

40th edition comes to King George (Murray) Park

## City's 'Frosty Fun' winter carnival unfolds February 6-9

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Westmount's 40th "Frosty Fun" winter carnival program this week February 6-9, kicks off with a seniors' craft workshop and lunch from Contactivity Centre on Thursday, followed by a "PJ Party" at Victoria Hall Friday evening for ages 5 years and over.

These proceed into Saturday's day-long outdoor activities at King George (Murray) Park with the carnival program concluding

Sunday with a McGill classics department play at Victoria Hall.

The many traditional outside offerings, such as the old-fashioned horse-drawn sleigh rides, sugar shack and the hockey winter classic, are all listed on the full program being delivered from the city to every postal address in Westmount, according to Dave Lapointe, director of Culture, Sports, Recreation and Social Development.

"The weather forecast looks promising with some snow on the way and cold weather," he said. "The rink should be in great shape by then and the added snow will make the tobogganing fun!"

Anyone planning to skate or toboggan is expected to bring their own equipment, including helmets.

Free hot chocolate *continued on p. 12*

## 'Women Who Care' hits \$200k milestone, aims to double it



From left, 100+ Women Who Care Montreal co-founders Jo-Ann Munro, Sabrina Ahmed, Paola Samuel, Susan Hinojosa and Anita Salvatore are seen here on January 24 at the Atwater Club where they hold their fundraising events. The group's fundraising tally recently hit \$200,000, which it aims to double in the future. See p. 10 for story.

PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY.

**Dodge on September real estate transfers: Low prices**  
See p. 14

City aims to develop site for storage

## \$150,000 approved for expertise on 'historic' incinerator demolition

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

The question of what to do about the city's former "historic" incinerator made it back to city council at its meeting January 13. That's when the council approved a cost of \$150,000 to develop an in-depth "expertise" to study demolition costs and the development of a storage space between Glen Rd. and the city's corporation yard

accessed from Bethune.

The contract for the study was awarded to STGM Architecture for which "a portion of the expertise costs may be reimbursed by Transport Quebec (Transports et Mobilité durable Québec)," the resolution states.

"This is an important step," a complicated and expensive one in demolishing a building that has been condemned, said Mayor *continued on p. 12*



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### Batshaw Children Seeking Homes

## Group of three siblings seeks foster family

A loving, long-term foster family is being sought for a bi-racial sibling group of three children: John (six years old), Mary (11) and Peter (10). These children are in need of a nurturing home where they can grow, heal, and thrive.

John is an easygoing, affectionate child who loves interacting with other children and spending time with family. He warms up to people quickly but can sometimes express frustration through screaming, growling or saying hurtful things. John has not yet received therapy to help him better understand and manage his emotions. He needs a foster family that will support him in developing healthy ways to express his feelings and cope with frustration.

Mary is generally calm and enjoys time alone. She has some challenges with hygiene and tends to shut down when addressed about her behaviours. However, Mary is a great helper and has made progress in therapy, particularly in communication and coping skills. She continues to work on improving her hygiene with ongoing therapeutic support.

Peter is a kind and curious child who

takes time to warm up to others. Once comfortable, he is expressive, playful, and enjoys interacting. Peter tends to internalize the actions of others and often blames himself, feeling he is "not good enough" or "bad." He needs a supportive home where he can receive reassurance and feel safe. Peter enjoys playing with Lego and is very skilled at building and constructing with them. He also enjoys helping with chores.

All three children are meeting their developmental milestones and would benefit from a stable, caring environment where their unique needs are supported.

The ideal foster family for John, Mary and Peter would also have heritage from the black community, with a willingness to make a long-term commitment to these children. The family should also be open to facilitating structured visits with their parents, with whom they maintain a positive relationship.

For more information about John, Mary, and Peter, please contact Batshaw Youth and Family Centres at 514.932.7161 x 1139.

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# Slippery drive results in 8 fender-bender accidents

Sudden heavy snow and wind came on so quickly January 29 during morning rush hour 8 to 9 am that Public Security received eight calls for minor accidents mostly involving hilly areas, department officials said. One, not wind related, involved a Metro delivery truck that hit a light pole on Mountain Ave.

“It came on so quickly that people were caught by surprise,” said assistant department director Kimberley Colquhoun. At two of the mishaps, Urgences Santé was called but airbags had been deployed and no one was reported taken to hospital.

High winds two days earlier, on January 27 at around 5 pm, caused a construction fence to blow over in front of 543 Victoria but the contractor was reached and remedied the situation. No trees were reported to have been brought down. – LS



During the sudden snow and wind storm January 29, this car was involved in a three-car accident on Westmount Ave. near Aberdeen in which air bags were deployed.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT PUBLIC SECURITY.

# Unleashed licenced dogs in Summit Woods bring 12 tickets at \$334 each

Public safety officers conducting a weekend campaign January 25-26 to check dog licences in Summit Woods issued 12 tickets for dogs found without a licence,

officials said. The crackdown followed the installation of new signs to highlight regulations.

“We’ve been doing quite a few campaigns in Summit Woods and weekends are generally very busy,” said assistant department director Kimberley Colquhoun. – LS

## Police Report

# Woman defrauded of \$6,000 after being pickpocketed on Greene

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Police at Station 12 on Stanton St. are closely scrutinizing images taken by security cameras on Greene Ave. last week in the hopes of identifying a pickpocket who took a woman’s wallet and then proceeded to steal \$6,000 from her bank account after tricking her into revealing her debit card’s PIN.

Around 3 pm on January 28, according to a complaint filed at the neighbourhood police station, the victim was walking along Greene. She believes that at one point someone with whom she may have briefly come into contact managed to relieve her of her wallet.

Sometime later on the same day, she received a phone call from an individual identifying himself as a representative of the Royal Bank. He told her they detected suspicious activity in at least one of her accounts.

According to the police report, the caller requested the victim’s debit card PIN number so as to be able to prevent the card from being used by whoever stole it.

“So, believing that it was the bank, she gave her PIN number,” said Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit.

However, even though the card did indeed end up being blocked later that day by a legitimate bank employee, it was not before around \$6,000 of purchases were made fraudulently.

While it can be *continued on p. 12*

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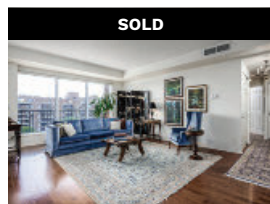
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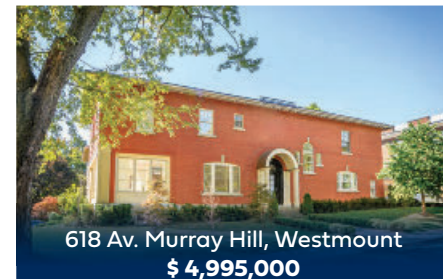
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## EDITORIAL

## Unsolicited advice (2), for candidates: Tell us what you want to do

We will have a municipal election in November, and maybe some readers are considering running for city council, including perhaps the mayoralty, for which the incumbent is not running (see January 21, p. 1). In 18 years at the paper, I have seen so many political efforts go wrong and I offer up some advice to would-be candidates before they jump in.

**Think about not running**

First off, in my opinion, some of you should not run. In many past contested elections, there have been what I think of as “student council” candidates. They want to get “involved.” They are interested in the “issues,” without saying which ones or which sides. They love the “community.”

Luckily for everybody, in my view, no “student council”-esque candidate has ever won.

Why do I say this? Because municipal politics is *politics* – not running a charity or a school, where most help is usually welcome and appreciated. City council makes things illegal (often) and legal again (seldom). City council taxes residents, i.e. it takes their money against their specific will. City council says “yes” to certain projects and “no” to others.

As a result, people get angry (and sometimes *very, very* angry) and there is often no convincing them. It is classic interest-group, zero-sum-game politics. To give to one group, one must disappoint another. With one exception (see box), I can’t quickly think of one highfalutin principle that has come up in the lifespan of this paper. It is about a finite amount of money funding some stuff and not other stuff, or agreeing with one group about a prohibition (e.g. leaf blowers, fireplaces) and not another. People will criticize, question and *complain*.

In my view, questioning government is a near-sacred part of democratic life and we should not apologize for it, even at the municipal level. I am simply advising new politicians to brace for it and, even better, be prepared by having made good prior decisions.

Speaking of angry people, future councillors should be prepared to be blamed by them for things done by other people, perhaps even in the distant past, about which they know nothing. *Did anyone mention the pool schedule?*

A starry-eyed person who wants to “contribute” will likely find this environment unsatisfying at best. There is no right answer. (I’ve noticed engineers often get very frustrated with Westmount politics and suspect this is the reason.) There is and, will be, no unanimity in the populace.

Polling is not feasible most of the time so it is not usually clear what the majority wants. To make matters worse, the public sometimes wants contradictory things (e.g. more spending – especially on their stuff, no debt and lower taxes). Being on council is a *job*, and a hard, political one at that. It can be thankless, time consuming and irritating. There has never been (in my time) a ticker-tape parade for anyone.

There are undoubtedly benefits to being on council (fulfilling a sense of duty? sense of accomplishment? money? influence? camaraderie?). Past and current members can chime in. Regardless, in my view it should be approached with the same seriousness as any employment, for everyone’s sake.

**Politics can be personal**

Relatedly, and picking up on something the current mayor complained to me about (see October 1, 2024, p. 8), politics – including the municipal variety – is *personal*.

If we think of federal and provincial politics, we see in-power politicians often sitting opposite a whole group of people who don’t think they should have their jobs. It doesn’t look like that municipally, but be prepared for the sentiment. Even if you win, even if you are acclaimed, there will be people who don’t think you should be there. There aren’t too many experiences more personal than that.

