

Westmount to combine water/sewer work with Montreal

Prepare for disruptive work ahead on lower Greene Ave.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Few areas of Westmount appear likely to escape traffic and work disruptions this year, judging by ongoing additional plans approved by city council February 3.

The latest is a council agreement for the city to piggyback on a Montreal plan for replacement of water service connections and rehabilitation of a secondary sewer line under Greene Ave. between St. Antoine St. and St. Catherine.

"Whereas Westmount wishes to take advantage of Montreal's work... and has asked Montreal to include this in its work

contract... the council mandated Montreal to represent it in the contracting process," explained Councillor Kathleen Kez in moving the resolution. Montreal is to be the project manager.

Nevertheless, this will be a significant project that will be "disruptive for the neighbourhood," both she and Mayor Christina Smith explained. The project had been delayed several times.

Council deferred to March 17

The city council meeting originally scheduled for March 3 was deferred to Monday, March 17 because of what was described at the meeting of February 3 as the period of "spring" or "March" breaks.

Dodge: Municipal valuation inputs looking low, p. 16

Off to Everest base camp



Seen here at his Westmount home on February 19, 16-year-old Matthew Turner is travelling to Nepal this week to climb part way up Mount Everest to raise funds for teenage mental health issues. See story on p. 14.

PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY.

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City's snow clearance requires advance planning, has long history

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Remember when? It seemed so early back in August for the city council to be starting approval of a succession of contracts for the contracting of an array of snow trucks, operators, road salt and winter work (see story September 3, p. 1).

But fast forward to last week's record-setting snowfalls February 13-16, it may have been reassuring to anyone living on

or near Lansdowne Ave. just south of Sherbrooke, to see the line-ups of empty trucks waiting at traffic lights before proceeding to be filled while others, already full, were taking the reverse route back down to be dumped.

While it is still far too early to have an assessment of quantities picked up and dumped from Westmount this time, it was on February 20, 17 years ago, that an *Independent* continued on p. 13

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Residents complain parking hampers snow removal

City's transportation committee audits Summit Woods parking lot

BY JENNIFER BALL

Summit Woods' visitor parking hampers snow removal operations on Summit Circle, several residents say, something for which the city's Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) has now effectuated two parking audits to assess.

Resident Maryam Kamali Nezhad reached out to the TAC in March 2024 on behalf of the homeowners who reside at 1 to 15 Summit Circle - a whole year before 75 centimeters of snow fell in the city over a four-day period earlier this month. She wanted something done about Summit Woods' visitor parking, which she said reduces drivers' visibility and makes manoeuvres to get in and out of their properties particularly risky.

The nine-car visitor parking lot for Summit Woods is near where Summit Rd. goes down to Belvedere Rd. Beyond its spaces, visiting drivers need to park on the street, pay close attention to the signage and move their cars during snow removal operations when the city erects temporary orange no-parking signs.

The whole area is in the eastern section of Summit Circle, which is no longer a circle given the closing of most of the roadway between Summit Rd. and Oakland Ave. on a permanent basis nine years ago (see March 8, 2016, p. 1, September 13, 2016, p. 3), after a long test period starting in 2009.

Resident's issue: Snow clearing

Kamali Nezhad told the *Independent* on January 28 of this year that "these [visitor] parking spaces seriously hamper the snow-clearing services in winter, making manoeuvres to clear our streets even more difficult and sometimes impossible..."

"The snow accumulates, and our drive-

ways remain partially blocked, making our own access difficult."

Kamali Nezhad contends that some drivers ignore the temporary orange no-parking signs and, on occasion, the homeowners' driveways are totally blocked by visitors' cars (see also February 20, 2024, p. 3).

She raised their concerns with the city in February 2024 in a phone call to Gregory McBain, director of public safety at the city.

"He told me that I must address the problem with the [TAC]."

On March 5, 2024, Kamali Nezhad contacted the TAC with a letter signed by the homeowners of 1 to 15 Summit Circle, which asked for a review of parking in the cul-de-sac section of Summit Circle, between numbers 4 and 15.

Jonathan Auger, traffic and parking technician at the city, oversees the file.

On July 30, 2024, Kamali Nezhad received an email from Annique Dufour, who was then the citizen experience agent in the Communications department at the city - before becoming Mayor Christina Smith's assistant on October 7 - which Kamali Nezhad shared with the *Independent*.

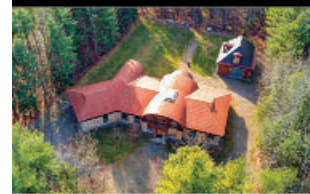
Dufour wrote: "...Your request was discussed at a meeting of the [TAC]. Although there is no definitive decision at this time, the city will continue to monitor the situation closely, gather more data and reassess the situation at the next TAC meeting..."

On November 5, 2024, she received another email from Dufour, "...I have received confirmation that a parking audit was carried out in the spring, but that the data was insufficient. A request to re-do the audit for the whole area will be presented at the November meet- ing..."

continued on p. 3

JOSEPH MAROVITCH

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Public Security: Snow clearance often requires cars to be towed, but where to?

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

“This was one of the most major storms for the amounts of snow accumulation that I’ve seen in 30 years,” said Public Security director Greg McBain in a weekly review of incidents. A couple of minor accidents were reported, but most of the Public Security reports duplicated others and boiled down to the dilemma of the need to remove illegally parked cars. But where to?

“People came together and helped each other,” he said. “In some cases, help digging out was found from people on Facebook.”

“Given the amounts of accumulating snow, spaces to move offending vehicles to were limited. This was very different from other snowstorms because of the accumulation of snow and the closing of schools during the blizzard.”

Public Security was “out there patrolling during the elements,” he said and helping

where they could by trying to reach people before the snow equipment arrived.

On the other hand, he added, “people were upset because they couldn’t move their cars in and out of snow banks.”

Abandoned?

One car reported to have been parked on Glen Rd. since February 16 was finally towed February 20. That car had been parked on the bike path and reported by Hydro Westmount to be broken down but was finally believed to have been abandoned.

On February 17, an accident between a Toyota Sienna and a Montreal Transit Company bus obstructed a salt truck and ended up sending the car into a snow bank on St. Catherine at Glen Rd.

On February 21, at Roslyn and Sherbrooke, a car parked illegally was found to have been reported stolen by police and a tow truck was called to remove it.

Summit Woods, cont'd from p. 2

“[Auger] mentioned that he was planning a telephone call with you later in the month.”

Kamali Nezhad said that call never came.

Both Kamali Nezhad’s statement and the emails from Dufour were written in French and translated using the DeepL translator.

Rutishisha, director of the Communications department at the city, said “A new parking audit by the TAC did take place late last fall. The city is currently analyzing the results of this audit. The results will be communicated to the requester following the [February 10 TAC meeting] and the TAC minutes will be deposited at an upcoming council meeting...”

