

# WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly Vol. 19 No. 5b

We are Westmount

May 13, 2025

## Message to residents from Cllr. Aronson: Let the grass grow! City to leave some sections of its greenspaces uncut in May

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Letting the grass grow in May, despite a perceived need to mow it, was one of the messages from Councillor Matt Aronson during the reports of council members at the opening of the council meeting May 5.

As commissioner of sustainability,

**Don't miss our year-end  
real estate review!**

**This year's transactions will be  
used to create the next municipal  
tax valuation roll, see p. SL 8**

Aronson explained that the city was leaving uncut some sections of its greenspaces and grass, and urged residents to do likewise. This is to allow the longer than usual grass and wildflowers, such as white clover, to go to seed and shelter pollinator bugs and flora.

He also suggested when cutting the grass to adjust a mower to four inches and leave the cuttings behind to act as natural food for the grass.

In fact, allowing wildflowers to grow in city areas rather than planting ornamental gardens is among some of the suggestions previously made at council meetings on the issue of biodiversity by Penny Arsensault of St. Catherine St.

## Royal Montreal Regiment welcomes new commanding officer Langlois



Lieutenant-Colonel Kevin Langlois, right, is the new CO of the RMR. He is pictured here at his May 4 investiture with his wife. See p. 18 for story.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

*Council members face many demands on their time*

## Municipal election set for November 2 – What do municipal politicians do? Why?

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

After all the buzz over the recent federal election, the time is approaching for Westmount residents to begin declaring an interest in running for city council as mayor or a councillor representing one of the city's eight electoral districts. These

province-wide elections are slated for Sunday, November 2.

The mayoralty is of particular interest now that Mayor Christina Smith has announced her intention not to run after more than two terms and previously serving as a councillor (see ..... story January 21, p. 1). *continued on p. 12*

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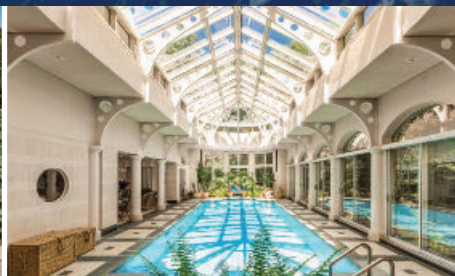
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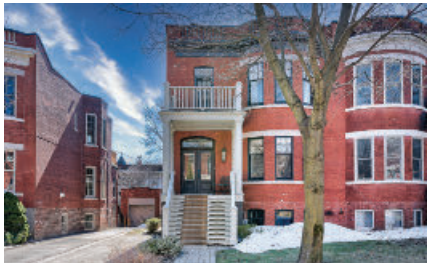
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# Public Security issue tickets to 2 on Upper Roslyn

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A call was received by Public Security May 3 around 10:28 am concerning two men seen walking around the back of houses on Upper Roslyn and pushing notices into front doors. Neighbours were reported to have described the behaviour of the two as suspicious.

Responding patrollers spotted the pair matching the descriptions as one wearing a khaki jacket, the other a blue one. Officers spoke to the two, advising them against going on private property and delivering unsolicited material.

Residents confirmed the two as those they had seen and police also responded to check out identifications.

Public Security issued the pair tickets for loitering and trespassing on private property. There was no mention as to where the two non-Westmounters lived.

## We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. Email us at: [editor@westmountindependent.com](mailto:editor@westmountindependent.com)

## Truck backs into light pole

A Fed Ex truck knocked over a city light pole while backing into a parking spot at 4833 Sherbrooke May 2, Public Security officials said. The accident occurred in front of the SAQ outlet around 3 pm, requiring Hydro Westmount to attend.

DON'T MISS OUR PULL-OUT

## Spotlight

ON REAL ESTATE

Dodge on April sales, p. SL-3

Dodge year-end review, p. SL-8

Retail Watch, p. SL-18

House History:  
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Social Notes:  
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Classified in the  
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## Westmount – 3 Anwoth

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## Westmount – 343 Clarke

Indulge in the elegance of a top floor condo nestled in a converted convent. Adorned with a stonefront, lofty ceilings, private parking, and a spacious storage room. This unique residence exudes charm and character.