To save everyone’s time, my advice is to state your positions and overall philosophy in advance. If you are elected on a purple ice cream platform, and you then vote for purple ice cream, your communications throughout your term should be relatively straightforward. When the mint ice cream lobby complains, you can rightly say, “I went to the people asking for a purple mandate, and I received one. I am doing what I said I would do.”

And, in the opposite case, if you’re for purple, and the people want mint, do you really want to spend four years bickering with them? Better to be forthright and lose, in my view, than be coy and win.

The same goes for approach. If the environment is your only (or main) criterion, say so. If you are a fiscal hawk, say so. (And fiscal hawk-itude may be everyone’s default setting given recent financial news about the city’s projected capital works spending.) If you want gold-plated services, say so.

**Do your homework**

Lastly, know your client (i.e. the voter) and, to speak in Quebec municipal-ese,

know your *dossiers*. Several elections ago, a resident asked participants at an all-candidates meeting how many had been to a city council meeting. The response was embarrassing.

Go to some city council meetings. Look at some older ones via online video. Read old *Independents*. If you think everyone seems whacko (a not-uncommon sentiment in the general populace), perhaps this activity isn’t for you. Regardless, get ready for the same questioners, pressure groups and their successors. They will be a part of your life if you win.

Similarly, get acquainted with city rules, traditions and (provincially set) powers,

many of which are hard to change, and the city’s budget, much of which is fixed. (And, to repeat, it may be even more fixed in the near and medium term.)

You will not be starting a city in the wilderness with a blank slate. So much is locked in. What do you want to change, specifically? How much will your plan cost? Is either realistic? Do you want to spend hours and hours of your life working towards that goal?

If you really care, run. But be prepared for the campaign and, potentially worse, the “gift” of victory.

*David Price is the editor of the Independent.*

**Two different political styles: Hand-on or hands-off?**

I concur with former mayor Peter Trent (January 21, p. 4) that there are two basic city council styles: hands-on and hands-off. I have touched on the same issue at least once. See “Is the city of Westmount a democracy or a bureaucracy?” (September 21, 2021, p. 8).

Over the five councils that I have observed at close quarters, it has sometimes seemed that the bureaucracy is in charge (a hands-off council) – and not just doing what it wants day to day, but setting the agenda for the politicians to approve or modify or (rarely) dismiss. Council members end up being more like ombudsmen than politicians. This approach is not really democratic and so would seem like a situation that requires rectification.

But I don’t think it is that simple. Many Westmounters are not interested in the details of municipal government, nor in spending much time understanding what is going on. Even in an interesting, well-covered three-way race for mayor in 2017, only 42.2 percent voted (see November 14, 2017, p. 4), which only takes five or 10 minutes. Delegating the whole municipal kit-and-caboodle to experts has an attraction to many, even if they may not articulate it that way. The hands-off approach can work well until big, or non-routine, decisions have to be made, or things just generally go sideways (e.g. service quality goes down or there is a well-founded complaint by a resident).

And cast your eyes around the whole democratic world to see what a mess generalist politicians can make! Maybe hands-off is the way to go...

Hands-off management doesn’t have to be explicitly chosen. It can just happen. One politician of my acquaintance once said something like, “We often just end up apologizing for the mistakes of the administration.” (“Administration” is Westmount-ese for the senior unelected employees.)

This situation can occur for all sort of reasons. Some employees have been around a lot longer than the politicians, giving them an institutional advantage. And they work full time, like the past three mayors, but unlike any councillor ever, to the best of my knowledge.

To really run the city, my guess is that it would need a determined mayor with specific goals who knows all the major *dossiers* well or better; has management experience, including in a unionized environment; and is backed by a hands-on council. If that’s what voters want, say so and encourage that kind of candidate!

As was my theme last week (p. 6), I encourage voters to state their preference and ask politicians what they plan to do if elected.

As is my theme this week, I urge would-be candidates to think about these things, let us all know your thoughts and get ready to answer questions on this topic.

Let’s have fewer platitudes, please! If voters and politicians start on the same page, things might go well in the next mandate. – DP

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This makes exposure to potential clients in Westmount second to none, and advertising in the *Westmount Independent* channelled new business my way on a constant basis.

With many thanks to editor David Price and sales rep Arleen Candiotti for the wonderful personal service they provide!

CATHERINE HOWICK, LANSDOWNE AVE.

**Editor's reply:** It is I who thank you, for this kind and unsolicited letter. Every word of support, printed or not, helps. – DP.

## REMEMBERING 'MOTHER AND CHILD'

Two years ago, Margherita and her parents visited Montreal. She was in love with the sculpture "Mother and Child." Every time she was close to its location, she would run to give them a hug.

She will be very sad if she knows that the statue has disappeared (see December 10, 2024, p. 23). The statue gave a tender note of human warmth to the square.

Many people will miss the "Mother and child."

BERNA TOWNSEND, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### IMPORTANT POINT: TAXES DID NOT KEEP UP WITH CONSTRUCTION INFLATION

According to Mr Biro in last week's *Independent* (p. 4), "Mr. Trent wrote about council's decision in 2016 to plan an investment of \$5 million a year in constant dollars from 2017 to 2037 just on road reconstruction and maintenance. He claims the current council is 'honouring this plan.' This is incorrect. The budget for roads alone in 2025 is \$18.6 million."

Mr Biro did not quote me correctly. I wrote "council *has honoured* this plan." I used the past tense for two reasons.

First, budgets are estimates of work to be done. Capital works budgets are traditionally unreliable estimates at that. In 2020, for instance, only one-half of the total Public Works budget was actually spent.

Second, Westmount financial statements show that, in 2018 – the first year of the new council – \$6.0 million was spent on roads, down from the previous year's \$8.0 million. In 2019, \$5.0 million was spent, then \$4.0 million in 2020. In 2021, \$5.9 million was spent, and then \$6.7 million in 2022. Only in 2023 did spending on roads since 2018 go above the \$5.0 million in constant dollars. That year, \$10.5 million was spent. The actual numbers for 2024 are not available.

This is why, taken as a whole from 2018 to 2023, I wrote that council has honoured the road reconstruction and maintenance plan.

My main point was that property taxes should have been increased every year (or operational spending decreased!) starting in 2018 to cover construction-cost inflation for all capital works expenditures. This was not done. Now we learn that council is going out to borrow massively to pay for it all. This way, it'll be tomorrow's taxpayer who will be stuck with paying the interest costs.

PETER F. TRENT, CÔTE ST. ANTOINE RD.

### SUPPORT, SPACE EXISTS FOR INDOOR POOL

A pool for southeast – in response to Peter Trent's guest column (January 21, p. 4).

What an odd position to take: is it not the city's core mission to provide the services required (see needs assessment study completed by the city) or requested by the population? It is also worth noting that all sitting councillors backed the construction of an indoor pool as a priority when quizzed during the last municipal election campaign.

In full transparency and as a board member of the Westmount Masters Swim Club, I can say with confidence that the YMCA pool does not serve the needs of Westmounters: the water quality is poor, the

lanes are too narrow and it is perennially overbooked. We love our outdoor pool, but not so much when the mercury drops below 10°C (nine months out of the year...).

One might ask why more consideration was not taken when deciding what services to include in the "new" Westmount recreation centre. An argument could be made that the construction of two underground hockey rinks might have lacked foresight, especially since hockey is not a sport that spares the titanium hip implants of a growing demographic... I can only suppose there was a revenue-generating opportunity and perhaps an indoor pool would not have met this criterion?

While I share Mr. Trent's concern with the simplistic architecture and excessive densification proposed in the most recent draft of the southeast planning study, the sites under examination *should* be built on and should provide amenities to the citizens of Westmount, be it housing, pools, gyms or any other demonstrated need.

Density can be achieved through other means: I see no reason why this area needs more parks (the Gladstone parking lots are surrounded by parks on all four sides) nor why the city should build and maintain another public square – Cabot Square is a five-minute walk away. It is a sad state of affairs that these [Tupper/Gladstone] lots have stood empty for over 50 years.

Take issue with results of the study, the quality of the product rendered and the process, but surely we should thank Mayor Smith for putting in place a process and moving forward a dossier that has languished for long enough?

CONOR SAMPSON, OAQ, GROSVENOR AVE.

### HOW TO RIGHT WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR CITY HALL

Thank you, Mr. Trent, for your clear and concise outline of how our mayor and councillors can provide us with responsive, effective, efficient and responsible government (January 21, p. 4). I hope that this and future administrations will take note and follow Mr. Trent's blueprint for hands-on governing. We, as citizens, deserve it.

CATHERINE DUFF-CARON,  
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

### THOUGHTS ON POLITICS, PLANNING

I always find an article by the former mayor Peter Trent edifying. His guest column in January 21 (p. 4) edition of the *Independent* is no exception.

His alarms regarding what he contends is a "hands-off" attitude of our present administration to firm Lemay's solution to the southeast sector's density problem are to be noted. Its solution is to

duplicate the ugly high-rises that replaced the Montreal Children's Hospital on the corner of Atwater and René Lévesque/Dorchester. These "family averse" (Trent's reference) buildings will resolve our tax base issue by granting access to low-ceilinged, pimple-sized balconies and handkerchief-size rooms. And thus are worthy of consideration. As a taxpayer since 1985, that vision of the southeast corner development causes me nausea.

We did something similar in 2012 (see February 7-8, 2012, p. 1) when we awarded the contract to build a new Westmount recreation centre to the construction firm Pomerleau. By 2014\*, it was clear that the city pool would not open on time. Problems with the ice refrigeration of the two NHL-size hockey rinks were delaying the project. Those continued well after the opening! Thus a probable reason for the inefficient effort allotted to the pool construct.