“The city is aware of the residents’ concerns regarding visitor parking and snow removal on Summit Circle...”

“The city will be reviewing the results of the recently completed parking audit.”

The *Independent* reached out to Rutishisha on February 14 to obtain the takeaways from the completed parking audit that were to be released at the February 10 TAC meeting.

He said “The minutes of the TAC meeting have not yet been communicated to the applicant or tabled at council. Once the applicant receives the information, we will send [the *Independent*] a summary.”

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Pet page, p. 13

Art: Grassi/GG award, p. 15

Dodge on January real estate, p. 16

Social Notes:

Ben Weider/Chabad, p. 17

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Police Report

Thieves steal cars despite snowfall

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The record-breaking storms that dumped more than 70 centimeters of snow in the Montreal region in recent weeks appear to have put a damper on criminal activity in Westmount, although car theft was a notable exception.

On February 17, a Genesis GV70 luxury SUV was stolen out of a driveway outside a home near the corner of de Maisonneuve Blvd. and Lansdowne Ave.

"It was parked overnight in a driveway, and when the owner got up in the morning it was gone," said Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit.

The owner remembered last seeing the car around 6 pm the previous evening, but noted it was missing around 6:30 am the following morning.

According to Cst. Yigit, there weren't any obvious signs of forced entry into the vehicle. The investigators couldn't find any nearby security cameras that might otherwise have recorded the theft.

Towed car then stolen

In a second car-theft incident during the same period, a 2008 Honda Civic that was

towed to Westmount from a parking spot on Sherbrooke St. near the corner of Marlowe Ave. in NDG during a snow-removal operation was later reported as stolen.

"When the owner went to the location in Westmount where the city told him the car would be, he couldn't find it," said Yigit.

More accidents, nicer people

According to Yigit, there was an in-

crease in the number of road accident reports filed at Station 12 during the snow storm period, although he noted that fewer people appeared to be outside, and the few who were seemed to behave with more civility given the trying circumstances.

"The situation was understandably very difficult, with lots of snow and stalled vehicles, so it was something that required a lot more patience," he said.

Contract awarded for design of Mountain Ave.

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Council awarded a contract February 3 at a maximum of \$477,609 for professional services in engineering, mobility and design for Mountain Ave. This went to Ponton Guillot Inc. The contact was described by Mayor Christina Smith as "an important step," given the effect of summer storms last year on Mountain.

"While the design for Mountain was included in the 2025 capital works budget," Engineering director Elisa Gaetano told the *Independent* that "the actual execution is not planned for 2025 nor was the recon-

struction of Mountain included in this year's capital works budget."

Mountain, which runs from Sherbrooke to Cedar, was last re-constructed in 1973, she explained.

With a 200 mm (8-inch) concrete base and an 80 mm (3-inch) asphalt overlay, the section between Sherbrooke and Rosemount Crescent has been re-paved twice (in 1990 and 2013) and the section between Rosemount Crescent and Cedar once (in 1990).

The water main was rehabilitated, and the public portion of the water services were replaced, in 2024.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THANKS FOR THE DIG-OUT!

Driving out of my building's garage on February 14, a day after the previous day's winter storm, I ended up in a huge sidewalk snowbank, my front wheels spinning pathetically. I made a feeble attempt to shovel and free the embedded tires, without a hope of success.

A woman walking her dog, probably noticing my white hair and lack of strength, politely asked me for my shovel and proceeded to make headway. A man walking his dog stopped, took hold of the shovel and instructed me to do my part behind the wheel. It took a three-way effort and set me free.

I called out to thank them as they threw the shovel back into the car and told me to keep going. If they are reading this (as I hope they are), I want them to know how grateful I am to them for rescuing a 90-year-old damsel in distress!

By the way, as you would expect, their dogs were completely obedient and well behaved.

With deep appreciation to good neighbours.

RONA SHEFLER HEFT, KENSINGTON AVE.

TIME TO FLY THE MAPLE LEAF, MORE OFTEN

When we bought our house almost 40 years ago, it had a flag bracket over the balcony. We adopted a custom to fly the flag from July 1 till November 11, in honour of Canada in the first instance, and of our war dead in the second. We would take it down then because our winter is quite harsh for a flag.

But this year, when the USA elections took a strong veer to the right, we decided that we would keep it up for the next four



years, if you get my drift (snowdrift?).

So how happy we were that five former prime ministers encouraged Canadians to fly the flag more proudly. How often do five former PMs unanimously agree with us? And the late and missed Westmounter Brian Mulroney would surely have been the sixth.

We are very lucky to live in this wonderful country, but it's going to take a lot more than luck to preserve our special place. Let's all get busy, each in our own way with personal decisions, but more importantly collectively as proud Canadians.

PATRICK AND JANE MARTIN,
THE BOULEVARD

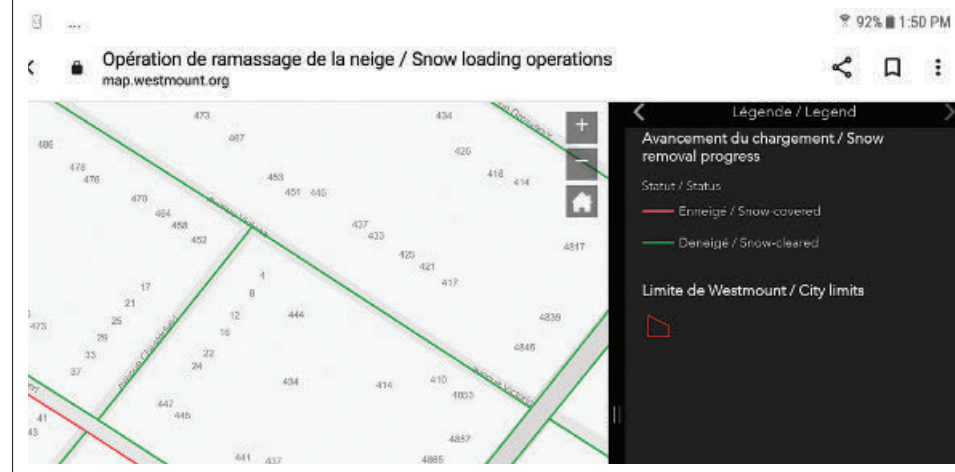
SOUTHEAST PLANNING, CITY-OWNED LAND CREATE ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME CHANCE FOR INDOOR POOL, GYM

Westmount excels at many things: parks, indoor skating rinks and a great library, but it lacks an indoor swimming pool. Many swimmers enjoy the outdoor pool in the summer but are not accommodated the other nine months of the year. The kids who swim with the very popular

CITY SNOW (1): DOES NOT COMPUTE

Photo of Victoria Ave. (right) on February 20 at 1:50 pm and a screen shot of the city's interactive snow removal map (below) at 1:55 pm [showing a green/"Snow-cleared" Victoria].

