

Most snow since record began, in 1941 Snow clean-up from record storm costs city \$1.6M

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The record-breaking snowfall February 13-17 cost Westmount \$1.6 million to clean up, according to a report presented at the start of the city council meeting March 17 by Councillor Anitra Bostock, commissioner of public works.

That is “what happens when the equivalent of three quarters of an entire season of snow falls in just three days,” she said.

In all, almost 127,000 cubic meters of snow fell between February 14 and 26. This was described as the equivalent of 43 Olympic-size swimming pools and compared with a total of 107,000 cubic meters (up to that point) during this winter of 2024-2025.

The storm was “unprecedented, with 74

cm of snow falling in just a few days, something our city hasn't seen since records began in 1941,” she explained. “The city has 50 km of roads and 100 km of sidewalks, paths, and public stairs that all require clearing.”

Figures presented to March 18

Bostock presented figures and answers that had been requested by the *Independent* March 3 when the city was in the throes of compiling the information for presentation to city council at its following session.

The clean-up involved crews working 14 days in the coordination of 80 Public Works employees and external contractors, an equivalent of almost 3½ snow “operations.” They were also working in combination *continued on p. 6*

Westmount Battery, 2719 Cadet Corps march in Montreal's 200th St. Patrick's Parade



Major Gilles Aubé of the Westmount Battery volunteer group, left, and city councillor Jeff Shamie respond to the applause of the crowd on March 16 during Montreal's St. Patrick's Parade on de Maisonneuve Blvd. downtown. One of the city's two cannon and several members of the 2719 Cadet Corps are visible on the float behind them. See p. 12 for story. PHOTO COURTESY OF PATRICK MARTIN.

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Challenging reduced parking, uphill bike path

Meeting questioners ask city to delay Claremont re-do until next year

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

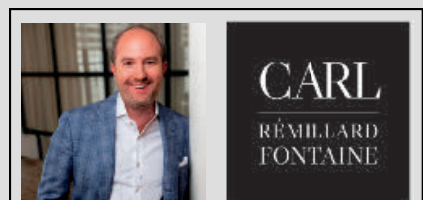
Citing the many heavy construction trucks involved in the current apartment project at 500 Claremont, several residents asked city council at its first meeting of 2025, March 17, to postpone for a year Westmount's start in May of major road and sewer reconstruction work on the long stretch of the street between Sherbrooke

and Marianopolis.

The issue consumed much of an extended question period that also included requests to “re-think” creation of a proposed northbound bike path on the steep hill and bus route that would reduce on-street parking by some 49 parking spaces and move them onto side streets.

“That's 25 percent more than the Metro *continued on p. 16*

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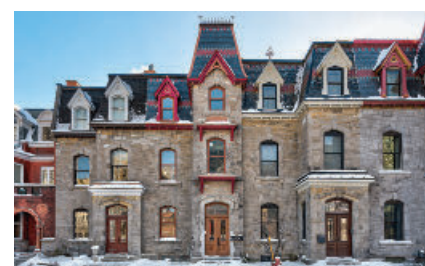
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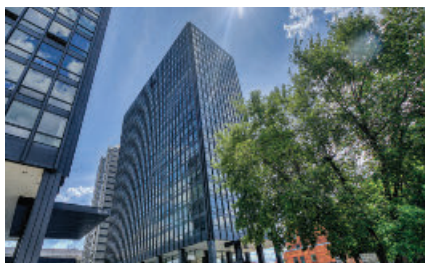
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Council approves 9% bonus increase for assistant PW director Public Works director Talarico appointed advisor to re-organize municipal garage



Three garage doors opening from a municipal building onto the city's Corporation Yard at the foot of Bethune St., as seen March 22.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

On the heels of the record-breaking snowfall and clean-up, city council appointed longtime Public Works director Robert Talarico to a newly created position within the department to reorganize its municipal garage section.

The appointment was made at the city council meeting March 17 as a new business agenda item when the new position was created as “advisor – operational efficiency” within the department “allowing Talarico to dedicate himself entirely to the necessary re-organization of the municipal garage as well as other mandates within the department.”

Public Works has by far the highest operating budget of the city's departments,

almost \$12 million excluding remuneration – more than half the city's total departmental expenditures of \$20.5 million. Its operations include snow removal, parks and sustainability, horticulture and arboriculture, street and building maintenance and the water and sewer network.

As part of the same council resolution, a 9-percent performance bonus increase was approved for the Public Works assistant director Titouan Perriollat “for an indeterminate period.”

The resolution was read by Councillor Jeff Shamie, who chairs the city's finance and administration committee and seconded by Councillor Anitra Bostock as commissioner of public works.

Important step

“This is an important step in ensuring that we work to improve and provide the best services available,” Mayor Christina Smith said.

Talarico was appointed Public Works director in 2017 after working with the city six years and serving as fleet superintendent and interim director (see story and photo July 11, 2017, p. 4 and December 12, p. 9.)

Letters to the Editor, p. 4

Police Report, p. 7

Pet page, p. 10

Social Notes:
St. Mary's Hospital, p. 17

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**OMITTED PARAGRAPH
IMPORTANT TO MOUNTAINSIDE
COLLABORATION, RESOLUTION**

A statement that I had authored on behalf of the owner and development team [of the former Mountainside United property on The Boulevard between Roslyn and Lansdowne] was published in the March 18 edition of the *Independent* (p. SL-23). It was written subsequent to the inquiry about the current status of the re-zoning application that we had made to revive and populate the former church, which is still vacant.

The statement was printed verbatim, but the concluding paragraph was not reproduced, and I add it here:

“Let’s all hope that this new approach will end the current stalemate and pave the way to welcome a few, new, happy Westmount families. Moreover, so as to escalate reaching this desired result, moving forward, the community will be kept updated on the progress of this file to avoid the delays that have plagued the process so far. Thank you for your interest.”

The above paragraph of the statement was significant in setting the stage/opportunity for a positive scenario, and as a lead-in and alert to the powers-that-be of our intention to advise the public through allowing publication of future proposals, representations *et cetera* in order to eliminate again six months of delays for anonymous and unjustified, arbitrarily determined

negative decisions; instead of meeting in collaboration upon win-win solutions.

Another comment, more personal but significant in the file, as it is imperative that the owner, Daniel Revah be represented at the highest and most professional level in expertise. Namely, that it is inappropriate in Jennifer Ball’s article regarding the project, that my professional role should be reduced to “hired to facilitate a June 2024 public presentation” and also “who liaises with the media on Revah’s behalf.”

Not described is my role as a consultant architect and urban planner, VP of Revah’s Corev Development, assigned to masterminding the design and its (re-)presentations to Westmount and modifications if and as required; as well as the public outreach for the past year.

Far from a PR agency, but an architect/urbanist /developer who for the past year has led the master planning of this project through its designs, its negotiations with the city professionals, *et cetera* – having moved the file away from the direction of a legal battle about which the city had been alerted over a year ago. We have used up a year to achieve a proposed 16-percent “benefit” – if it can be called as such – all efforts using Revah’s resources and with the delays in time, abusing his patience.

Most importantly, we still do not know why we were refused, again, in spite of apparent support throughout the process and from the public. Why have the anonymous powers blocked what would be an amicable

resolution after six long years?