Pomerleau in its lack of expertise bestowed a cement pond on the Westmount populace. *Nota bene* cement pools were obsolescent in Quebec by the 1960s. Cement is a porous product requiring a membrane to protect it from corrosive water effects. Perhaps that's why three months after the delayed opening in 2015\* a slab of cement fell off a pool wall onto a young swimmer in the midst of his lesson, hopefully causing no deleterious psychic damage (see August 19, 2014, p. 6, September 11, 2018, p. 1 and June 16, 2020, p. 6).

Further lack of Pomerleau's pool acumen led to a configuration problem that permanently prohibits the installation of backstroke flags and resulted in the erection of dangerously close diving boards. The latter almost caused a dangerous collision between two divers before it was remedied. The former never can be adjusted, leaving back stroke enthusiasts to rely on their peripheral vision of lane guards to protect them from the occasional concussion with deck walls. Speaking of decks, the use of cement on them results in swimmers in July and August wearing protective footwear to counter deck heat.

All these adverse effects did not occur because citizens of Westmount neglected to attend featured planning sessions.

*Au contraire*, those sessions were well attended when questions were posed on these issues and assurances proffered. As an elector, I will be mindful of Mr. Trent's admonition to choose good candidates come the November 2 municipal election.

B. MANTEL, BRUCE AVE.

\***Editor's note:** The Westmount recreation centre building opened in September 2013, not 2015 (see September 24, 2013, p. 1), with the pool a little later – and too late in the year for most swimmers! (see November 5, 2013, p. 1 and June 3, 2014, p. 10). But, yes, it was late (see April 9, 2013, p. 23). – DP.

## SMITH LEAVES A 'MOUNT WESTMOUNT' OF PROBLEMS FOR OTHERS TO CLIMB

*Editor's note: A much longer version of this letter was emailed to all city council members and the Independent on January 20. At my request, letter writer Janis Kraut greatly reduced it in length, after which I reduced it even more. – DP.*

Christina [Smith, mayor] made the right decision not to stand for re-election. Many members of council should join her.

No doubt her email to the *Independent's* editor (see October 1, 2024, p. 8) was directed at me. This started four years ago when I raised The Boulevard [as an issue]. Christina said the street was too wide for the neighbourhood and needed a traffic diet and that [work on] The Boulevard was coming. IT'S NOT. This is not someone who takes her responsibilities seriously or considers public safety a priority.

When Christina writes to the editor asking why they don't report on certain sporting events, it lays bare what ails city hall. Council's first responsibility is prudent fiscal management, public safety, maintenance of the infrastructure and *then* the social calendar.

I have written on the following, none of which a diligent elected official would consider PETTY.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Disrespect for the democratic process* – threatening residents to be escorted out [of a council meeting]. Instead of apologizing for saying something inappropriate in the heat of the moment, Christina doubles down and writes to the *Westmount Independent*, residents' only meaningful source of information, asking [the editor] to muzzle residents.

*Fiscal responsibility* – Hydro Westmount. Approximately \$20 million in the last seven years. In the infoWestmount brochure, [it said] “we will put Hydro Westmount on sound financial footing.” Details please, or is this potentially a fiscal disaster in the making? What responsible administration risks millions on an operation with no economic or sound business model? PETTY?

*Committees* – endless fruitless committees. The Hydro Westmount governance Committee, after THREE years Councillor Shamie had literally nothing to say. PETTY?

*Disneyfying Westmount Park* – Councillor Gallery, commissioner for parks. Three surveys, a hailstorm of opposition, Westmount Park 1.0 buried. Then: STUFF. Hokey arches, chemical-infused treated wood pagodas and a light show for the ducks. Money and labour spent (all gone). PETTY?

*Traffic* – seven years on and residents

and 10-year-olds are still pleading for safe roads. All they get is an applause. Parents ask for lines, speed bumps in school zones. The city of Montreal installed two speed bumps in front of St. George's and The Priory on the Montreal side [of The Boulevard]. I asked about speed bumps, Christina nodded to someone to look at this. Nothing [happened]. PETTY?

*Non-rigorous road selection* – How can you possibly claim road re-build selection is rigorous when public safety isn't even mentioned? Lexington: \$7.2 million spent on a safe, no-traffic street whose pipes supposedly leaked that is now a veritable obstacle course with a bounty of traffic-calming measures but not a dollar for dangerous streets. PETTY?

*Surveys and brochures* – irrelevant and costly. The infoWestmount brochure no doubt cost tens of thousands of dollars, an eight-page colour brochure, the first issue with a quarter-page photo of Christina in robes. PETTY?

And Councillor Bostock's article (October 1, 2024, p. 9) about serving and good intentions. Good intentions are a starting point, not the end game.

Westmount residents are singularly united on all issues except the dog-leash rules in Summit Woods. Fix the roads and sidewalks, deal with the traffic, maintain the parks. Good vibes and brochures are no substitute for competence, strategic thinking, financial literacy and risk management.

The Smith administration will be known for a lost decade (Almost. It's been 8½ years.) Christina leaves behind a trail of near-insurmountable issues.

A new mayor will face “Mount Westmount” – mounting debt (\$0 to 70 million, Tesla-like acceleration), a mounting infrastructure deficit, mounting traffic problems, mounting risks from Hydro Westmount.

Westmounters will undoubtedly pay for this one way or another.

JANIS KRAUT, THE BOULEVARD

### WHY IS ROAD CONSTRUCTION SO COMPLICATED FOR CITY?

Ohhh my, I guess I am totally crazy or ?? Claremont Ave. has some of the worst road bumps in Westmount. So how can we solve this horrible condition? We need to have consultants and consultants and consultants and public information sessions and and and??

How about the city does that what I have found in the past in other areas of the Americas that have even worse weather conditions than we have? Places such as the Rockies (Canadian and the US) or, even closer, the Adirondacks. There, I have always found the roads great.

If you design something correctly for five years, and the materials and installation and maintenance perform as per design, then things will usually last five years. If, however, you add a generous safety factor, then things will usually last a bit longer than five years. If you design something correctly for 30 years and the materials and installation and maintenance perform as per design, then things will usually last 30 years. If, however, you add a generous safety factor, then things will usually last a bit longer than 30 years.

And yes, I did not design roads *but*, I did design newsprint paper machines, which in my day ran non-stop for 48 to 50 weeks a year. And yes, they are not small, as they can reach a height of eight meters, a width of 12 meters and a length of 120 meters. Their speed would be 1,000 meters per minute. Also, since there were people around the machine, we designed for an infinite life and, *no*, I am not proposing that the city design for an infinite life as with roads that does not appear practical.

Anyhow, I did learn something about designing for longevity and since other places can manage road construction in terrible weather, why can't the city simply get a proper design and have it followed in terms of materials, construction, maintenance and safety factors so that we, the citizens of Westmount can also finally start to enjoy our roads?

ALFRED EDEL, VICTORIA AVE.

### A TALE OF TWO STUDIES

Two heritage studies were commissioned by Westmount as part of the procedure to recognize 178 Côte St Antoine Rd. (the Goode House) as a heritage property under the powers granted to the municipality by the Cultural Heritage Act. The corresponding By-law 1552 was enacted on November 2, 2020. The two studies, which are cited in the preliminaries of this by-law, are:

- Analyse Patrimoniaire | Volet Paysage prepared by WAA, Montréal Inc. of July 14, 2020, and
- Étude Patrimoniaire prepared jointly by Luce Lafontaine Architectes and Ms. Christina Cameron of September 30, 2020.

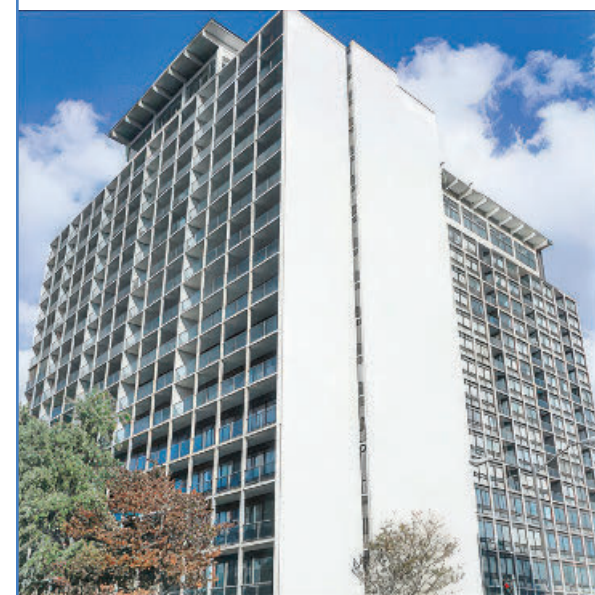
At the October 11, 2022 council meeting, I asked council whether these two studies could be made public.

Mayor Smith responded that she thought that they were already on the city's website. This is not unreasonable, since the value statements for the other two heritage projects – the Glen viaduct and the houses of worship – are indeed on the website. On pointing out that that was not the case, she instructed me to send an email and “We will see what we can share with you.”

I followed this up, and was told that I could only have access if I used the Access to Information procedure. Why one would

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Protected heritage garden, Goode House, December 1, 2024.

viewing these taxpayer-funded studies relating to the second oldest house in Westmount?

One can get some idea by considering

the abyss between the level of protection implied by these two studies and the abysmal oversight that is evident in protecting this property. The WAA study stated:

“Three generations of the same family owned and occupied the Goode Residence and Garden from 1883 to 2019, and each generation built on – but did not obliterate – the work of its predecessors. This, reinforced by the richness of historical information available and the evidence of the historic garden on the ground, demonstrates a coherence and continuity that is rare, making the garden and landscape of this residence truly unique in today’s world.”