FREDERICK GIRVAN, VICTORIA AVE.



Westmount Dolphins in the summer have no local pool to swim in the rest of the year.

Yes, the Y has an indoor pool, but does not have the capacity to offer many aquatic programs due to its size. This community needs a proper indoor lane pool, with a dedicated shallow area for water aerobics, kids swimming lessons and a play space. Other features could be envisioned such as a water slide and a hot tub for soaking, especially in these cold months.

The city of Westmount also needs its own gym, as many of its programs are run in school gyms. It needs to offer residents more opportunities for sports such as basketball, volleyball and pickleball.

With future of the southeast sector under review, now is the time to address the matter of an indoor pool. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a facility with a pool, on land that the city owns on Dorchester Blvd [i.e. the Tupper parking lots]. The new building could be a satellite pavilion of the Sports and Rec department, and it could house an indoor pool complex, a gym and space for community groups such as Contactivity.

Perhaps the building could be developed with the private sector, with rental housing on the upper floors and potentially some floors reserved for independent seniors. This is a unique situation to take advantage of city-owned land and is unlikely to arise again.

What a great way to respond to some of the pressing needs of our community.

ROSALIND DAVIS, LORRAINE AVE.

Editor's questions: (1) I am curious what the indoor-pool lobby, including former city councillor Rosalind Davis above and Conor Samson February 4 (p. 7), thinks about the financial realism of their desire in light of recent city pronouncements about its near-term capital expenditures and borrowing. For instance, the city is currently planning to borrow \$76.3 million over the next three years (see westmount.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/PTI-2025-2026-2027_EN_V1.pdf p. 6) – and all this in a city frequently used to no borrowing. The same question goes for the new ideas (!) of a gym and hot tub. In all cases, don't forget running costs. And please account for the use of city land. Square footage used for city recreation cannot be sold to help blunt the impact of other expenditures.

(2) Questions for council with an impact on a possible indoor pool: How is municipal debt benchmarked in Quebec? What ratios are used to gauge if a city has a lot of debt? Or too much? What cities in the province are most indebted by these metrics? What is the mean, median and distribution among municipalities, or ones comparable to Westmount? At a certain amount of borrowing by one municipality, do interest rates rise? In terms of these metrics, where is Westmount forecast to be in each of the next three years? – DP.

SNOW (2): PRAISE FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

In early March 1971, dubbed the "Snow-storm of the Century," over 50 centimeters

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

of snow fell in a three-day period (McGill weather station data), of which 43 centimeters fell in one 24-hour period.

Roads and bridges were closed, bus and train services were suspended, there were widespread power outages, all schools, day-cares and many businesses were completely shuttered, the police resorted to Ski-dos to get around, the Habs' game was postponed and many of those brave enough to travel to work used snowshoes or skis (like my father) for their arduous trek. Sadly, 17 people died tragically during the storm.

Montreal was effectively completely paralysed for three days until things gradually returned to normal. A real calamity.

In February 2025, 74 centimeters accumulated in four days, with around 40 centimeters in one 24-hour period. Storm of the century? Possibly. Calamity? Not even comparable with 1971.

Our city kept functioning and essential services were maintained. Tragedies were avoided.

Our Public Works crews, the city's contractors, Public Security and the other emergency services deserve our enormous thanks for keeping the city functioning, the roads reasonably passable for all those not in a terrible rush and residents safe.

For those of us who experienced the 1971 storm, this one was a cakewalk. Canadian resilience, perseverance and neighbourly support at its finest. Not too bad, eh?

PETER F. HOFFMANN,
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

SNOW (3): UN GRAND MERCI TO PUBLIC WORKS, PUBLIC SAFETY

I would like to acknowledge the efforts (and results) of the snow removal members of the Public Works department for their tireless efforts to keep our hilly and flat roads safe and passable, as well as many of our sidewalks and laneways, a task that has been overwhelming during these most recent record snowfalls.

Yes, they are paid for these tasks, including for possible overtime, but working without adequate sleep or days off is very stressful, especially in operation of various heavy machinery in close quarters, day and night.

Kudos are also extended to our Public Safety officers who patrol our city, ensuring the efficient movement of traffic, including citizens and students in need, and particularly so, during this extraordinary period.

A *grand merci* to each of them.

HOWARD B. HOPPENHEIM,
THE BOULEVARD

SNOW (4): LUCIANO TO THE RESCUE!

This past Sunday [February 16] immediately after the large snowfall, I was parked on Victoria Ave. after deciding to go to my office and catch up on work.

A few hours later, when I went back to my car, I discovered that it was buried in snow from the snowplows. I had no idea how I was going to get out of this pickle with no shovel I my car.

Within a minute, a Westmount Public Works employee driving a small snowplow came by and I waved him down. He stopped his work and helped to clear the snow so I could get out.

His name is Luciano. *Grazie*, Luciano, from one *paesano* to another!

FRANK CANDIDO, PROSPECT ST.

SNOW (5): WHAT'S WRONG WITH WINDSOR AVE.?

Email sent by Michael Shevell to District 4 councillor Conrad Peart

On behalf of multiple residents of Windsor Ave., I am writing to you regarding the following matter.

Now [February 19], 72 hours since the last snowflakes of the storm, there has been absolutely no plowing or clearing of the sidewalks of Windsor Ave. and there is but a narrow path for one car on a two-way street. This has created a dangerous situation, leaving fire hydrants inaccessible and forcing pedestrians to walk on streets with often no easy way out should a car come by.

This contrasts with the situation on Chesterfield, just one block south of and parallel to us, where snow from sidewalks and street has not only been plowed and cleared but removed on both sides.

How can a street have both sides completely done and the immediately adjacent street not even have one or even any sidewalks plowed? The situation is even more mystifying when one considers that Claremont, a major north-south way, has, like our street, not even had its sidewalks plowed nor any of its road snow removed.

The question in our minds is: How is the sequence of snow clearing decided upon to best ensure accessibility, safety and fairness for the citizens of Westmount? And why are the citizens of Windsor second class to those of an entirely comparable street?

A response would be appreciated.

Thanks.

*

Michael Shevell writes to the Independent:
Councillor Peart replied to the email above quickly with a *pro forma* letter that

stated in very general terms that snow clearing and removal operations proceeded in a set, sequenced process that prioritized certain streets.

He did not respond to my specific query about why Chesterfield was so obviously prioritized over Windsor, despite these being adjacent, entirely residential streets running parallel west to east above Sherbrooke between Victoria and Claremont.