THOMAS ROBERT REINER – ARCHITECT &
URBAN PLANNER

Editor’s reply: (1) When we are provided with a statement from a newsmaker, we do not undertake to publish it in its entirety. (2) The story was about the most primary aspect of the proposed development – i.e. the number of permitted residences and the fact that the city had only accepted to permit one, not six as per the developer’s June 2024 request. The story was NOT about the proposed development’s building type or style or layout or aesthetics or other details (e.g. square footage, parking, environmental enhancements). For this reason, the person or firm that drew up those plans was not identified *per se*. Put another way, if a dedicated third-party PR-only firm had been handling the press, we would have mentioned it and not you. Because the city was not commenting substantively and only the developer would talk much to us, we had to identify *who* was speaking for the developer and *why*, hence the phrasing: “... Thomas Robert Reiner, whom [developer] Revah hired to facilitate a June 2024 public presentation of the development plan, and who liaises with the media on Revah’s behalf..” Nevertheless, we did identify, correctly, your profession (“Architect and urbanist”) right before those words, which was also the first time that you were mentioned in the story. If the reader inferred – correctly – that you were also the creator of the development plan, I am happy and I consider that a normal inference. If some very literal readers were left in the dark on the specific point of who authored the development plan, I remain un-heartbroken. Articles containing news (i.e. new occurrences) for the edification of general readers are not encyclopedia entries. -DP.

**SUMMIT WOOD – GONE
TO THE DOGS?**

We are extremely disappointed and frustrated with the situation at Summit Woods, particularly regarding the behaviour of some dog owners and the impact on the environment and other visitors. Here are a few points to consider.

I have recently visited the Woods and was saddened and angered by the state of the grounds, with dog feces strewn on paths and field. The promise to be vigilant and pick up the feces by these dog owners was certainly not done.

1. Environmental impact: Dog feces left unpicked up can harm the local ecosystem, especially in a bird refuge.
2. Public safety and comfort: Dogs running loose can indeed be intimidating or dangerous, especially for children,

the elderly and those who may be afraid of dogs.

3. Responsible dog ownership: Responsible dog ownership includes picking up after your pets, keeping them on a leash where required and ensuring they do not disturb others. Unfortunately, not all dog owners adhere to these guidelines, which can lead to conflicts and negative experiences for others.
4. Enforcement rules: It seems that security is attempting to enforce rules, but some individuals are not cooperating.
5. Community and communication: Perhaps there could be more community outreach or clearer communication about the rules and the importance of respecting the environment and other visitors. Signage, community meetings or even educational campaigns might help. This would be ideal, but have sorrowfully failed.
6. Reporting issues: the problem persists, it might be helpful to report ongoing issues to local authorities. They may need to implement stricter enforcement or additional measures to ensure the area remains enjoyable and safe for everyone.

Dog owners, police your group.

If you feel strongly about this issue, we must consider reaching out to local community groups or authorities to advocate for better enforcement or additional measures to address the problem. It seemed that only the mayor and M. D’Amico [city councillor for the area] care about the community of Westmount citizens, on both sides of the safety and legacy issue of Summit Woods.

The city council has been extremely remiss in STRONGLY protecting the Woods for all, as a legacy. They have succumbed to pressure and showed no backbone in not acting firmly to protect this legacy from those dog owners who are totally irresponsible. Dog owners do not police themselves. We must protect this heritage for all, from the few irresponsible dog owners.

JOSEPH YERMUS, OAKLAND AVE.

**CONSTRUCTION SITE DIRTY,
DANGEROUS**

I was interested to read the article in the *Westmount Independent* of March 11, p. 8.

The Albert Square building site is one of the messiest I have ever seen – both within the site itself but also outside, with debris on the pavement and uncontained cement dust blowing around.

I broke my finger and am left with a permanent deformity after tripping over a small pile of hardened concrete on the sidewalk while walking to work in the summer of 2023. I complained about it at the time but received no response from city

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

officials and the concrete remained there for many more months.

What is the role of the city inspectors? What penalties are there? How is this acceptable?

CAROLYN NEGRETE, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

KEEP OLD PORT'S SKATING RINK OPEN

At a time when:

- Our Canadian identity is in crisis,
- Mental and physical health issues are at an all-time high,
- Social tensions have escalated,
- And families are searching for ways to connect,

it seems shortsighted and undemocratic for the federal government to close the highly popular refrigerated skating rink at the Old Port. This beloved destination attracted skaters and non-skaters, locals and tourists alike. It was a place of magic – an escape from daily chaos, a breath of fresh air and a celebration of Canadian history and culture. Not only that, but music of all genres and eras were played - from Bach to Brubeck, Sinatra to the Stones – and not to forget Ginette Reno/Jacques Ferland's "T'es mon amour" to Jean Leloup's "I lost my baby."

The usual culprits – costs and weather – were cited as reasons. But instead of shutting it down, why not explore ways to maximize its potential as a year-round venue and a major source of revenue?

For nine months of the year, the rink sits unused. Why not re-purpose it for dance, yoga, tai chi classes or even weddings? The same goes for the pavilion, which also remains closed most of the year.

Other cities with much milder winters have outdoor rinks – like New York's Central Park, Philadelphia's Delaware Riverfront and Reston, Virginia. They manage to keep their rinks open for seven weeks longer than ours. If they can overcome weather challenges, why can't we?

The government wouldn't dream of [permanently] shutting down the Rideau Canal Skateway, which is surely far more expensive and complex to maintain. Old Port's rink, though smaller, is just as iconic – a uniquely Montreal landmark in one of the world's most beautiful settings.

We should be preserving and enhancing spaces that serve our population, not dismantling them. The health and well-being of citizens shape the future of our nation.

PATRICIA CHANG, DOWNTOWN

Batshaw Children Seeking Homes

Susan, Andrew & Juliana looking for a stable environment

Susan is a bright and energetic three-year-old who faces challenges when adjusting to new environments. She often expresses her discomfort through tantrums. Susan is curious and eager to explore her surroundings, showing a strong desire to learn.

However, she experiences a speech delay, which sometimes makes communication difficult and her words hard to understand.

Andrew, a reserved and charming four-year-old, is particularly strong in his intellectual abilities but faces challenges with social interactions.

Recently diagnosed with autism, Andrew struggles with transitions between activities. When these transitions occur, he can become overwhelmed, leading to emotional outbursts and difficulty expressing his feelings, sometimes resulting in throwing objects. Andrew is currently receiving support to help manage his behaviours.

Juliana, an energetic two-year-old, is very active but has a tendency to become easily distracted. She loves climbing and

playing with other children. However, when frustrated, Juliana likes to run around and makes loud noise, and raise her voice in frustration.

All three children require ongoing medical and other professional follow-ups to ensure they are meeting their developmental milestones.

They would greatly benefit from a stable, caring environment that supports their individual needs.

The ideal foster family for Susan, Andrew and Juliana would ideally have heritage from the black community and a strong 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 the children maintain a positive relationship.

For more information about Susan, Andrew and Juliana, please contact Batshaw Youth and Family Centres at 514.932.7161, ext. 1139.