As can be seen from the photo, Westmount has permitted the protected heritage garden to be completely obliterated. What is the point of a heritage designation if it is not enforced?

How does one balance the planning aspirations of the current owners with the requirement of preserving the heritage character of this property? This is council’s responsibility. They had to evaluate the requested demolition of the rear windows along with the construction of an attached modern two-storey addition, as well as a swimming pool. The mayor has one set of concerns – getting the house restored, not

permitting it to fall into disrepair, etc., and these concerns are entirely cogent. She had a meeting with the current owner, according to a confidential statement to me from a high-ranking city employee, and that too is not unreasonable.

On the other hand, for council members to make an informed evaluation, they surely should have had access to these two studies, which were commissioned exactly for this purpose. If they had seen these two studies, they may well have been sufficiently convinced that they would not have voted to grant the requested demolitions, or permitted an extension that violates the integrity of this property. By not allowing her council to have access to these entirely relevant documents, as I infer, the mayor not only fails to encourage council members to take a full role in this decision, but effectively stages the result that she wants.

This is a shame. It is a shame that Mayor Smith does not allow, as I infer, her council to fully help her in what is, I acknowledge, a difficult decision. It is a shame that council decision-making is subverted by restricting access to relevant studies. And it is a crying shame that limited demolition should be permitted on an irreplaceable heritage property. In a real sense, this action subverts the democratic process of electing council.

JON BRESLAW, GROSVENOR AVE.

need that for heritage studies is another matter, but I’m accommodating, so I made the application.

The city of Westmount refused access for years. So, still being accommodating, I followed the recommendation of the Commission d’accès à l’Information du Québec (CAI) for mediation. This was also refused by the city.

Next, I made an application to the CAI for the release of these studies, which was contested by the city in a five-page response, citing that these studies included opinions or recommendations. (I thought that opinions or recommendations were what we had paid for.)

After I had contested this response, the CAI ruled that the documents indeed should be released, with recommendations redacted.

Unlike the other heritage value studies for the Glen and houses of worship, these documents are not available on Westmount’s website, however they are available [in redacted form] at the Westmount Historical Association’s website (www.wha.quebec) under the publication section.

In her sworn testimony to the CAI, Urban Planning assistant director Nathalie Jodoin stated that these documents were not submitted during the council meeting at the time of By-law 1552’s adoption. Why would the mayor go to such extreme lengths to prevent citizens and, as I infer, council from



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## Coronation medals awarded to Westmount, Westmount-linked honourees



In addition to Nancy Rosenfeld, Judith Mowat and Susan Stevenson (see January 21, p. 1), several other Westmounters received the King Charles III Coronation medal January 15 at the Atwater Library. Among the recipients in this photo are Westmounters Gail Adelson, David Cape, Steven Cummings, Victor Drury, Stephen Gross, Jeff Hart, Dean Mandel, François Morin and Joel Segal. Westmounter Jonathan Wener (not present) was also honoured. Also pictured and honoured were Geoff Dowd, who taught at Selwyn House before heading up Trafalgar School for Girls, and Michael Cristofaro, retired head of Westmount High (see June 5, 2018, p. 1). Bruce Bolton, left, represented Quebec's lieutenant-governor, Manon Jeannotte.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT FRANK.

## Standish stands down as Canadian Party co-leader

Colin Standish, founding leader of the

Canadian Party of Quebec and candidate in the Westmount-St. Louis provincial riding last election, has stepped down as co-leader (as he eventually became), effective February 1.

He has accepted a one-year contract as a crown prosecutor in another province, but may return as a candidate in the next provincial election, currently set for October 2026.

Standish's role will be taken up by founding party member Joe Cianflone, who will join Myrtis Fossey as co-leader of the organization, explained a January 30 press release.

Standish placed sixth in the riding with 1,029 votes in the 2022 election.

Province-wide, the party placed seventh, garnering 12,981 votes to the CAQ's 1,685,573, Québec Solidaire's 634,535, the Parti Québécois' 600,708, the Liberals' 591,077, the Conservatives' 530,786 and the Greens' 31,054. The CAQ formed a majority with 90 seats out of 125.

### 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

## '100+ Women' exceeds expectations, raising more than \$200K

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

After first being established in Montreal in 2021, a local chapter of a global women's philanthropic group recently marked an important milestone: more than \$200,000 raised for Montreal-area charities and non-profit groups since the start.

Originating in Michigan in 2006, 100+ Women Who Care has since then expanded into cities around the US, Canada and elsewhere, while growing to more than 60,000 members worldwide.

The Montreal chapter was started by five determined women – including four from Westmount – who share a passion for helping to bring about meaningful change. Besides the co-founders, there are now more than 200 members.

On three occasions every year, 100+ Women Who Care Montreal meets to select its next charity to support. The social gatherings, held at the Atwater Club, require each member to commit to a donation of \$100.

The goal is to make an immediate and direct impact on local communities in need.

The variety of organizations covers all aspects of the lives of Montrealers: women's health equity, gender-based violence, programs for children, fighting poverty and supporting marginalized groups. To date, they have donated to 11 causes in Montreal.

"This was just an idea and an overwhelming desire for me and a few friends," says Sabrina Ahmed, one of the co-founders who is a Westmounter.

Besides Ahmed, 100+ Women Who Care Montreal co-founders Jo-Ann Munro, Paola Samuel and Susan Hinojosa are also Westmounters. Co-founder Anita Salvatore is from Brossard on Montreal's South Shore.

They were determined to support programs serving the needs of struggling Montrealers.

"We didn't know what to expect, but we knew this simple concept would resonate with many," added Ahmed. "We aimed to grow and raise \$50,000. Now 200 women strong, together we have quadrupled that amount."

The group's latest goal is to again double the amount of money they've raised until now. But to do that, they need more women to join.

100+ WWC Montreal's Winter 2025 event (\$100 admission), supporting people with disabilities, will be taking place Tuesday, February 11 at the Atwater Club (3505 Atwater Ave.). Food and drink will be served to those arriving as early as 6 pm. The time from 7 to 8 pm will be devoted to presentations by charitable organizations, followed by the membership's vote. Things will begin winding down after 8 pm during a social hour.

See p. 1 for photo.

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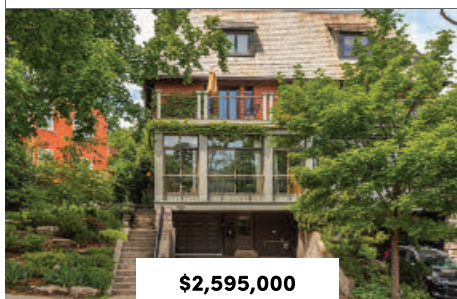
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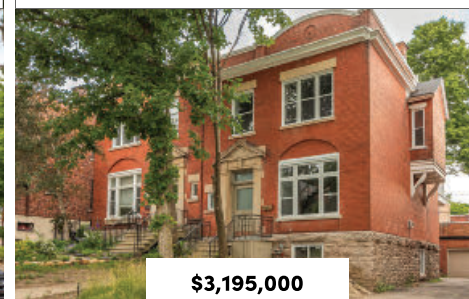
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*Perseverance behind achievement***Council supports ‘Hooked on School Days’ Feb. 10-14**

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council adopted a resolution January 13 designating the week of February 10 to 14 as “Hooked on School Days” in support of this year’s campaign under the theme of “Perseverance Makes a World of Difference.”

In a resolution reading: “Whereas the support and caring presence of all adults are essential for academic success” and that “perseverance lies behind every achievement,” it states that “elected officials wish to demonstrate their solidarity and support for young people and all stakeholders in the education system.”

This year’s theme is especially meaningful for Westmount Public Library, says children’s librarian Wendy Wayling.

“The Westmount Public Library helps support local students achieve their edu-

cational goals by offering free library cards to all students who live or go to school in Westmount. Teens are welcome to use the newly designated teen area to discover the pleasure of reading, take part in activities at our new ‘makerspace’ called The Studio and sign up for a variety of volunteer activities to develop new skills and feel a sense of responsibility and purpose in the community.”

Created 21 years ago in Montréal, the Hooked on School Days (HSD) campaign has grown into a national movement. The Montreal edition celebrates its 15th edition this year.

“And celebrating every step along the way to success is described as an essential message in these days of images and stories creating the illusion of instant success,” its website states.

**Police report, cont’d from p. 3**

nearly impossible to tell whether a caller claiming to be with a bank is in fact legitimate, Yigit said the giveaway in this case was the fact the caller asked for a PIN – something that a real bank employee will never do.

Another reason to doubt the veracity of callers claiming to be from banks: Cst. Yigit pointed out that banks generally contact their clients for serious issues by written letter, rather than by telephone.

“The moral of this story is you never give the PIN number over the phone – even if it’s ‘the bank,’” he said.

Regarding the pickpocketing, Yigit said the victim told police that she recalled passing closely by a man and a woman standing by the door of a Greene Ave. boutique, although she wasn’t completely certain.

Some time after this, she noticed that her wallet was missing.

He said he would be dropping by the boutique to view the footage recorded by its security cameras and to check whether there are any clues that might help identify suspects.

**Carnival, cont’d from p. 1**

and cookies are to be available at a bonfire from 10 am to 3 pm along with a marshmallow roast. Hot dogs, while supplies last, are to be provided from noon to 1 pm.

Starting at 1 pm are the “chuck-a-puck” and puck-shooting contest as well as an opportunity to skate with various costumed city mascots and participate in an obstacle course and relay races. For a “family letter hunt,” a family “will be given clues to find letters throughout the park that will spell a word,” Lapointe explained. “Families that complete it will get their name in a hat to win a prize.”

The day concludes with family skating from 2 to 3 pm.