In response, I again raised my concerns that the absence of snow plowing on Windsor and other streets in favour of complete road snow removal on other streets created a dangerous situation for some citizens, precluding both residential home access and exit in case of an emergency (e.g. fire, medical, security) and by forcing pedestrians to walk on crowded streets together with road traffic.

I would like to note that late on the day after that I sent my email, one side of Windsor (but not the sidewalk) was cleared in an *ad hoc*, not previously announced snow removal operation. I suspect that Councillor Peart enabled this welcomed intervention.

MICHAEL SHEVELL, WINDSOR AVE.

SNOW (6): LOOK AGAIN AT LANSDOWNE

I have lived on Lansdowne Ave. for the past 18 years and for the majority of those years when snow fell, it was one of the first streets to be cleared, street and sidewalks from Sherbrooke St. down to St. Catherine St.

The reason was that it is a main route for the snow-filled dumptrucks to transport the snow down the Glen.

Over the past few years, it looks like the snow removal planners have changed their thinking and are waiting for a tragedy to happen, which almost did so yesterday [February 17].

These snow-filled trucks come barreling down Lansdowne like locomotives, non stop and as Lansdowne has not been cleared of snow on the streets or sidewalks cars going the opposite way are forced to reverse down de Maisonneuve and tuck into where the church is. This is a very bad idea as so many children and pedestrians are crossing at that intersection coming from the park.

Will it take a child getting run over for the city snow removal planners to realize that Lansdowne needs to be cleared first for the safety of its citizens? Please re-think your strategy and clear Lansdowne first, or send your snow-filled trucks that barrel down the streets like locomotives to another street!

ALLAN GOLDBERG, LANSDOWNE AVE.

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Snow.



Looking down Grosvenor from Sherbrooke on February 16.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT WICKS-POTTER



The Boulevard between Belvedere Rd. and Mount Pleasant on February 18, "down to two lanes" according to resident Patrick Martin.

PHOTO COURTESY OF P. MARTIN.

Snowbanks, plus



A car on Sherbrooke west of Kensington buried in a snowbank, as seen February 19.



A discarded Christmas tree caught up in the city's snow removal process, as seen February 18.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

EDITORIAL

Giving thanks, in February

Firstly, I would like to thank a city of Westmount team member for excellent attention to duty, and for decency and reasonableness, during the recent storms.

My wife's parking spot on our parking pad was temporarily empty when a snow plough operator came down the back alley near our place and deposited three feet of concrete-like corn snow there. It would have taken ages to dig it out by hand. No judgement! Landmarks disappeared last week all over the place.

Noticing the situation after the fact and a snow plough still operating nearby, I ran out and asked if the operator (a city employee, I think, but definitely a city-engaged person) if he could scoop out some of the deposited snow.

"I will see what I can do," he said.

Boy did he ever. He removed the snow perfectly, from a tight space using a huge machine (surgery with a chainsaw?), and my wife was able to drive in without issue on her return.

Thank you.

*

Westmount also has many wonderful

people operating in the private sector.

I have some ancient eyeglasses that I like and I recently asked my optician, Alain Assedo of Sherbrooke near Claremont, if he could tighten them a bit to keep them on my face. I am a client, but hardly well known to him. Without asking for proof of this, he tightened them up and likely gave them a few more years of usefulness.

Thank you.

*

David Estephan at the Esso on Grosvenor is another excellent local merchant and asset. We are so lucky to have a full-service garage that we can walk to (and from, after depositing our vehicles).

On a recent outing, my car started to shake at 100 km/hr. I asked David if I could come by for a check-up. "Your mags are likely frozen," he said. (To which I thought: "I have mags? They can freeze?") He continued: "Can you get the car inside to unfreeze them?" Maybe, I replied. "If not, come see me."

I asked the *Independent's* landlord, Barry Friedberg, if I could get my car inside the building's garage, last in at night, first out

in the morning so as not to disturb any tenants with actual spaces.

"No problem," our superintendent Nick Vriniotis replied for Barry. "I have a tenant away. Come any time." Problem solved.

Thank you, David, Barry and Nick, and additionally to David for the help installing a car battery charger last year.

*

Straying a bit from Westmount and local merchants, I would like to thank Home Depot in St. Henri for its excellent customer service.

I bought some chains during the recent postal strike to secure our outdoor newspaper distribution boxes. The first batch was too large to fit in the holes that the boxes came with. My mistake entirely, and the chains had been custom cut and so should not have been returnable.

They were still quite long and useable by someone, though, so I thought I would try. The employees at the return desk took them back. Kudos to a large organization, with many (necessary) rules, showing flexibility. I will tell that story many, many times and I hope that Home Depot ends up ahead on all aspects of the exchange.

David Price is the editor of the Independent.



VINTAGE
MUSTS

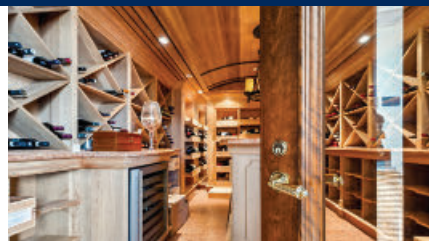
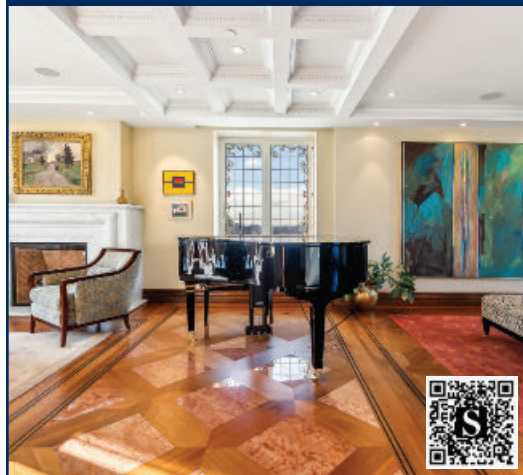
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MLS 17197578



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NBA alum, champion Anthony visits alma mater Selwyn House

On January 21, NBA champion Joel Anthony became one of the owners of the Montreal Alliance basketball team, which plays in the Canadian Elite Basketball League. He had been the team's general manager since its inception in 2021.

Six days later, the current Toronto resident visited Westmount's Selwyn House School, which he attended in 1994 to 1997 for grades 7 through 9. Anthony is the only former Selwyn student to play in the NBA.

From 2007 until 2017, Anthony played for the NBA's Boston Celtics, Detroit Pistons, San Antonio Spurs and Miami Heat, with whom he won championships in 2012 and 2013. – WI.



Middle and senior School basketball players get autographs after Joel Anthony's presentation.



Anthony embraces his former basketball coach, Marty Boyle.



Middle school students greet Anthony in the halls he once roamed as a student.