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Library's spring Literary Soirée to feature three authors April 3



Megan Durnford, Sivan Slapak and H. Nigel Thomas.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY.

A special "literary soirée" at Westmount Public Library is planned for Thursday, April 3 at 7 pm.

The event is to feature three acclaimed authors who will read from their latest books and participate in a discussion with the audience.

Called "WestmountLit - Spring 2025," this is described in a press release as "a new series aimed to connect readers with authors and shine a spotlight on our vibrant literary scene," explained Daniel

Miguez de Luca, programming librarian.

The three authors are Megan Durnford, documentary film maker and author of *Our Plastic Problem*; Sivan Slapak, author of the story collection *Here Is Still Here*; and H. Nigel Thomas, author of 14 books including his recently launched novel *A Different Hurricane*.

WestmountLit is a new series curated by Miguez de Luca and local novelist and poet Cora Sirée. A press release states the event is open to everyone.

Snow, cont'd from p. 1

with Public Security, Hydro Westmount and other first responders.

Refitting equipment

Along with the actual clearing and disposal of snow, Public Works had to refit some of the equipment. The volume of snow that fell meant the standard sidewalk plows "simply weren't equipped to handle the height and density of the snowbanks," Bostock said. "Only heavy machinery could break through, which significantly slowed down sidewalk clearing."

In response, Public Works outfitted a smaller-format snowblower to help with the task, but "it was still not enough to meet city-wide demand as quickly as we would have liked."

The city also continued to face the chal-

lenges of private contractors and individuals clearing their driveways or commercial lots by pushing snow back onto freshly cleared sidewalks and streets. "This created additional set-backs and challenges for our teams."

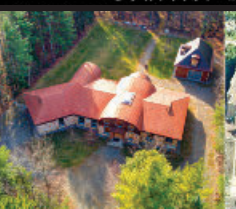
In conclusion, she said, in assessing what went well and what could be improved, "this was a one-off, extreme weather event... No one" - on the Public Works team or on council - "was satisfied with those challenges either but we adapted, we persevered, and we did our absolute best within the constraints we faced."

She also thanked residents "who reached out to express their gratitude" and their kindness helping uncover cars, assisting people stuck in the snow, and offering support to neighbours in distress.

"This is what community spirit looks like."

JOSEPH MAROVITCH

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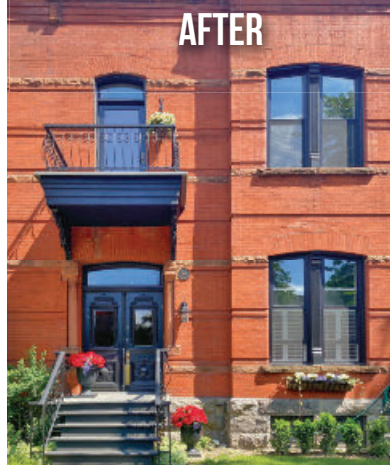
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Police Report

Police offer anti-theft advice after pickpocketing at food court

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Although last week was a relatively quiet one for police at Station 12, a single pickpocketing incident is providing some insight into how to avoid being victimized by purse and wallet thieves.

Around noon on March 16, according to Station 12 criminal incident reports, a man who sat down for a meal in the food court at Alexis Nihon Plaza hung his windbreaker from the back of his chair.

He realized a short time later that his wallet, which had been in one of the pockets, was missing.

Cst. Mike Yigit, Station 12's community relations spokesperson, said pickpockets often target shopping mall food courts, knowing the habits of the shoppers who gather there. Besides wallets, cell phones also get stolen.

Pickpockets are renowned for their agility and dexterity when targeting and robbing victims.

People who've lost their wallets or other valuables to pickpockets will often find

themselves awestruck afterwards at how quickly and discreetly the theft took place.

"They're very agile," said Yigit. He noted that police investigators who study security videos have documented the clever maneuvers used by pickpockets. "It's quite something how confident they are."

According to Cst. Yigit, law enforcement officials have had difficulty dealing with pickpockets. They often have no home base and tend to travel from region to region throughout the world in teams, spending time in one area, then moving on before the law catches up.

"They're very mobile," he pointed out. "So, by the time reports reach us, they're already gone. It's very difficult for us to get information on them because they come in, they stay for a while – sometimes just two or three weeks – and then they leave. They stay in one spot, they do their stuff and they move often."

His advice to women using purses in busy public areas like shopping centre food courts is to avoid placing them on the *continued on p. 10*



Richard G. Gervais passed away in Montreal on March 10th, 2025, surrounded by members of his family. He was the son of **Aurette and J. Gaston Gervais**. He is survived by his wife and lifelong companion, **Marie Chevrier**, lawyer and administrative judge, whom he married in 1975, his sister **Sonya (late Paul Lajoie)**, his sister **Caroline (late Michel Salbaing)**, his uncle **Claude-André Piquette**, his nephews **Pierre Salbaing (Chantal Perron)** and **André Salbaing (Patricia Girard)** and their children **Ema, Michelle, Eve-Emanuelle**, and **Pierre-Olivier**. He is also survived by his brothers-in-law **Robert Chevrier, Bernard Chevrier, Jean Chevrier** and his sisters-in-law **Adèle Besner (late Jean Besner)** and **Lucie Chevrier (Pierre Thomas)**, as well as their many children and grandchildren, and many friends in France, the United States, Mauritius, and across Canada.

Richard G. Gervais, political scientist, inveterate globetrotter, amateur historian, art-loving oenophile, great collector, and patron of the arts, began his career in politics under the Right Honorable **Pierre Elliott-Trudeau** in the late 1960s. After studying political science in Montreal, New York, and Paris, he arrived in Ottawa and served as a political assistant to three ministers, most notably the Honorable **Mitchell Sharp**, Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs and his mentor, for nearly four years. He was fortunate to participate in several state visits and meetings of the United Nations General Assembly in New York and NATO in Washington. He was a candidate at the Liberal Party of Canada nomination meeting for the riding of Lafontaine in 1972, and again in 1974, when he was defeated by 9 votes despite being declared elected by the national press. He then decided to return to Montreal and practice the profession of public affairs. For seven years, he was director of public affairs for French Canada at the multinational **Esso**; later, he became senior vice-president of **PIR**, the largest public affairs firm in Canada at the time; then majority shareholder and CEO of **GGA Communications** for 25 years. There, he developed an international practice, both for Canada and other countries, supported by the World Bank. **GGA** had offices in Hanoi, Niamey, Abidjan, and Libreville, as well as in Montreal, Quebec City, and Toronto. In 2010, he founded **Wagram**, a strategic public affairs consultancy that he ran until a few years before his death.

Over the course of his career, **Richard Gervais** supported a number of cultural organizations on a volunteer basis. He was a member of numerous boards of directors and fundraising campaigns. He was particularly proud to have been Chairman of the Board of **Théâtre du Nouveau Monde**, **Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal**, and a member of the Board for ten years of the **Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal**; as he was to have been Governor of the **Festival de Lanaudière** and the **Théâtre du Bois de-Coulonge** at Quebec.