On the Sunday afternoon, a McGill classics department play called *Apollonius of Rhodes Argonautica* is programmed for Victoria Hall starting at 2 pm.

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**Lights to replace proposed greenspace ‘hypotenuse’ closure****Many turn out to view plans unveiled to redo Claremont**

Tom Flies, second from right, the city’s senior director, project management and land use, explains some of the preferred Claremont changes January 30 at Victoria Hall.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Final recommendations for the major reconstruction of Claremont and Lorraine from Sherbrooke to Marianopolis were unveiled last Thursday evening at Victoria Hall as many people came in and out to view what will be a major project in 2025.

Among project highlights displayed on panels around the room were a slightly elevated one-way northbound bike path along the east side of Claremont. Some additional width was provided to the southbound traffic lane for use by cyclists in lieu of space for a protected route.

This reduces parking to 20 spaces from 69, mainly close to Sherbrooke. Some benches will be added there. Pedestrian crossings at side streets are to be levelled with the sidewalk for the ease and safety of pedestrians and to provide a slight speed bump for cars, according to Tom Flies, the

**Incinerator, cont’d from p. 1**  
Christina Smith.

Historically used to burn garbage and melt snow, the building is partially nestled into the cliff just behind the Public Works yard on Bethune and Hydro Westmount’s Glen power station. It is on the edge of the city land that was expropriated by Quebec for expanding the land used by Highway 136 (the former 720).

**Still standing**

The incinerator still stands although its demolition had been approved by the city’s demolition committee in 2022, which was allowed in part given that its historic importance had been reduced by the removal of an upper part of its chimney, that the building had not been used since the 1960s and contained a high degree of contaminants (see story May 24, 2022, p. 1).

city’s senior director, project management and land use.

One preliminary proposal of concern, however, has not been recommended. This was the pilot project to green-over the diagonal “hypotenuse” road alongside the green triangular area across from Marianopolis. Found to cause traffic backing up on NDG Ave. as far west as Decarie and beyond (see story October 8, 2024, p. 4), traffic lights are instead being recommended for its intersections with Westmount Ave.

Details and plans of the “preferred development model” from the engineering consulting firm of Rayside Labossière are now posted on the city’s Engage website resulting from public consultations in May and September.

“Some changes may still be made,” the city’s website states. Tender bids are tentatively scheduled for opening in March.

Having been condemned and unused for several years, an amount of \$800,000 had been designated in the city’s 2019 capital works budget for decontamination, but it never occurred (see story June 4, 2019, p. 1).

**First to burn garbage for electricity**

Westmount was the first municipality in Canada – and reportedly in North America – to generate electricity from burning garbage. This was phased out in 1947 when the demand for power exceeded capacity.

The incinerator was subsequently used to burn garbage until about the late 1970s. The top floor, which is level to the Public Works yard, was reported to have been used for some storage but the building has been essentially unused since 2011 (see story June 4, 2019, p. 1).

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## Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

# September transfers: Low prices

than \$1 million for all of 2023.

The top price of \$2,300,000, for a semi-detached house at 727 Upper Roslyn Ave., is less than the average price of all 89 Westmount houses sold through September 2024.

August had five prices of more than \$4 million, with the highest at \$9 million for 4302 Montrose Ave. (December 3, p. 20). Thus the September average price of \$1,691,182 is humbled by the recent August average price of \$3,411,923 or the recent July average of \$3,907,000, so homeowners looking to sell their Westmount house at more than \$4 million should not be discouraged – yet. There are still several pending sales over \$4 million to be notarized, and the spring market should be starting up soon.

The highest mark-up among September sales was 22.6 percent for 716 Upper

*Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in September 2024, gleaned from city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 15.*

Eleven residential sales were closed in September last year for an average of \$1,691,182, the lowest raw average price for a month since February 2020, with individual prices ranging from \$955,000 to \$2,300,000 and an average price:valuation ratio of 1.2 percent, the lowest average such ratio since April of 2024.

The lowest price went for 104 Irvine Ave., one of four (so far) Westmount one- and two-family homes to sell below \$1 million last year, compared to only two at less



716 Upper Roslyn, the month's highest mark-up, 22.6 percent.



104 Irvine, the month's lowest price, \$955,000 and biggest mark-down, -19.3 percent.

Roslyn Ave., one of seven houses to sell over municipal valuation. The other four dipped as low as -19.3 percent for 104 Irvine, which was also the lowest-priced house in the month.

So far (in coverage) for 2024, the average house sale is 8.2 percent over valuation, in a range of monthly averages between -7.2 percent (February) and +29.4 percent (July).

### Condos

The addition of seven condominium sales in September brings the quarterly volume of those property sales to 18 between July and September, for an average price of \$1,089,472 and an average mark-up of 11.7 percent.

In fact, only three of the 18 condo sales were under water, with mark-downs between 2.2 percent and 10.0 percent, the

latter the September sale of Apt. 505 at 175 Metcalfe Ave.

The biggest mark-up among condominiums in September was 33 percent for a flat on St. Antoine St., capped only in the quarter by a 42.4-percent mark-up on part of a former duplex on Grosvenor Ave., which sold in July.

The latest list of sales also includes four sales signed in August that had not been on the previous list. Two of these involved a trade of properties, one a split-level house at 44 Roxborough Ave., the other an attached two-storey house on Prince Albert Ave. above Sherbrooke St.

The declared price of \$3 million for each property leaves a mark-down of 2.5 percent for the Roxborough property, and a mark-up over 60 percent for the Prince Albert home.

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# Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in September

| ADDRESS                        | VENDOR  | PRICE                    | 2023 VAL               | RATIO (±%) |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------|------------------------|------------|
| 442 Clarke                     | Thien San Mac & To Nhu Nguyen                 | \$2,000,000              | \$1,803,100            | 10.9%      |
| 339 Grosvenor                  | estate Pamela Edwards                         | \$1,375,000              | \$1,697,900            | -19.0%     |
| 104 Irvine                     | Nigel Goddard & Maria d'Agostino              | \$955,000                | \$1,183,000            | -19.3%     |
| 117 Lewis                      | Anik Poirier                                  | \$1,150,000              | \$1,093,700            | 5.1%       |
| 259 Metcalfe                   | James T. Kaufman                              | \$1,825,000              | \$2,050,100            | -11.0%     |
| 422 Mount Stephen              | John Rioux                                    | \$2,200,000              | \$2,006,300            | 9.7%       |
| 716 Upper Roslyn               | Gabriella Kogan & Aubrey Rosenhek             | \$2,293,000              | \$1,870,700            | 22.6%      |
| 727 Upper Roslyn               | Sophie Beugnot                                | \$2,300,000              | \$2,092,300            | 9.9%       |
| 483 Strathcona                 | Mair Edwards                                  | \$1,755,000              | \$1,665,400            | 5.4%       |
| 82 Sunnyside                   | Anthony Moffat & R. Ann Huntley               | \$1,150,000              | \$1,067,900            | 7.7%       |
| 360 Wood                       | Beatrice Melmed                               | \$1,600,000              | \$1,853,200            | -13.7%     |
| <b>CONDOMINIUMS</b>            |   |                          |                        |            |
| 3 Church Hill                  | Nadia Ferrah & Tahar Tarfa                    | \$1,230,000              | \$1,088,900            | 13.0%      |
| 175 Metcalfe #505              | Qusay Abu-Ghazaleh                            | \$1,300,000              | \$1,444,500            | -10.0%     |
| 215 Redfern #207               | Matthew Kendall                               | \$1,025,000              | \$806,800              | 27.0%      |
| 3125 St. Antoine               | Giovanni Miliani & Oleksander Fuks            | \$615,000                | \$462,400              | 33.0%      |
| 4175 St. Catherine #1704       | Jack Levee                                    | \$2,700,000              | \$2,048,800            | 31.8%      |
| 4700 St. Catherine #509        | estate Joyce Barakett                         | \$850,000                | \$839,800              | 1.2%       |
| 1 Wood #603                    | estate Greta Segal                            | \$1,750,000              | \$1,939,800            | -9.8%      |
| <b>SHARE SALES</b>             |   |                          |                        |            |
| 84-88 Somerville, 33%          | Laura Rose                                    | \$515,000                | \$545,567 <sup>1</sup> | -5.6%      |
| <b>ADDITIONAL AUGUST SALES</b> |   |                          |                        |            |
| 318 Côte St. Antoine           | Lawrence Joseph                               | \$2,000,000              | \$2,225,900            | -10.1%     |
| 312-12A Kensington             | Lawrence Joseph & Uda Zahara Castillo Andrade | \$2,620,000              | \$2,451,400            | 6.9%       |
| 435 Prince Albert              | Baback Khatami & Ana Victoria Aguerre         | \$3,000,000 <sup>2</sup> | \$1,868,900            | 60.5%      |
| 44 Roxborough                  | 9960112 Canada (Roxanne Levy)                 | \$3,000,000 <sup>2</sup> | \$3,075,600            | -2.5%      |

<sup>1</sup>Valuation is 1/3 of the total valuation of \$1,636,700. Includes exclusive use of 84 Somerville. <sup>2</sup>Buyers traded properties. This was the declared value of each.

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# Hockey enforcer Nilan opens up about surviving addiction



## Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

With moving honesty, the famous enforcer of the Montreal Canadiens came out from behind the hockey helmet. With vulnerability and humour, he recounted his journey.

At times haltingly, he admitted how painful that journey was as he dove into the emotional and physical battles that defined his turbulent life. He gave shout-outs to thank Bob Gainey and Serge Savard, both present, for their support.

Some time ago, noting that Chris needed help, Gainey gave him a business card for someone from the NHL who helped players with addiction issues.