Anthony and his former coach, Pete Govan, speak together.
PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALLIANCE DE MONTRÉAL, WITH THANKS TO SELWYN HOUSE SCHOOL FOR CAPTION INFORMATION.

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9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

A pretty brown-and-white tabby, Annabelle has the most stunning water-green eyes in contrast with the markings on her little face. Her perfect white blousy ruff and short white booties are quite distinct as well.

Annabelle is presently at the Montreal SPCA cattery, which has many cats to present for re-homing at the moment. Annabelle is ready to go to a new family and she is available now for visits at the shelter.

As a very healthy four-year-old, Annabelle is up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. For more information on her, please go to the Montreal

Darling Annabelle



SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, refer to her information page by her identification number, 2000245821, then plan your visit to the cattery to meet with the adoption coordinators and discuss adoption when you visit Annabelle.

The SPCA is open every day, from Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, then Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm. It is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4. Please bring your carrier or plan to drop by its well-stocked onsite boutique, where you can browse through the selection of carriers and accessories to have so much of what you need after adoption.

Annabelle is waiting. It would be wonderful if she could come home with you.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

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*Westmount
A-dog-tions*

LYSANNE FOWLER

Jules had a good life with his loving owner for years but things have changed. He is now in need of a new family as his owner was transitioning to hospice care.

Jules is now in foster care for the volunteer rescue group Gerdy's Rescue &

Snow clearance, cont'd from p. 1

story described some of the snow removal challenges and changes that had occurred over the years (see story February 20, 2008, p. 1).

Public Works officials at that time described many changes that included increased traffic congestion, new provincial regulations limiting the number of working hours followed by mandatory rests, and the travel time to and from dump sites.

Jules needs a new family



Adoptions.

This stunning Chinese-crested powder puff is quite sweet and enjoys the company of adults and other dogs. Ten years ago, Jules was born and then raised in a puppy mill, where he was not socialized with humans until he was rescued at three years of age.

More recently, after his owner was placed in hospice care, he was temporarily rehomed for a short period, and now the rescue is moving forward to adoption as Jules is fostered while in the process of placement.

In this loving temporary family, Jules has shown great strength of character as he is enjoying the daily routine, during which he is with two other lovely dog companions. He plays with enthusiasm in the fenced backyard and enjoys walks on quiet streets.

Jules is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. If you would like more information on him and more beautiful photographs, please do not hesitate to scroll to the Gerdy's Rescues & Adoptions website at www.gerdysrescue.org, then fill out an application for him at: gerdysrescue.org/adoption-form/.

Jules will thrive in a caring, quiet home and it would be wonderful if you would reach out for him.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

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'Le jardin de Monsieur Kuroki' and 'Alexi trouve sa voix'

Renaud's two new 2025 books hit the shelves last month

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Two new books from prolific Westmount children's author Anne Renaud hit the shelves in bookstores last month as well as at the Westmount Public Library. Originally written in English, and translated by Renaud herself, both books target age groups over five and the growing French-immersion market.

Lavishly illustrated in keeping with the theme, each has an underlying story and meaning to life in Renaud's usual style, with either a historical basis or, as with both these new offerings, a moral message.

One book is *Le jardin de Monsieur*



Kuroki (Mr. Kuroki's Garden). The other is *Alexi trouve sa voix (How Abigail Found Her Voice)*.

To Japan

In *Mr. Karoki's Garden*, Renaud's inspiration came from an article that she had read about how an older Japanese couple coped when Mrs. Karoki lost her sight and could no longer see the beautiful garden, and how Mr. Karoki stepped up and planted its "fields" with highly scented flowers.

"The more research I did," Renaud said, "the more I wanted to share this beautiful act of love and devotion with young readers. The story also touches on the topic of mental health in a gentle way, and I wanted to share that with young readers, as well."

Adds Renaud: "I managed to get a message to Mr. and Mrs. Kuroki to let them know I wanted to write their story and ask for their approval. It was a bit complicated since I didn't have their contact information – just the name of the small town where they live" – Shintomi, in southern Japan.

Reached out to Shintomi city hall

"When I worked at Westmount city hall [Renaud was the mayor's executive assistant], I would sometimes receive emails from people trying to connect with former or current residents of Westmount. That gave me an idea."

She reached out to Shintomi city hall, explaining that she was trying to connect with Mr. and Mrs. Kuroki to share their story with young readers. "Thankfully, I got a response, and a city employee kindly acted as a liaison between the Kurokis and me."

While the language barrier complicated things, "by running our emails through translation software, we were able to communicate. In fact, I'm sending two copies of the book to Japan this week: one for Mr. and Mrs. Kuroki and one for the Shintomi town library."

Alexi trouve sa voix

"In the second book – about Alexi's journey – I wanted to explore the idea that having a 'voice' isn't just about singing or speaking – it can be expressed through writing, painting, music, movement or any other form of self-expression."

Continued Renaud, "Alexi's journey reflects the struggle many children face when they feel unheard or out of place, but also the joy that comes from embracing their unique talents instead of fitting into traditional expectations."

The heroine finds her artistic voice

through song-writing, "showing that creativity can flourish in unexpected ways. Through this story, I hope to encourage young readers to celebrate their individuality and recognize that self-expression isn't about perfection – it's about passion, persistence, and the joy of sharing one's

perspective with the world."

The English rights to this story have been sold to Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Renaud said, and *How Abigail Found Her Voice* "should be published sometime in late 2025 or early 2026."

Turner off to Mount Everest to support mental health

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A 16-year-old Westmounter will be setting off from Montreal to Nepal on Thursday, February 27.

His mission: to climb part-way up Mount Everest to a base camp in order to raise money for a teenage mental health initiative supported by the Douglas Foundation.

Matthew Turner, who attends Lower Canada College, says he launched Step Into Light (www.stepintolight.ca) as an initiative to support the mental health of teens after a good friend lost a brother to suicide.

Funds raised by Step Into Light are being earmarked for Treatment Interrupts Depression Early (TIDE), a project sponsored by the Douglas Foundation.

Step Into Light hopes to shed light on the realities facing youth who are coping with mental illness "so that no one else ever has to face the kind of loss and devastation that is caused by suicide," Matthew said in an interview with the *Independent* last week.

With an estimated one in five young Canadians suffering from mental health issues, he believes it is time to break the stigma by fostering open and honest conversations on the challenges that face individuals and families who are impacted.

'No one should suffer alone'

"I believe that no one should ever have to suffer alone," he said. "That is why I am working to build a network, collaborating and partnering with organizations that specialize in youth mental health and wellness."

"I am driven by the belief that everyone deserves access to proper health resources and a supportive network that no longer stigmatizes mental health, but rather offers a compassionate, open and caring space for youth to emerge healthier and happier

in building their futures."