He has also been a director of several companies and organizations, including **Renault Canada**, **Club Mont-Royal**, the **Canadiana Fund** in Ottawa, and **Vie des Arts** magazine. For ten years, he was Chairman of the Advisory Committee of **Enders Endowment** in Washington and New York. For over 35 years, he was a member of the Board of the **Maison des étudiants canadiens** at the **Cité internationale universitaire de Paris**, later becoming an honorary member. He was a student at **Science Po** and President of the Paris Student Committee in 1966/1967.

He has donated numerous artifacts and works of art, and financially supported many museums and institutions, most notably the **Montreal Museum of Fine Arts** and the **McCord Museum of Canadian History**. In 2007, he presented the **Bibliothèque de l'Assemblée nationale du Québec** with more than 3,000 historical and political photos and artifacts from Montreal, Quebec, and Canada, as well as from the Francophonie and the Commonwealth, the largest donation in its history and for which he received the Assembly's Medal of Honor.

For his volunteer work, particularly in the cultural field, he was made a **Chevalier de l'Ordre du Québec** in 2010. In 1967, he was awarded the **Canadian Centennial Medal** for his contribution to centennial celebrations in France. In 1981, he was elevated to the rank of **Commander of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem**. In 1986, he was made a member of the **Order of St. John**, a decoration awarded by the Right Honorable **Jeanne Sauvé**, Governor General. In 1992, he received the **125th Anniversary of Confederation Medal** from the Speaker of the Senate, the Honorable **Guy Charbonneau**. In 2002, he received the **Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal**, and in 2012 the **Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal** from the Honorable **Serge Joyal**, Senator.

Richard Gervais was appointed Honorary Consul of the Republic of Mauritius in 1993. He served as such for several decades, devoting himself to this community which has seen its Canadian diaspora grow from 1,000 to over 40,000 citizens in 25 years. In 2009, in recognition of this volunteer dedication, the President of the Republic of Mauritius elevated him to the rank of **Grand Officer of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean (G.O.S.K.)**.

A great wine enthusiast, he was for decades a member of the **Commanderie de Bordeaux**, Montreal Chapter, becoming its Grand Master. He was inducted into most of the brotherhoods grouped under the **Grand Conseil de Bordeaux**. He also became, with the Right Honorable **Jeanne Sauvé** and her husband **Maurice, Mousquetaire de l'Armagnac**, a brotherhood with few Canadians.

A funeral service will be held at **St-Léon Church** in Westmount on Friday, April 04, 2025, at 11 a.m. A reception will follow. Donations in his memory to the **Montreal Museum of Fine Arts**, - "Fond Richard G. Gervais" - would be appreciated.

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— Joyce Faughnan and Peggie Hopkins

Website: Area closed until November

Alexis Nihon Plaza food court undergoing renovation



Alexis Nihon's food courts on the mezzanine level were closed at the beginning of March for renovations, as seen March 18.

BY JENNIFER BALL

The Alexis Nihon Plaza food courts on the mezzanine level of the shopping mall were closed at the beginning of March for renovation.

The shopping mall is located at 1500 Atwater Ave. It is situated between Atwater Ave., and Wood Ave., mostly in Westmount with the balance of the mall being downtown in Montreal's Ville Marie borough.

The work is expected to last until November, according to the Alexis Nihon website. Signage outside the construction area indicated the work is being undertaken by Anjinnov Construction.

Tenants comment

One restaurateur who has remained open during the renovations – whose business is not located inside the closed food court – told the *Independent* on March 7 that they had very little notice of the renovation work and very little time to prepare for it, and they are hopeful that it will not affect foot traffic to their restaurant.

On March 15, a boutique owner told the *Independent* that some retailers that she had spoken to are concerned that the renovation

will result in their rents increasing.

Landlords comment

The company that owns Alexis Nihon is Cominar REIT. It owns and manages office, commercial and residential buildings, mainly in Quebec.

On March 18, the *Independent* reached out to Noémie Palenzuela, senior marketing coordinator at Alexis Nihon, and Complexe de la Gare Centrale, which is employed by Cominar REIT.

On March 20, Sandra Lecuyer, chief culture and brand officer at Cominar, responded upon Palenzuela's behalf and refuted the restaurateur's claim. "All customers of the shopping centre, offices and residents of our complex were notified several weeks in advance..."

"The signage in place allows visitors to effectively identify the dining options open during the construction. Based on our preliminary observations, the open restaurants appear to be experiencing increased traffic since the food court closed a few weeks ago."

Responding to the boutique owner's concern about rents increasing, post-food court renovation, Lecuyer was less definitive, saying:

"The modernization of the food court represents a key step in strengthening the attractiveness of Alexis Nihon's presence in Montreal's retail ecosystem [and] is excellent news for our merchants, who are delighted with this investment..."

"An attractive shopping centre benefits the entire community, including retailers who benefit from increased visibility and traffic."

Helen Kordatzis, director of Alexis Nihon, also provided information to the *Independent* saying, "The entire Cominar team is proud of this project, which will offer an improved dining experience for Westmount residents..."

"The modernized décor, combined with the arrival of new restaurateurs, will revitalize the gourmet experience for regulars and attract new customers curious to discover this renewed offering. Our goal is for the entire property community to benefit from the spin-offs: whether it be increased visibility and traffic for retailers, increased attractiveness for employers, or more pleasant and inviting meeting spaces for residents, workers, and students."

Both Lecuyer and Kordatzis' statements were provided in French and translated by DeepL translator.

What's still open/what will open

The restaurants and food stores that will remain open during the renovation are:

On the mezzanine level:

- Sushi Shop,
- Seoul 73.

On the street level:

- Caféto,
- Tommy,
- IGA extra,
- Roasters,
- McDonald's.

On the Metro level:

- Cocobun,
- Jugojuice,
- Tim Hortons,
- Wetzel's Pretzels.

Restaurants that will feature in the food court re-launch are:

- Poulet Rouge,
- Real Fruit,
- Grillades Torino,
- Poke Monster,
- Shawarma Plus,
- Thai Express,
- Muffin Plus.

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LYSANNE FOWLER

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smart. So, once in his new home environment, the rescue will ensure these continued services to complete his program moving forward.

Theo is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. He is good in the home but still vocal with outside stimuli, so best to be in a house with a fenced backyard.

To obtain more details about Theo, please do not hesitate to email the volunteers at info@gerdysrescue.org to find out more about him and get fresh news and photographs. They look forward to discussing adoption and your interest in Theo joining your family.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

Police report, cont'd from p. 7

ground and out of sight (such as under a chair) where the contents will be vulnerable to theft.

For men, he suggests storing a wallet or cell phone in the front pocket of pants or slacks.

It's worth noting that with the arrival of warm weather and spring, pickpocketing incidents are expected to become more frequent. Pickpocketing is known to surge every year around the summer months, according to security experts, tapering off as the weather cools in the fall.

With such a sweet demeanour and a great personality, Theo is a perfect companion to an active and outgoing family. Our neighbourhood has many of his type, yet he is distinct as the best of Bernese mountain dog and sheltie.

Theo is seven years young, active and affectionate. He loves people and dogs, enjoying walks during which he meets other dogs that he becomes friendly with and looks forward to playing with. Due to his breed, he is a working dog who need physical and mental activity to channel energy.