Unlike crowd clamour during NHL hockey games, when Chris Nilan spoke recently, you could have heard a pin drop. A press conference was held to launch “Knuckles: The Chris Nilan Story,” a one-man show premiering May 28 at Maison Principale.



Chris Nilan, Barry Lorenzetti and Vittorio Rossi.



Chris Nilan and Serge Savard.

“That saved my life. But I am not a victim; I am survivor.”

His survival – the highs and lows of his career from his rise in the NHL to his struggles with addiction and mental health after retiring – is the star of “Knuckles: The Chris Nilan Story.”

Director Vittorio Rossi, who spoke at the event, will “shape the story, but it is Chris’ own. He is a born story-teller.”

All proceeds from the dinner and show (\$350) go to the Barry F. Lorenzetti Foundation.

Barry Lorenzetti, executive producer of

the show, spoke about his foundation, which focuses on mental-health-care initiatives in Canada.

In an era when some proclaim they shy away from media yet court it assiduously for their Next Best Project, and others gain daily headlines with bombastic proclamations, this self-deprecating man quietly awed the most jaded of journalists.

His personal path will now reach out to help others.

Knuckles: The Chris Nilan Story. May 28 & 29. June 3 and 5, 2025. Tickets and information [foundationlorenzetti.org](http://foundationlorenzetti.org).

## WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

*We are Westmount*

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Please include your name and street for publication (or borough or municipality if you do not live in Westmount), but not your address (unless you want it published).

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## Westmount A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

A classic jaunty terrier, Jack is a bright and handsome little fellow. He is attentive to all around him and keen on participating in activities. He is presently at the Montreal SPCA kennel, available for visits and adoption in our neighbourhood.

At eight years young, he is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

Do not hesitate to refer to the Montreal SPCA website at [www.sPCA.com](http://www.sPCA.com), scroll to his information page by his identification number, 490058026, and plan your visit to the shelter to meet with the adoption coordinators for your interest in Jack.

The Montreal SPCA is open every day, from Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm. It is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4.

## Master Jack



Jack is waiting. He would fit in so well in your family, a beloved companion in your daily routine.

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne





9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

## Miss Nonna



Adorable and playful, Miss Nonna is looking forward to a loving family. A delightful two-year-old, she is presently in foster care for the Montreal SPCA cattery.

Family members note that young Nonna is gentle, curious and can be found enjoying the sunlight.

She is also enjoying the companionship of another cat, giving the option of adoption in a forever home with another friendly and respectful cat.

A very healthy grey-and-black tabby, Nonna is up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. If you would like to find out more about her, please refer to the Montreal SPCA's website at [www.sPCA.com](http://www.sPCA.com), scroll to her information page from her identification number, 2000163679, then click on the "Fill out the form" black rectangle on the right-hand side of the page.

You will then be able to provide basic contact information and detail your interest in adopting Nonna. The adoption coordinators will then get back to you to discuss Nonna's needs and the next steps for adoption. Nonna is such a dear companion, a friend to all in the family.

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne

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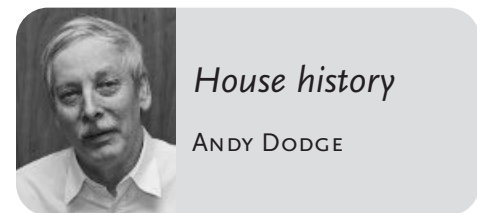
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# The southeast's long, long, long history of urban planning



## House history

ANDY DODGE

“Pave paradise, put up a parking lot...”

Those words from Joni Mitchell's 1971 hit, “Big Yellow Taxi,” have been ringing through the streets of southeast Westmount for the past 50 years.

Whenever I ponder the questions of development in southeast Westmount, my mind goes back even earlier than that, when – as an innocent American student at McGill who knew little about the dynamics of municipal politics in Montreal – I began hearing about the protests and clamour surrounding the construction of the Ville Marie Expressway and the resultant destruction of residential housing on Selby St. in lower Westmount.

I figured this was just another example of the big, bad provincial government plowing through residential neighbourhoods without a care in the world for the dislocated citizens.

Though I never got involved in that

debate, during my years of study at McGill, I met a nice young lady who lived on Lincoln Ave., who took me over to the newly-constructed Alexis Nihon Plaza, which was an example of urban reconstruction (that lady has since become my wife).

By some fluke of history, my first solid job after I graduated from McGill was as a reporter for *The Westmount Examiner*. One of my first assignments was to cover meetings of the Urban Renewal Implementation Advisory Committee (URIAC), whose members included residents of Selby St., St. Antoine St. and other streets in lower Westmount, which was mandated to try to plan on the re-location of dispossessed property owners and residents and to determine what was to be done for the proposed reconstruction of southeast Westmount.

### How it all began

As time went on, I began to understand that the discussion and debate actually had started in 1960 with the issuance of the Bland Commission Report, which had been authorized by the city to determine what to do with a network of seedy houses and rooming establishments in lower Westmount, as development in the city of Montreal was slowly moving westward to the city limits.

The commission was working in an era in which “urban renewal” was the lingo of the day: Tear down the old and re-build with high-rise buildings that would accommodate more residents, offer them services and transportation, and improve the tax base for the municipalities.

By 1964, plans were under way for the construction of both Alexis Nihon Plaza and Westmount Square, replacing the row houses and rooming establishments with huge mixed-use projects.

Both opened in 1967, very shortly before my first visit.

At the same time, the city started demolishing row after row of houses on the south

side of Tupper St. and the north side of Dorchester St. The mayors of Montreal and Westmount colluded to plan, first, the Montreal Metro – whose final east-west stop at the time was at Alexis Nihon – and the reconstruction of Dorchester St. to become Dorchester *Boulevard*, with plans for extensive reconstruction and a treed centre strip to provide a touch of nature.

With the prospect of an elevated highway running through their neighbourhood and no way to move their Selby St. citizens to other houses in Westmount, the city finally agreed to build a series of low-rise residential buildings with rents based on income and priority given to former residents of Selby St. and the lower Westmount area. (These Hillside Ave. buildings are still standing and being used for similar purposes.)

### Back to the Bland Commission

In any event, the Bland Commission report proposed demolition not only of Selby St. and the other streets south of the Canadian Pacific right-of-way (Brooke Ave. and St. Antoine St.), but of the entire southeast sector of the city, including Stayner and Prospect streets, Clandeboye Ave. and Weredale Park road, Bruce and Columbia Aves. and Hallowell St., and of course Greene Ave. as the main feeder street in the area.

The east-west streets serving the area included St. Antoine St., Selby St., Dorchester St. (now Blvd.), Tupper St. and St. Catherine St.

North of St. Catherine St., parts of Elm and Wood Aves. were doomed with the launch of Alexis Nihon Plaza and Westmount Square.

It was not until Westmount filed notices of expropriation of the houses on Tupper and Dorchester streets, Atwater Ave. and Gladstone Ave., in 1966, and then the demolition of all the houses on the south side of Tupper and north side of Dorchester, that citizens began to realize what

was happening to the historic neighbourhoods of lower Westmount.

A citizens' committee was formed to appeal to Westmount to stop the continued expropriation and demolition, and architects and community activists started buying up the remaining houses and renovating them.

The word “gentrification” was catching the world by surprise, as enthusiasts began to realize that the term “urban renewal” did not have to mean destruction coupled with high-rise development. This was a movement that captured forward-thinking people everywhere, reasoning that the beauty and character of 19th- and 20th-century urban development did not have to be erased to welcome the 21st century.

### Demolition stops

The outrage in Westmount effectively stopped any further demolition, resulting in an award from the federal government as an example of citizen action (which is still, we were once told, hiding in the bowels of city hall), but the question then became, what to do with all the already cleared land?

The answers were not easy, with the Reddy Memorial Hospital and the Atwater Library bordering the north side of Tupper St., both still active and cherished institutions at the time (though the Reddy building has changed its orientation and