With a fundraising campaign taking place through the online crowdfunding platform GoFundMe, Turner had managed to raise more than \$31,000 as of late last week.

He said all of the proceeds are going to the cause, with the trip's expenses being paid out of his own pocket from savings he accumulated from a social media consultancy business he operates.

"I've been saving up money for this trip because going on an expedition like this has been my dream for as long as I can remember," he said.

While climbing all or part of Mount Everest has become so much more common that it is raising environmental issues because of the amounts of waste trekkers are leaving, he said he was careful to choose an expedition facilitator that promised not to leave any waste behind.

See photo on p. 1.

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Internationally known Grassi gets national recognition



Art

VERONICA REDGRAVE

hint to computer programming, creating a contemporary connection between familial history and today's coded world.

Present and past are realigned: analog technologies meet curated recall. Memories have undergone a sea change and references to lineage are a subtle hide-and-seek, adding depth once one learns about



Sometimes you meet someone whom you wish you had met years before.

My regret is not romantic but artistic. I would have loved to have covered Westmount artist Antoinetta Grassi's work during the 10 years when I wrote art reviews for *Vie des Arts*. She deserves national coverage.

Today, however, she enjoys international recognition. And recently she was awarded the 2024 Governor General Fellowship (Fine Arts).

Before studying art at Concordia, Grassi's early career in fashion influenced her work. While suggesting digital art, her fine lines evoke the lines of a loom, a relevant resonance as her mother and aunt both worked in the textile industry.

To complete the historical circle, on the back of some works Grassi has embroidered and the textured threads' haphazard sewn shapes contrast with the minimalism on the other side. Those meticulously painted lines are created with very fine brushes. Colours are interdependent, their subtle harmony a chromatic conversation.

Repetitive parallel lines are the core of Grassi's art. Subject matter is a complete unknown, although there is a linked-in

the back story.

Her geometric abstract paintings have a classical equilibrium, offering an elegant narrative both illusive and allusive.

While it is often suggested that art is best appreciated with a naked eye – that is, with no explanation – I found that learning about what influenced Grassi's approach greatly enhanced my appreciation of her much-lauded work.

A harmonious respite from the tsunami of daily conversational noise.

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Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

January sales: Market on hold

new valuation roll covering the years 2026 to 2028 is published this fall.

As our graph shows, 2024 was a rather rocky year with a bulge in mid-summer followed by a serious slide in the fall months. It turns out agents posted 140 sales during the year, way up from 114 in 2023 and 118 in 2022, but otherwise slightly below the 148.8 average volume of the past 15 years.

The average mark-up over valuation in the first year of the 2023 valuation roll was 1.7 percent, then 7.7 percent in 2024, but these figures are far lower than the average mark-ups for the previous valuation roll (2020-22) when they came in at 17 percent, 32.8 percent and 36.3 percent respectively.

Condos

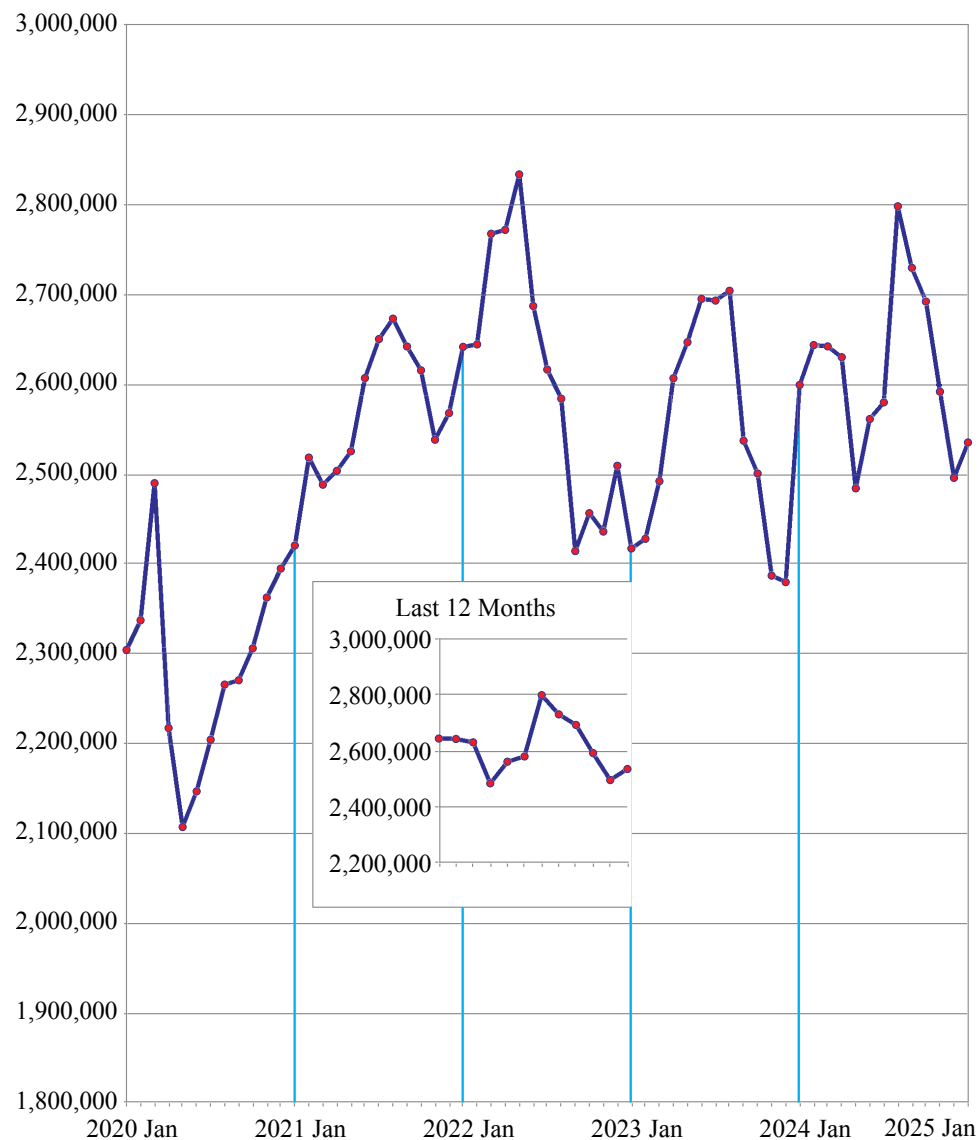
Four condominiums – including one former duplex and three apartments – all cleared the \$1-million mark in January; the lowest was the duplex-condo that went for \$1,130,000, while the highest price was an upper-floor apartment at 1 Wood Ave. that sold below valuation for \$1,925,000. Higher prices went for two high-rise apartments in Westmount Square, co-op apartments that sold for \$2,250,000 and \$3,546,000.