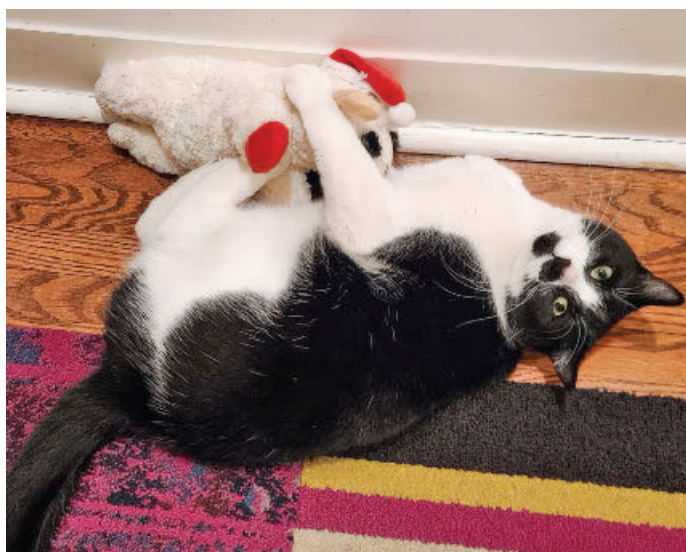
In the past, Theo came from a home where there was less opportunity for exercise and training. Yet now, in foster care, he has been set forth on a great path as he has been given a framework by a trainer, which he is excelling at since he is very



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Miss Harlequin



do not hesitate to reach out to the volunteers at Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions at their website www.gerdysrescue.org and fill out their adoption application form www.gerdysrescue.org/adoption-form/ for Harlequin. The volunteers would be pleased to discuss your interest and share new photographs of this delightful young companion.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

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Second legal-dept. appointment in 2 months Council appoints Leblond assistant city clerk

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In this election year for Westmount, city council March 17 appointed Maitre Arienne Leblond as assistant city clerk and assistant director of legal services after the department had been shorthanded for several months. “Welcome to Westmount,” Mayor Christina Smith said.

Leblond has been a member of the Quebec bar since 2016 and brings with her “a diverse background,” according to Maitre Paule Béliveau-Geoffroy, director of legal services and city clerk, who had been named to head the department February 3 (see story February 11, p. 3). “We are thrilled by the nomination and really looking forward to her joining the team.”

Professional background

Leblond, she told the *Independent*, has worked within both the provincial and federal public service.

Prior to her appointment in Westmount, she had served as a commissioner at the Immigration and Refugee Board of

Canada. Before that, she held positions including assistant legal coordinator at the Quebec Court of Appeal and special clerk for the Quebec ministry of Justice at the Montreal courthouse.

“She also has significant experience in corporate secretariat functions, having begun her career at the Quebec bar as a court clerk,” Béliveau-Geoffroy said.



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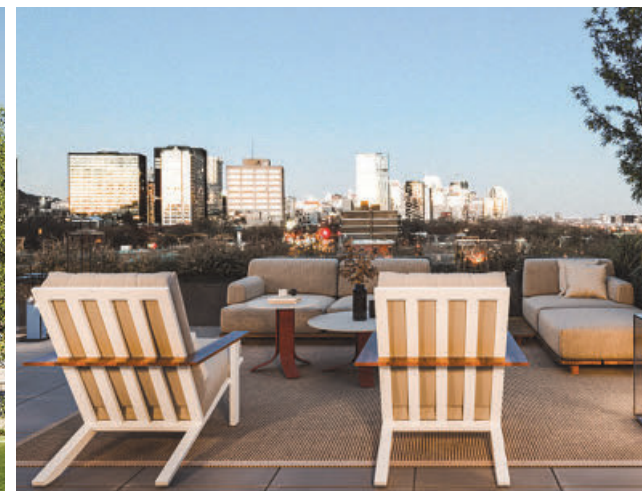
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Westmounters walk proudly in St. Patrick's Parade



Seen here on St. Catherine St. on March 16 just before the start of this year's St. Patrick's Parade are, from left, members of the 2719 Cadet Corps, Westmount Battery board member Charles De Kovachich, Westmount city councillor Jeff Shamie, Westmount Battery president Patrick Martin, and Westmount Battery ceremonial officers Fred Lanoes and Gilles Aubé.

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Westmount was well represented at the 200th annual St. Patrick's Parade held in downtown Montreal on December 16.

A delegation from the Westmount Battery brought along one of the 19th century field guns they fire off on special occasions – although not this time. The historic cannon belong to the city of Westmount.

As well, members of the 2719 Cadets Corps from the Côte des Neiges Armory accompanied them.

Former city councillor Patrick Martin, a co-founder and president of the Westmount Battery, noted that the cannon was 15 years older than the parade.

"This is part of the city of Westmount's historical legacy," said Councillor Jeff Shamie, noting the city's role in restoring the cannon.

It was one of two that were parked for decades in Westmount Park along Sherbrooke St., before being removed for several years to undergo restoration.

"Westmount is so proud of the Westmount Battery organization," added Shamie. "We're happy to be here with them today."

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Historian McGowan traces fate of Canada's Irish potato famine orphans

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Members of the Montreal chapter of the Women's Canadian Club were given a

summary last week by a 19th century Irish potato famine expert on some recent efforts to map out the trail that Irish famine victims took throughout Canada and

the world as they fled calamity in their native country.

Speaking at Victoria Hall the day after St. Patrick's Day was guest speaker Mark McGowan, a University of Toronto history professor. He is the author of *Finding Molly Johnson: Irish Famine Orphans in Canada*, which traces the fate of the famine orphans who landed in Canada.

McGowan provided some historical perspective on the famine, which reduced Ireland's 1841 population of eight million by a quarter – and from which the country has never fully recovered.

"That's how demographically this tragedy of the famine affected this country," he said, calling it "the worst catastrophe in Ireland's modern history."