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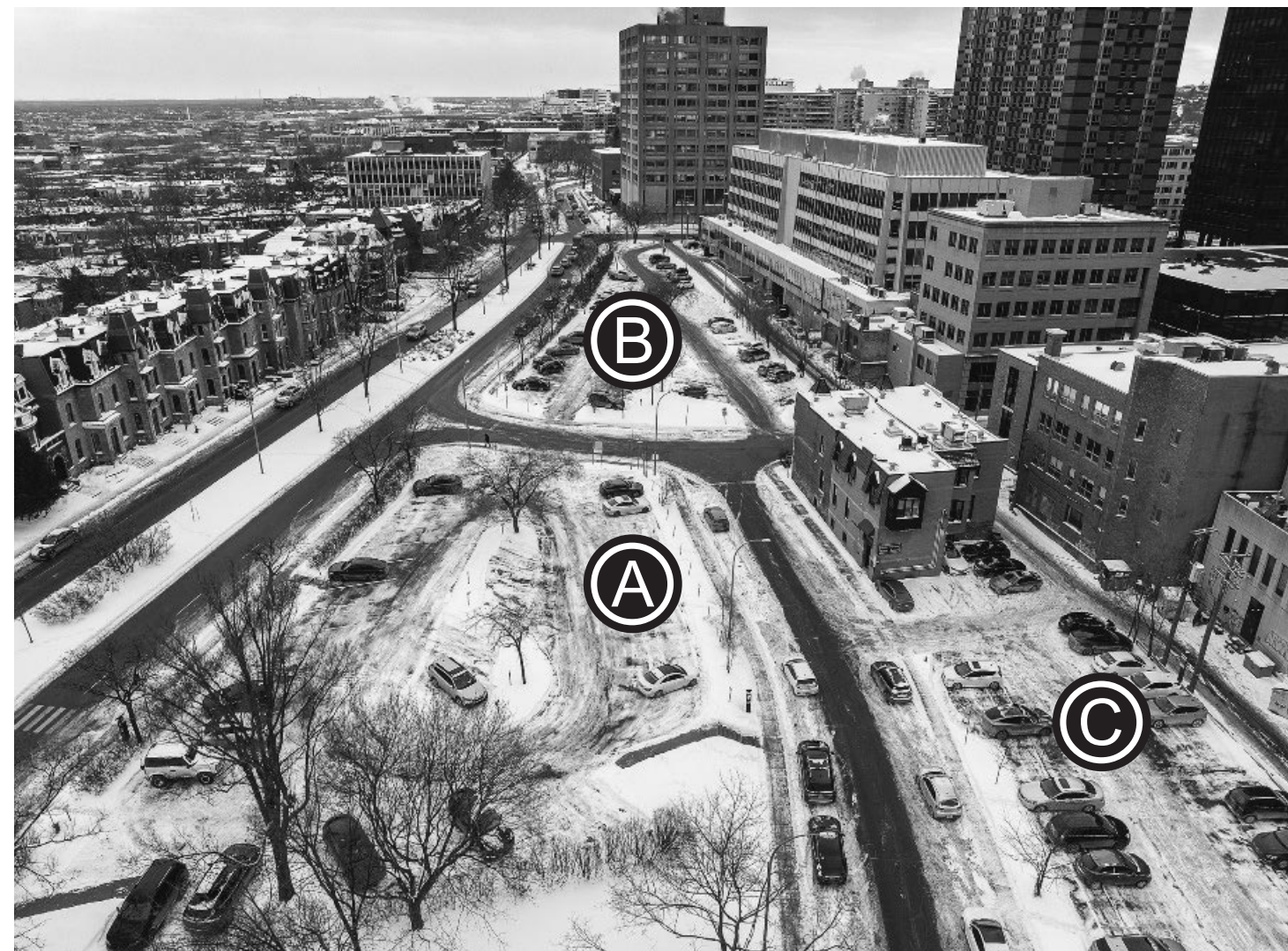
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Looking west at the city's two Tupper parking lots, a square-ish one ④ in the centre-left foreground, and the other – wedge-shaped ③ – to the west/top. Running vertically, Dorchester Blvd.'s two roadways are on the left and Tupper St. is the shorter street to the bottom-right. It ends at horizontal Gladstone Ave. The parking lot ③ in the lower-right corner of the photo, north/right of Tupper, is not owned by the city. The building in the centre background is the RCMP's Quebec headquarters at Dorchester and horizontal Greene.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

mission several times since then).

Development rose up around the empty lots, including a new Quebec headquarters for the RCMP, after which the old RCMP building on the north side of St. Catherine was torn down and eventually replaced by the luxury condominium building at 1 Wood Ave.; some low-rise storefronts on the south side of St. Catherine St. were replaced by a six-storey office building built by First Quebec Corp., and finally, a condominium tower arrived alongside Westmount Square, to the west of Wood Ave. at St. Catherine St and Greene.

Only one institution, the Royal Bank of Canada, built a relatively small five-storey commercial building fronting on Atwater Ave., 1100 Atwater. The rest of the land – some 16 acres – was turned into parking lots that exist to this day.

Joni Mitchell, eat your heart out.

#### How it stands

To all this, three huge skyscrapers have recently been added to the eastern edge Westmount, where once the Montreal Children's Hospital stood.

The conservationists of the 1970s appear to have been replaced by a new generation, but the questions still remain: Do we need more high-rise development? Can we blend any new development with the historical buildings in the area (Atwater Library, the old Royal Bank building at Greene and St. Catherine, perhaps the Reddy Memorial Hospital)? Should the city pre-zone the area; or wait for developers to negotiate design and then zone the area to comply? What effect will more development have on the single-family homes and triplexes between Dorchester Blvd. and St. Antoine St.?

There have been some efforts at conservation nearby, including most especially the takeover of the Mother House of Congregation Notre Dame by Dawson College, but some others, such as efforts to make a shopping centre out of the Old Post Office at Greene and de Maisonneuve, were less successful.

#### The past's mistake

Westmount made the mistake 60 years ago when great minds sought to re-create

the entire southeast sector of Westmount. Buildings were expropriated and torn down before the citizens yelled "Stop!" The city obliged, but the land has been left fallow ever since.

A faint discussion within city council took place in 2016, but apparently was dropped by the incoming city council as it was sworn in early the next year, and was not revived until 2023, when a zoning freeze was renewed for the area between Dorchester Blvd. and St. Catherine St.

Then, Lemay and Associates was hired to set out a consultation with citizens and come up with recommendations. After devising a plan, the company staged "work groups" of citizens to discuss it last November.

#### Current criticism mounts

The plan was roundly criticized in December by two of Westmount's former mayors, Peter Trent and Karin Marks, along with Julia Gersovitz, formerly chairman of the city's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), and a list of other prominent architects.

Then, in January, lifelong Westmouter and founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Phyllis Lambert, provided her strong critique of the plans in a page-two article in the *Montreal Gazette*.

So as things stand now we may be galloping backward – not far from square one.

Comments from last summer's consultations offered a plethora of ideas and indicate a mood rather than an architect's plans.

The critics do not necessarily agree with each other, but they sense the mood of Westmount's population and the unique character of the city, and they say the ideas do not blend well together: high-rises interspersed with lower buildings, "parks" bordering on one of the busiest traffic corners the city, only steps from the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG).

The plan might be a little tamer than the original Bland proposal, which suggested the entire sector be rezoned for commercial development – including the Stayner-Prospect area and even St. Antoine St. frontage in Westmount. One of the most interesting things about Westmount is that it has an intense, highly-educated population that wants to be included in every aspect of the process.

After all, they say, it is their city and they are proud of its unique character.



**Arthur Younanian**  
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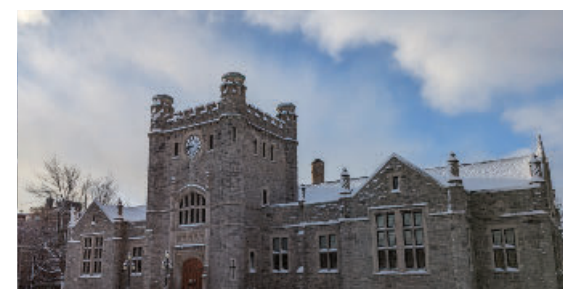
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# infoWESTMOUNT

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NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL  
MEETING

Monday, March 17



## Le 40<sup>e</sup> Carnaval d'hiver de Westmount

Le Carnaval d'hiver de Westmount revient du **6 au 9 février**. Au programme : dîner festif, soirée pyjama, théâtre et activités au parc King George. Places limitées pour certains événements. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)



## Westmount's 40<sup>th</sup> Winter Carnival

The Westmount Winter Carnival returns from **February 6 to 9**. Enjoy a festive dinner, pajama party, theater, and activities at King George Park. Limited spots for some events. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

## Sports et loisirs : inscription pour les activités du printemps

La période d'inscription pour les activités sportives et de loisirs pour le printemps 2025 commence le mardi **11 février** pour les résidents de Westmount et le mardi **25 février** pour les non-résidents. [westmount.org/inscriptionenligne](http://westmount.org/inscriptionenligne)

## Ville de Montréal : réhabilitation et reconstruction des chambres de vannes

**Dès le 5 février**, des travaux qui dureront environ 13 semaines auront lieu dans le secteur de la rue Sherbrooke et de l'avenue Wood. Les travaux se dérouleront du lundi au vendredi, de 7 h à 18 h. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

## Sports and Recreation: registration for spring activities

The registration period for the sports and recreation 2025 spring activities will begin Tuesday, **February 11** for Westmount residents and Tuesday, **February 25** for non-residents. [westmount.org/online-registration](http://westmount.org/online-registration)

## Ville de Montréal: réhabilitation et reconstruction of valve chambers

**Starting February 5**, work will take place in the area of Rue Sherbrooke and Avenue Wood, lasting approximately 13 weeks. Work will be carried out Monday to Friday, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

## Réduction de la consommation d'électricité en période de grand froid

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## Reducing electricity consumption during extreme cold

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## BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

### Cercle littéraire avec l'Institut Thomas More

**6 février, 14 h**, Salle Westmount. Participez à une discussion ouverte sur un court récit sélectionné. Deux animatrices de l'Institut Thomas More nous guideront à travers la nouvelle *The Lottery* de Shirley Jackson. [westlib.org](http://westlib.org)

### Danse de la Saint-Valentin avec le groupe Jump to it

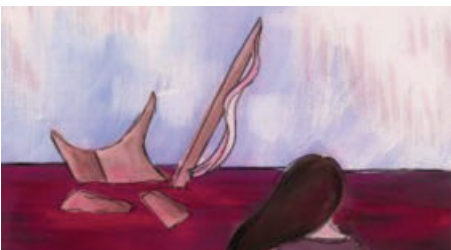
**12 février, 19 h 30**, Victoria Hall. Une soirée envoûtante vous attend au Victoria Hall cette Saint-Valentin! Le groupe Jump to it (une section de Ballroom Blitz Combo) rassemblera tout le monde sur la piste de danse avec un répertoire de mélodies romantiques allant de la pop au rock et au-delà. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

### Literature Circle with the Thomas More Institute

**February 6, 2 p.m.**, Westmount room. Join an open-ended discussion about a selected short story. Two facilitators from the Thomas More Institute will guide us through the short story *The Lottery* by Shirley Jackson. [westlib.org](http://westlib.org)