For 2024, the adjusted average for condominiums climbed to \$1,350,345, up 2.7 percent from 2023, in a price range from \$420,000 to \$4,600,000. The highest mark-up among condominiums last year was 44.4 percent, the biggest mark-down was 26 percent, with an average for the year of 6.6 percent.

As we move into 2025, buyers are looking at 109 available houses of which 25 are asking less than \$2 million and another 35 asking between \$2 and \$3 million. The lowest-priced house is asking \$799,000 but it is lonely; only one other house is asking less than \$1 million, at \$999,000.

Nineteen houses were listed for rent by agents in mid-February, the lowest number since the pandemic. Westmount tallied 48 house rentals at the end of the year, the

Average adjusted price for 'typical' Westmount house, by month, January 2020 to January 2025, based on accepted offer dates



Municipal 2026 valuation roll inputs (so far): only +1.7%, +7.7%

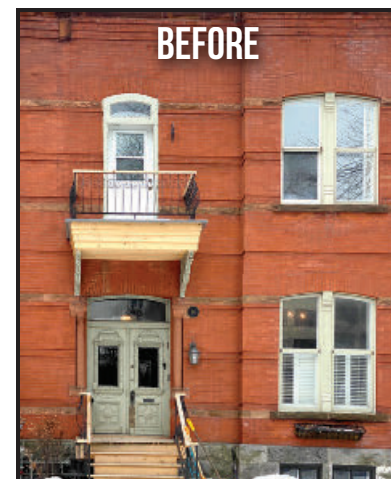
were above \$2 million and only one sold above the \$3-million mark; this is only the second month in which all the sales have been north of \$2 million, after seven sales cleared that mark in October 2022.

Three of the four in January sold for more than their municipal valuation, none higher than a 13.8-percent mark-up, and the fourth with an 11.9-percent mark-down, so the average of the four was only 6.0 percent, again indicating that we can expect little increase in tax values when the

highest number since we began keeping records in 2016, as was the number of rentals (eight) over \$10,000.

Only two houses sold in adjacent-West-

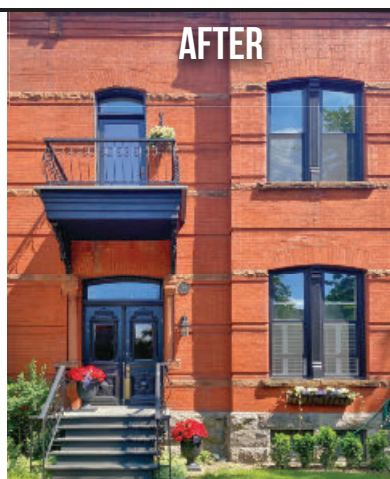
mount areas in January, one on McDougall Ave. near The Boulevard for \$1,535,000, the other on Vendôme Ave. above NDG Ave., for \$1,215,000.



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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE



Rabbi Abraham Cohen, Rosa Cohen, Joanne and Jon Gurman.

The philanthropy of Joanne and Jon Gurman was recently recognized by friends and family from around the world at Feast of the Nations.

The annual gala, held at the Ben Weider Educational Center/Chabad Seminary of Canada, helped the organization exceed its fundraising goal. Monies raised directly support refugees and underprivileged women to help them continue their education in a safe communal environment in Montreal.

“The Jewish community of Montreal is engrained in both our hearts,” said Jon Gurman. “We can see first hand how the Ben Weider Educational Center lifts up young women both here and in Israel and we are proud to support them.”

Added Joanne: “The Chabad Seminary of Canada and the Chaya Mushka Seminary prioritize not just any education, but the education of displaced young women whose education has been interrupted. When the war broke out in Ukraine, these continued on p. 18



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Social notes, cont'd from p. 17

organizations stepped up when few would. And since October 7, they have increased their efforts to help girls in Ukraine and Israel. They've not only changed lives but saved lives."

Messages of praise were received from celebrities such as US media personality **Judge Jeanine Pirro** and NFL legend **Rob Gronkowski**, who played tight-end for the New England Patriots and Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Gala co-chairs were **Darlene Ambar, Alicia and Brian Bailey, Karen and Albert Cohen, Ariella and Walter Gottleib, Senator Leo Housakos** and his wife **Demi**, Hampstead mayor **Jeremy Levi** and his wife **Mandy**, **Stephanie and Neil Oberman** and **Sandy and Allan Rubin**.

The campaign committee members were **Aldo Bensadoun, Jack Dym, Barry Fagen, Barry Kotler, Zohar Krivorot, Simon Margel, Jeff Segel, Stephen Shiller, Richard Stern** and **Beryl Wajzman**.

Guests enjoyed entertainment by world-renowned recording artist **Gad Elbaz** while enjoying delicious food from **Le Marguerite**.

Silence reigned as **Hana Lyubarskaya** spoke. Born and raised in Dnipro, Ukraine, she was forced to flee in March 2022. An alumna of the Chaya Mushka Seminary, Hana is a testament the success of Operation Miriam. Following the completion of her studies at the seminary, Hana worked in Canada as a kindergarten teacher for six months and will soon rejoin her family in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Established in 1989, the Ben Weider Educational Center/Chabad Seminary of Canada, under the auspices of the worldwide Chabad movement and the Quebec CEGEP system, is dedicated to the post-secondary education of young Jewish women from the province and beyond. The collegial certificates bestowed are recognized across Canada, the United States and Israel.

Please send information on your spring 2025 event to veronica@redgravepr.com.



Jack Dym, Gad and Sandra Bitton and Maureen Dym.



David Golbert, Saul Frankiel, Peter Varadi, Rob Sigal, Jon Gurman, Albert Cohen and Bernie Shuster.



Mandy and Jeremy Levi, with Neil Oberman (standing).