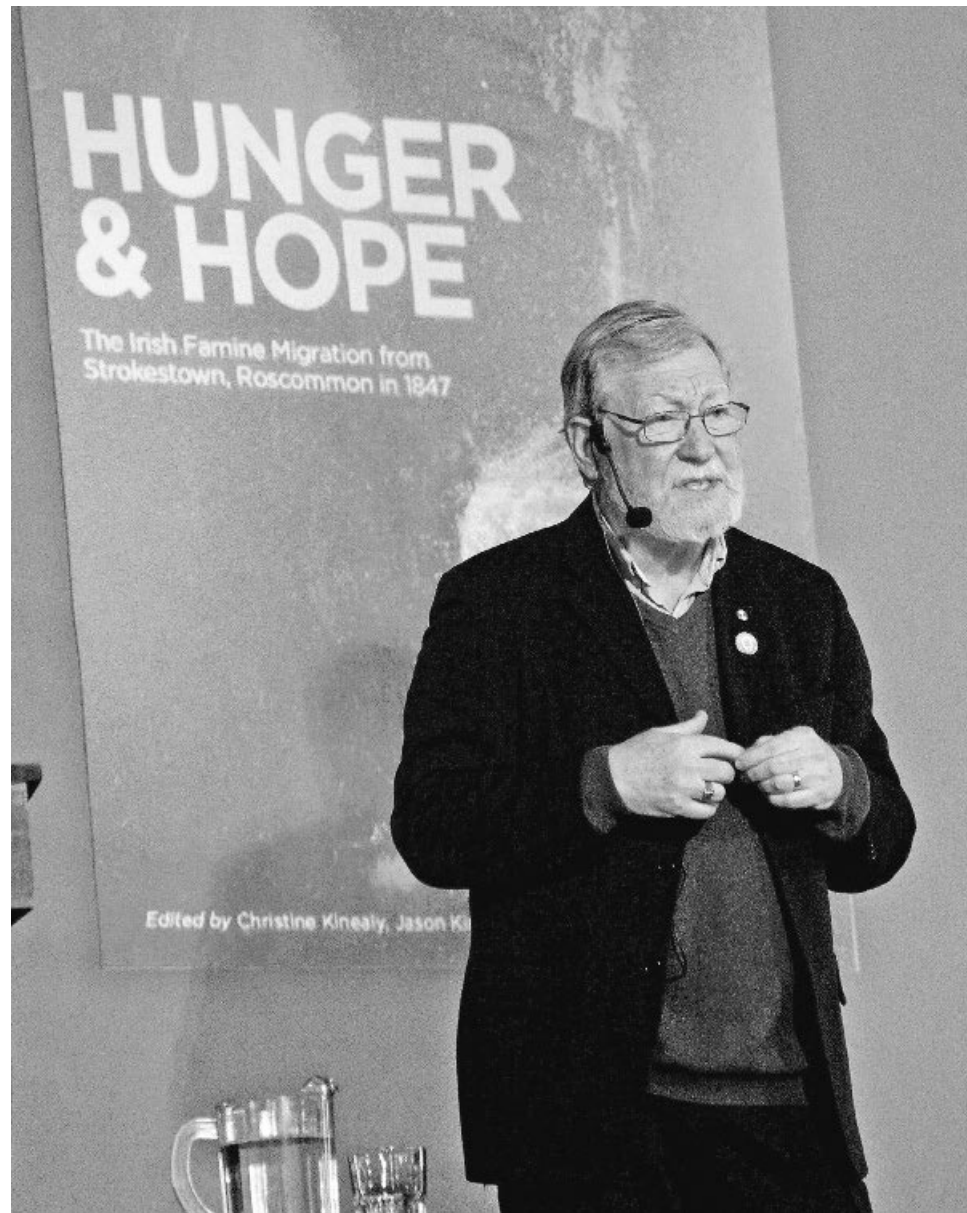
McGowan spoke of the Global Irish Famine Way, a heritage trail that will eventually follow the journeys of all the Irish Famine emigrants around the world, including the UK, Canada, the United States, South Africa and Australia.

The project will eventually include two

monuments in Quebec, one of which will be attached to the Montreal Irish Monument Park near the Black Rock on the Montreal side of the Victoria bridge. The other will be in the town of St. Coloman northwest of Montreal, which is home to the first Irish Catholic church and cemetery in Quebec.

The Global Irish Famine Way is an international extension of the National Famine Way, an effort undertaken in Ireland to trace the footsteps of Irish tenants who were forced off farmland and marched to Dublin at the peak of the famine in 1847 after they failed to pay their rent.

In Dublin, they boarded a ship to Liverpool, before journeying to North America on board some of the worst "coffin ships" of the time. Not all of them made it alive. The ordeal is being memorialized through the establishment of trails following the path of Irish migrants, along which can be found bronze replicas of famine-era children's shoes.



Mark McGowan, author of *Finding Molly Johnson: Irish Famine Orphans in Canada*, addressed the Women's Canadian Club of Montreal in Victoria Hall on March 18.



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PUBLIC NOTICE

APPLICATION FOR A MINOR EXEMPTION

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the City of Westmount shall consider an application for a minor exemption at the regular sitting of the Municipal Council to be held on **April 7th, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.** in the Council Chamber, at City Hall, located at 4333 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount, which shall be broadcast live on the City's website. The link to the sitting will be available at the following address: www.westmount.org/council-live

Location of the request:

149 Chemin de la Côte-Saint-Antoine (lot 1 583 076)

Nature of the request:

The request for a minor exemption is aimed at allowing at allowing a driveway measuring 3.66 meters (12 feet) wide calculated on the street line, which is 0.61 meters (2 feet) wider than what is permitted by Section 5.5.3.4 of *Zoning By-law 1303* which stipulates that the maximum width of the driveway entrance calculated on the street line is 10 feet (3.05 meters) in this situation.

Any interested person may be heard by Council regarding this request at the sitting. Any interested person may also submit questions or comments via the online form at <https://westmount.org/en/questions-for-the-council-meeting> before noon on April 7th, 2025.

For more information, please contact Mr. Yves Wang, of the Urban Planning Department, by phone at 514 989-5200, ext. 5617, or by email at ywang@westmount.org.

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At de Casson/Wood Ave.

Permanent stop sign replaces months-long temporary signage

BY JENNIFER BALL

In late 2024, a car accident happened that took out the stop sign, the street sign and a tree in a triangular traffic island where de Casson and Wood Ave. intersect. From that time, a temporary stop sign that measures three feet from the ground was *in situ* to instruct drivers to stop – only the *Independent* has witnessed on many occasions that the stop sign was not having its intended effect. Cars whizzed by it heading towards Sherbrooke St.

On March 19, the *Independent* reached out to Mugisha Rutishisha, director of the Communications department at the city, to ask when and what repairs would occur.

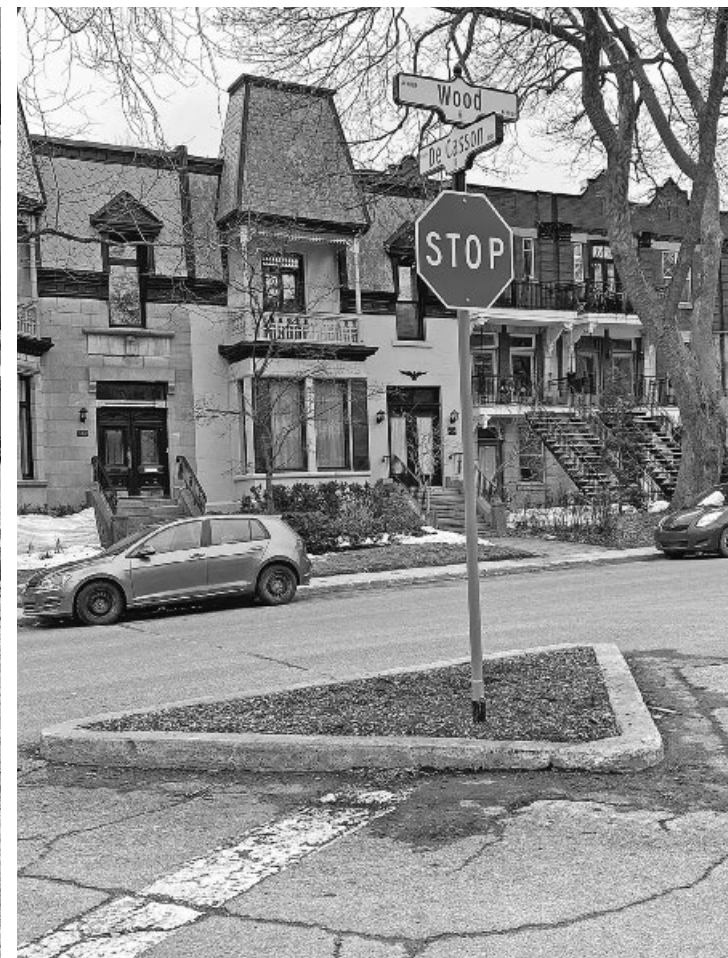
On the same day, Melanie Duffin, a citizen experience agent in the Communications department at the city, responded saying, “Coordination has been carried out with the teams responsible for traffic and horticulture...”