### Valentine's Dance with Jump to it band

**February 12, 7:30 p.m.**, Victoria Hall. An evening of enchantment awaits at Victoria Hall this Valentine's Day! The Jump to it band (a division of Ballroom Blitz Combo) is sure to get everyone and anyone on the dance floor with a medley of romantic tunes from pop to rock and beyond. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

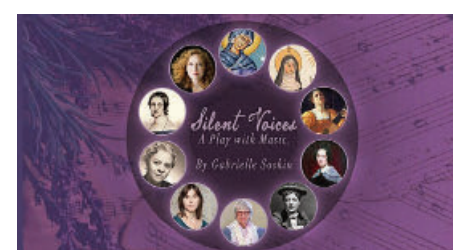


### McGill Classics Play : l'Argonautica d'Apollonios de Rhodes

**9 février, 14 h**, Victoria Hall. En anglais. Mise en scène et adaptation par Carys Foulds et Jericho O'Keefe. Dans cette relecture de l'épopée d'Apollonios sur la quête de la toison d'or par Jason, la perspective est inversée. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

### Lecture théâtrale — *Silent Voices: A Play with Music*

**22 février, 14 h**, Victoria Hall. En anglais. Sept actrices feront une lecture théâtralisée de la pièce, entrecoupée de musique, suivie d'une discussion avec la dramaturge Gabrielle Soskin. [westlib.org](http://westlib.org)



### McGill Classics Play: Apollonius of Rhodes's Argonautica

**February 9, 2 p.m.**, Victoria Hall. Directed and adapted by Carys Foulds and Jericho O'Keefe. In this retelling of Apollonius' epic about Jason's quest for the golden fleece, the perspective is flipped. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

### Film Club: Chevalier (2022)

**February 25, 2 p.m.**, Victoria Hall. Come share our passion for cinema! A drama directed by Canadian filmmaker Stephen Williams. Inspired by the incredible true story of Joseph Bologne, the Chevalier de Saint-Georges. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

## Au Contraire Film Festival explores mental health

### Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE



Barbara Silverberg and Sandra Dias.

The Au Contraire Film Festival gala was dedicated to breaking down stereotypes and challenged stigmatizing views toward mental illness. The 12th annual event, held at the Hilton Garden Inn Midtown, raised funds for UP House, Montreal – the renowned community supporting adults with long-term mental health conditions through an innovative “clubhouse” model.

Committee members were **Sandra Dias**, vp Paradis Urbain board; **Devon Reid**, senior director of Paradis Urbain; **Robert Moore**, **Joan Voogesang**, **Marc Mintzberg**, **Romi Swidler-Howard**, **Marlene Levenson**, **Roslyn Williams**, **Thea Apostolopoulos**, **Dahna Weber**, **Dianne Rogers**, **Zoe Cousineau**, **John Compuesto**, **Athena Le-Tran** and **Lisa Bellevue**.

This year’s theme, *Inside Out/Outside In*, explored the complex web of relationships that shape mental health, highlighting how individual well-being is deeply connected with social dynamics. The evening featured four films, each shedding light on unique perspectives related to

mental health.

*Antipsychotic*, directed by Matt McCorkle, offered an immersive journey into the filmmaker’s own mind. *Claude*, by Clément Guillaume, presented a poignant portrayal of a man with Alzheimer’s and his musical gifts. *Sound and Colour*, an award-winning work by Emma Foley, explored family struggles around suicide, and *Left Over Roast*, by Belgian director Xavier Diskeuve, delivered biting social commentary on homelessness.

Following the screenings an insightful Q&A session featured experts **Dr. Karl Looper**, psychiatrist-in-chief Jewish General Hospital; **Dr. Vincent Laliberté**, psychiatrist and PhD candidate at McGill University; and director **Clément Guillaume**.

The evening concluded with a dessert reception, adding a sweet note to an unforgettable night.

Special thanks were extended to diamond sponsors Marlene Levenson, the Eric and Sherri Kimmel Family Foundation, The Rossy Foundation and Lundbeck - Otsuka for their generous support.

Among the distinguished guests were **Barbara** and **Philip Silverberg**, UP House’s founders, **Stephanie Rossy**, **Marc** and **Jeanine Mintzberg**, **Sherri** ..... and **Eric Kimmel**, *continued on p. 22*



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Marcel Pinchevsky, Cybil Geracimo, Clément Guillaume, Philip Silverberg and Devon Reid.



Naomi Sharpe, Izak Rubin and Ann Birks.

**Social notes, cont'd from p. 21**

Arlene Devine, Paula Pedicelli, Bunny Berke and Larry Lusko, Gary and Dana Even, Marvin and Barbara Stutman, Naomi Sharpe, Izak Rubin, Ann Birks and Pnina & Marcel Pinchevsky. The evening was a testament to the power of art to inspire change, leaving a lasting impact on all who attended. (Check the website for the next exciting event on May 1: Acff.ca.)



Marc and Jeanine Mintzberg.



Marvin and Barbara Stutman.



Bunny Berke and Larry Lusko.

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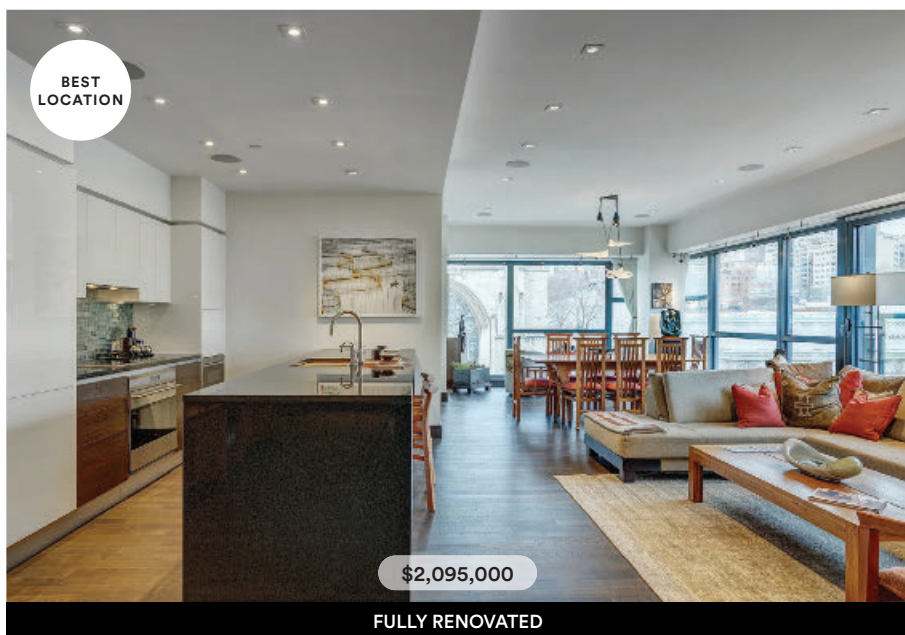
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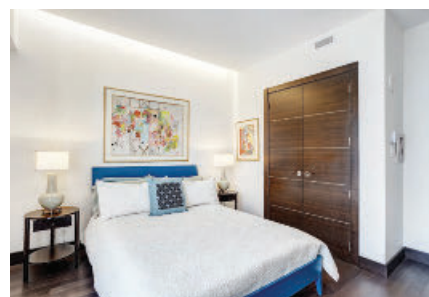
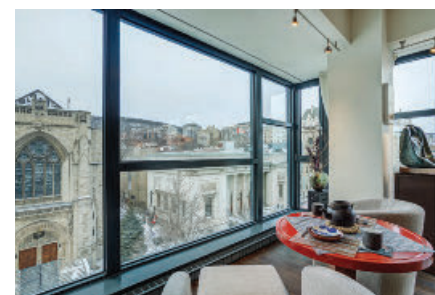
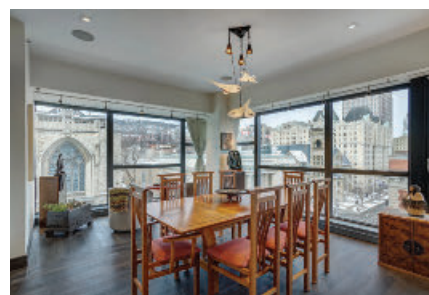
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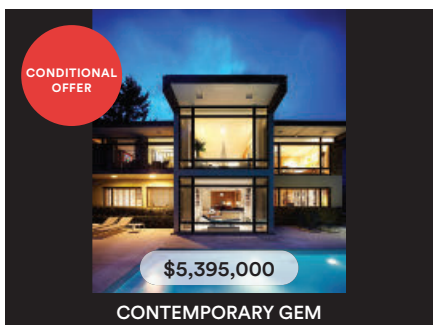
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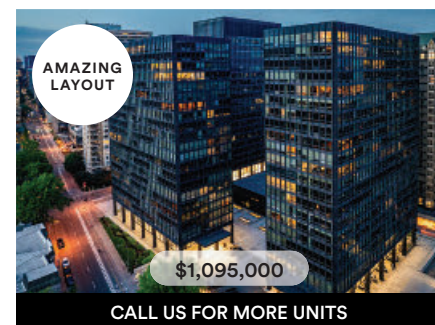
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## Galerie Alan Klinkhoff



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### Lieu

Galerie Alan Klinkhoff, Montréal, 1448 rue Sherbrooke Ouest

### Heures d'ouverture spéciales

Du mardi 11 février au vendredi 14 février, 9h à 17h

Samedi 15 février, 10h à 18h

Du lundi 17 février au vendredi 21 février, 9h à 17h

### Pour plus d'informations

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### Special Opening Hours

Tuesday, Feb 11 - Friday, Feb 14: 9:00 - 17:00

Saturday, Feb 15: 10:00 - 18:00

Monday, Feb 17 - Friday, Feb 21: 9:00 - 17:00

### For More Information

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