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Galerie Alan Klinkhoff

Ethel Seath (1879-1963)

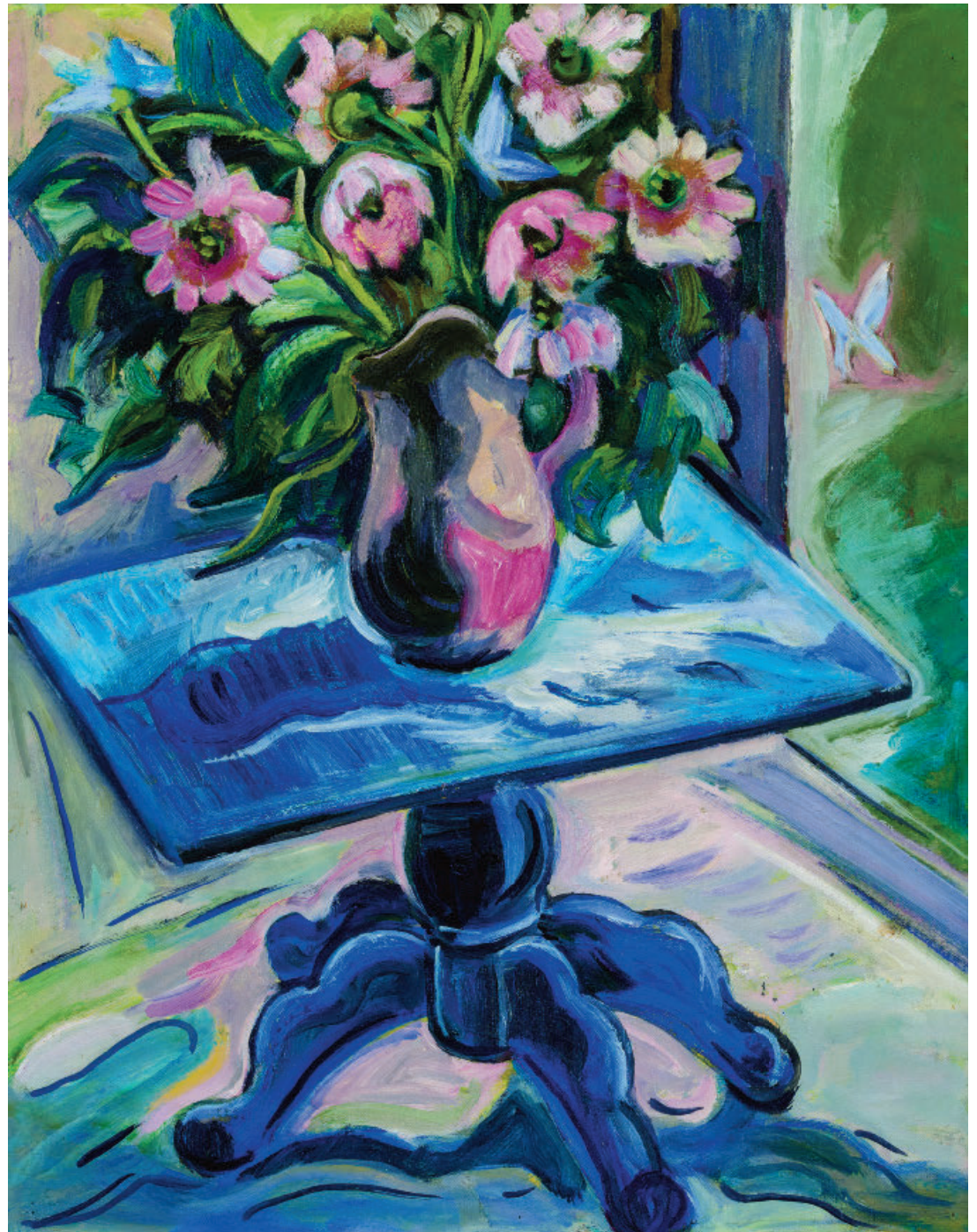
The Blue Table, 1935 (circa)

Oil on board

20 x 15 3/4 in (50.8 x 40 cm)

For over sixty years, Ethel Seath was a familiar figure in the Montreal art scene. Selfless, earnest, and sincere, she was a pioneer among the artistic women of her generation. She implicitly challenged the conventions of Victorian propriety with a soft-spoken but resilient independence. At the Art Association of Montreal, she had studied under William Brymner, Edmond Dyonnet and Maurice Cullen, later reflecting their example of a native and forward-looking art. Following a career of two decades as a commercial illustrator, she found her métier as an inspired art teacher at The Study School. As a founding member of the Beaver Hill Group and of the Canadian Group of Painters, Ethel Seath contributed to exhibitions at home and abroad.

Scan QR code for additional images and details



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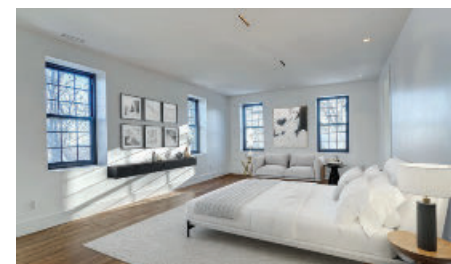
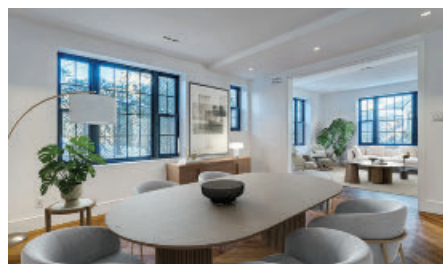
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Marie Sicotte
Real Estate Broker

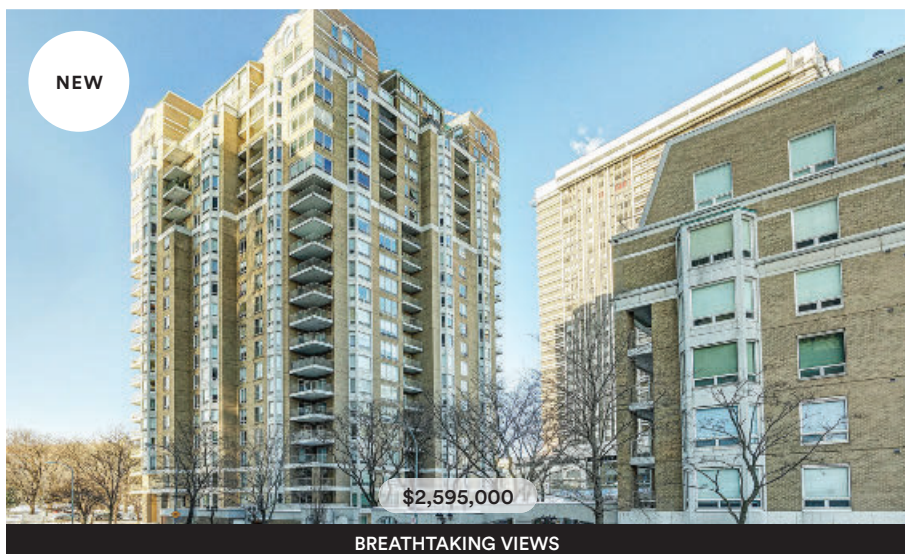
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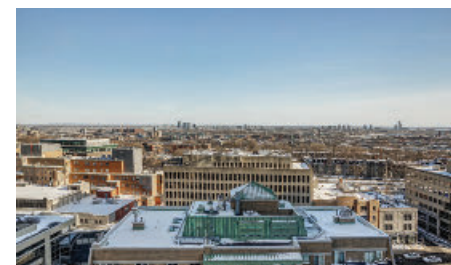
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