“In the coming weeks, a new pole and a stop sign are scheduled to be installed on the corner demarcating Chemin De Casson and Wood Ave. Following this, tree planting will take place. Kindly note that the teams will need to wait for the ground to thaw before proceeding with these operations.”

In fact, a new street sign and a new, standard stop sign were installed by a city Public Works team on March 20.



The temporary stop sign at Wood and de Casson on March 19.



The new, permanent stop and street signs on March 21.

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A move, an expansion, 2 openings and 3 closures



Retail Review

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Victoria Ave.

Foot Solutions, 386 Victoria, has moved. Still on Victoria, it is now closer to Sherbrooke St. The shop is the go-to destination for men and women for support products for the feet. The shoe collection offers seasonal must-haves, like warm boots or soon-to-be-sought sandals, as well as the must-have sneakers. (My favourite colour was metallic “anthracite.” The better to wear with a ball gown.) Closed Sundays.

Spirulina, 392 Victoria, has expanded its Westmount space. One of four locations, the shop offers toasts, salads and the much-loved smoothies, whose names such as Glow, Immunity, and Spirulina *et cetera* made me feel healthy. We were unable to get in touch with the owner in time for this column. Open every day.

Alexis Nihon

Wetzel's Pretzels has opened on the Metro level. Founded in California in 1994,

the chain offers sweet and salty handcrafted pretzels. Success can be judged by popularity. Here there is often a line-up. Open every day.

Sarah III recently closed very quickly. Now brown paper covers the space.

Westmount Square

Maison Juliette, new in Westmount Square, made me think of an old Truffaut film *Day for Night*. The boutique's fashion collection is precisely that: it turns daytime into night. Frank Lyman, Hollywood and Joseph Ribkoff are just some of the name brands offered. Many have enjoyed success for decades. Owner Ala Akaberi showed me the lines, ranging from leisure to *luxe*. I spied a sequined jacket (black of course!) perfect to pair with wide white jeans. Closed Sundays.

Greene Ave.

Sox Box, 1357 Greene Ave.'s once-favourite fashion accessory boutique is closing at the end of March.

Galerie Blanche's 1321 Greene location has closed and is for rent. It continues in Old Montreal at 218 St. Paul St. West.

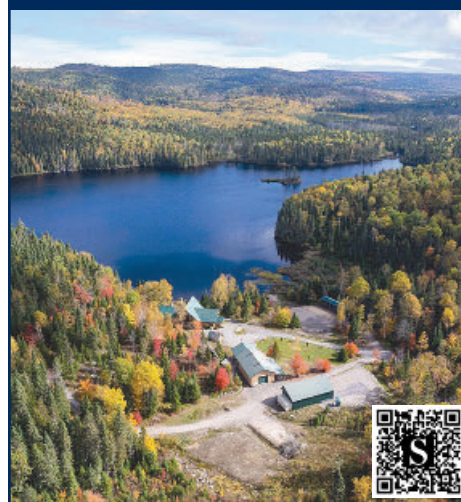
Sofia Zakia, 1373 Greene, has closed and is for rent.



Ala Akaberi, the owner of Maison Juliette.

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Passover Koshert menu



Menu 1

Coleslaw salad
Chopped Eggplant Salad
Salade Cuite
Homemade Liver pâté with caramelized onions
Matzah ball soup
Moroccan style Salmon
Roasted Chicken Teriyaki or BBQ
Beef brisket served in a rich savory gravy
Grilled vegetables or Vegetable Towers
Lemon & garlic roasted potatoes
\$75/pp

Menu 2

Carrot salad
Chopped Eggplant Salad
Beet Salad
Salade Cuite
Moroccan style fish balls in a tomato coriander sauce
Vegetable soup or Matzah Ball soup
Chicken pargiot in a zesty sauce of olives & marinated
Minute roast with a sautéed mushroom sauce
Grilled vegetables or vegetable towers
Lemon & garlic roasted potatoes
\$85/pp

Shabbat Meal Pre Passover

For 4 people \$ 129.99

Carrot ginger soup
1 dz Sweet & Sour meatballs
Schzuan Chicken or General Tao
Roasted sweet potatoes
Grilled vegetables
Passover brownies

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Criss cross Cajun chicken breast - \$14.00 ea.
Chicken Schnitzel - \$15.00 ea.
Chicken pargiot Marsala - \$16.00 ea.
General Tao Chicken - \$20.00 (1 serving)
Crispy Beef - \$25.00 (1 serving)
Sweet & Sour Beef or Turkey balls - \$18.00 (6 balls)
Whole roasted chicken - \$22.99
Beef Brisket with gravy sauce - \$64 lbs
Minute Roast with sautéed mushrooms - \$62 lbs
Shepherd's Pie - \$24.99 (serves 8-10 people)
Beef Pastels - \$6.50 ea.
Moroccan style salmon - \$12.99 pc
Homemade Liver pâté with caramelized onions - \$10.00 8oz
Lemon & garlic roasted potatoes - \$13.50 lbs
Grilled vegetable or Vegetable Towers - \$13.50 lbs
Roasted Sweet potatoes - \$13.50 lbs
Salade Cuite - \$7.99 8oz
Chopped Eggplant Salad - \$6.99 8oz
Carrot salad - \$6.99 8oz
Beet salad - \$7.99 8oz
Coleslaw - \$5.99 8oz
Vegetable soup - \$12.99 1 litre
Matzah ball soup - \$14.99 1 litre
Brownies - \$14.95

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Giving blood at Victoria Hall a breeze for Fattal

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Unlike some people with an aversion to needles or who don't like having blood drawn from an arm, Jason Fattal could hardly wait last week for his turn to donate blood.

The 35-year-old Westmouter was one of the many residents who turned up at Victoria Hall on the afternoon and early evening on March 12 to help Héma-Québec achieve a goal of gathering 90 blood donations during a drive sponsored by the city of Westmount.

Since the age of 18, Jason has donated blood nearly a dozen times.

However, he was disappointed to learn the last time that his blood's iron content was a little too low for Héma-Québec's needs and he'd have to wait until it rose again to an acceptable level.

"It's not a recurring problem, but they always want to make sure you have a certain minimum amount of iron in your blood," he told the *Independent*.

He started giving blood after a friend who was slightly underweight had to cut back on making blood donations because they were causing his body's blood volume to drop unacceptably low.

"So, I guess in honour of him, I decided that I would start giving blood," he said.

According to criteria posted on the Héma-Québec website, donors must weigh at least 50 kg (110 lb) to give blood. As well, the use of certain prescribed medications can make potential donors ineligible to give blood.

He said he greatly enjoys being able to give when the city sponsors blood donation clinics at Victoria Hall – where he remembers taking break-dancing lessons more than two decades ago.



Jason Fattal, a 35-year-old Westmouter, is seen here reclining in the main auditorium at Victoria Hall on March 12 moments before he was about to make his latest blood donation to Héma-Québec at a blood clinic sponsored by the city of Westmount.

"I always have a good time when I come here," he added. "Everybody here is an ab-

solute sweetheart and I love chatting with them."

Claremont, cont'd from p. 1

parking lot," stated Jon Breslaw of Grosvenor, who led off the issue. He also asked for a count of current bike use. "You must have this information because it doesn't make sense to re-do the road [with a northbound bike path] without a count."

"We had a lot of feedback on this," Mayor Smith stated, later adding that "more parking spots will be put back."

Councillor Conrad Peart also said "we have heard" from people about losing parking. He later said that the choice of Claremont as a northbound bike path starting from Sherbrooke conformed to the city's master plan so that eventually it would connect with the de Maisonneuve

route to link with Côte St. Antoine and Westmount Ave.

A resident of Montrose asked if the city had "tariffs" on heavy highway-type construction trucks that could damage residential streets, citing the complexity of removing Claremont's long abandoned streetcar rails and effects on drainage. The year's delay, he said, would prevent damage to a newly rebuilt street.

"Whatever you do on Claremont is fine, but it should be done after [the major renovation/re-purposing at] 500 Claremont is finished."

Judy Philpott of Claremont questioned whether proposed plantings along Claremont might interfere with access by ambulance and adapted transport vehicles but

was told that they would not.

Shona Godwin, a cyclist living on Claremont, also challenged the uphill bike path. She also asked if the city had information on the volume of traffic to establish the legality of a total of five traffic-light locations as recommended around the Claremont "triangle."

Peart stated that this would be known to the engineering consultants who proposed it.

Other issues raised during the question period included work on the tree canopy and acacia trees (black locusts) at King George (Murray) Park, and a need to construct residential housing, possibly more conducive to younger families than high-rises, in the southeast.

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St. Mary's Hospital marks 100 years, in style

Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE



Bridget Fetterly, Mary Gallery, Sylvie Chagnon, Cynda Heward, Arielle Meloul-Wechsler, Adriana Embiricos and Anne-Marie Boucher.

St. Mary's Hospital's centennial celebration was a master class in best in show. Sartorially speaking, it was splendid. The 87th annual ball starred dazzling dopamine dressing, the best gowns ever. Guests were touchstone titans from cultural and corporate communities; united at this once-in-a-century occasion.

St. Mary's Ball Visionary Women Leaders were **Anne-Marie Boucher**, **Sylvie Chagnon**, **Adriana Embiricos**, **Arielle Meloul-Wechsler**, and Westmount city councillor **Mary Gallery**, great-granddaughter of hospital founder **Dr. Donald Hingston**. Mary's mother **Nancy Gallery** attended with extended members of the Gallery family.

The ball fundraising committee was chaired by **Curtis Millen**, working with foundation CEO **Cynda Heward**, **Brigitte Fetterly** (décor design), **Sylvie Chagnon**, **Terry Didus**, **Mary Gallery**, **Stephen Kelly**, **Guy Laframboise**, **Arielle Meloul-Wechsler**, **Geoff Molson**, **Richard Renaud**, **Paul Scardera** and **Arthur Wechsler**.

The opening champagne cocktail reception referenced the 1920s – the decade in which St. Mary's was founded – with a speakeasy-style bar and a life-size replica of the original hospital gates. The evening was hosted by foundation board's chair

Arthur Wechsler and executive member **Rachel Renaud**.

After a video featuring St. Mary's 100-year history, the foundation officially launched its \$100-million Next Century of Care campaign. Montreal's famed chef

Adele Forgione from Ristorante Beatrice curated a four-course dinner menu paired with specialty wines selected by the SAQ.

Bridget Fetterly and her husband **Paolo Bassi** opened with a traditional dance routine *continued on p. 18*



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Justin Trudeau, centre, with, from left, classmates from Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf Marc Miller, David Legendre, Mathieu Walker, Alison Fischer and Allen Steverman, Nathalie Ng Cheong and Ian Rae.

Social notes, cont'd from p. 17

that paid homage to the white-gloved débütantes of the very first St. Mary's Ball.

Noted in the crowd were (then) prime minister **Justin Trudeau**, **Marc Miller**, (then) minister of Immigration, Refugees

and Citizenship of Canada; **Anna Gaaney**, MP for NDG-Westmount; **Michelle Setlakwe**, provincial legislator for Mont Royal-Outremont, and **Désirée McGraw**, provincial legislator for NDG.

Also seen in the high-octane crowd were **Lise and Don Bastien**, president SMHC board of governors; **France Chretien Desmarais**, executive chair of TES Canada H2 inc.; **Phyllis Lambert**, founder Canadian Centre for Architecture; **Claire and Peter Kruyt**, vp Power Corporation of Canada, and MUHC board chair; **Carolyn and Rick Renaud**, chair TNG Corporation; **Julia and Stephen Reitman**, executive chair Reitmans; **Paul Scardera** executive vp Assistenza International; **David Bensaoud**, CEO Aldo; **Colleen and Mirko Wicha**, chair HaiVision; **Sara Pedersen**, vice chair Rossy Family Foundation; **Josephine Brodeur** and **Michael Rousseau**, CEO Air Canada; **Jenny and Terry Didus**, partner Dentons; **Sophie and Scott Jones**, CEO Nova Steel; **Arielle Meloul-Wechsler**,

vp human resources Air Canada and **Arthur Wechsler**, managing partner Kugler Kandestin LLP, **Susan and Rick Hart**, Raymond James; **Victor Drury**, BNP Philanthropic Performance; **Peter O'Brien**, C.M.; **Luc Maurice**, president Le Groupe Maurice; **Sarah Ivory** and **Guthrie Stewart**, **Christina Miller**, founder, Christina Miller Real Estate Group; **Elise Nesbitt**, chair MGH Foundation; St. Mary's School of Nursing alumnae, **Catherine McIninch**; **Vanessa and Guy Laframboise**, and **Claire and Stuart Webster**.

Doctors in attendance included **Mathieu Walker**, **Nathalie Ng Cheong**, **Ron Dimontberg** (with his wife **Tami**), **Bruce Campbell** (**Josephine Campbell-Lashuk**), **Allen Steverman**, **Hélène Weibel** (with **Sonny Joshi**), and **Arvind Joshi**.

Throughout the night, Paul Chacra's 1945 Band and DJ Psychology upped the energy level.

The high-octane eve raised \$1,251,850 (net).



Phyllis Lambert and Catherine McIninch.



Paul Scardera and Terry Didus.



Michael Rousseau and Josephine Brodeur.

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Tobie Steinhouse 1925-, *Self Portrait in Atelier*, 1953, Oil on canvas,
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Tobie Steinhouse, Paris, 2001

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