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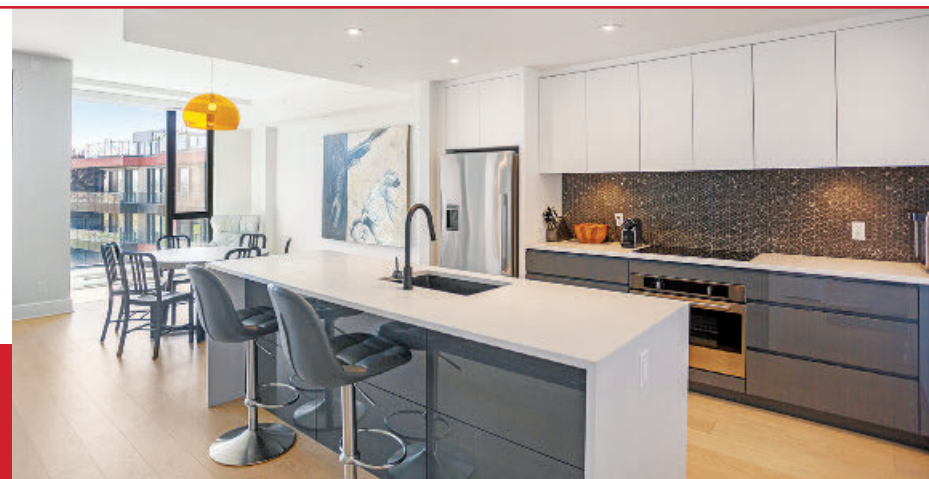
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Distribution note

# Canada Post could strike next week – If so, here’s the Indie’s plan

BY DAVID PRICE, EDITOR

Canada Post employees will again be in a strike position on Thursday, May 22. We have no way of knowing whether they will strike then, afterwards or never. As ever, we wish labour and management well, and hope for a mutually beneficial and quick resolution of all issues.

The bulk of the *Independent’s* distribution is done by Canada Post, so if there is a strike, there will be no mail carriers leaving a copy of our paper at your house or in your condo/apartment mailbox.

Here is what will happen.

**Online & email – No change**

The newspaper is posted online on Tuesdays, on which day an email also goes out to subscribers. Go to our website to sign up for the latter, free service.

**Normal drop points – No change**

Our normal drop sites at grocery stores, ATMs, dépanneurs and public buildings are done by a private contractor so there will be no change at these sites (except more newspapers – especially at the Victoria Ave. Metro grocery store).

**Apartment buildings, condos – Bulk delivery**

Starting next week, bulk drops of newspapers will be left in the lobbies of all of Westmount’s apartment and condo buildings by our private distributor, as was done last fall during the strike. If your building does not receive copies, please call me at 514.935.4537.

**Special street-side distribution boxes**

For the duration of any Canada Post strike, the city of Westmount will be allowing our metal newspaper boxes in selected places on public land, as it did during the late fall of last year.

Thank you to Mayor Christina Smith for stickhandling this approval.

Four new locations are:

- Devon Park entrance on Upper Belmont,
- Summit Circle at the cul-de-sac’s concrete planters, which are north of where Summit Rd. descends to Belvedere,
- Greene Ave. parking lot (on its south side, near the sidewalk),
- de Maisonneuve/Lansdowne entrance to Westmount Park.

The seven unchanged locations from last time are:

- The Boulevard at the steps to Upper Roslyn,
- The Boulevard/Aberdeen (southeast corner),
- Côte St. Antoine/Victoria (northwest corner),
- Montrose/Mt. Pleasant (northeast),
- entrance to Murray Park (Montrose/Murray),
- entrance to Murray Park (Westmount Ave./Murray Hill),
- entrance to Queen Elizabeth Gardens (Barat/Vignal).

**House-to-house distribution– Best efforts by yours truly, volunteers**

Last fall, I was able to personally deliver about 800 issues per week, mainly to upper Westmount, which I focused on given its distance from the on-the-flat commercial areas where drop sites are so easily found. (I couldn’t get to the north side of streets like Sunnyside and The Boulevard, or to Edgehill at all. Sorry! The stairs or hill would have killed me.) I have aged a bit

since then, but I would hope to do about the same again this time, health permitting.

Another 1,600 copies were distributed by volunteers (thank you again!).

This time, I would like to ask anyone who is willing to distribute 100 papers or more to join in, for 15 cents a newspaper. You can pocket this amount or donate it to the charity of your choice, with or without publicity. Just let me know at editor@westmountindependent.com or 514.935.4537.

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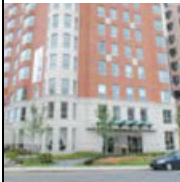


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# Construction is the thing, and it starts in spring



## Mayor's Column

CHRISTINA SMITH

### *The 'Fordens' to start in June*

Starting in June, Forden Ave. and Forden Crescent will be re-designed in a manner that respects their residential character. This is a long-overdue project, considering the state of the road.

### *Greene, with the city of Montreal*

A joint project with the city of Montreal will begin on Greene Ave. in mid-June. The project will focus on improving the water and electrical systems and replacing lead service lines on public property. We are awaiting confirmation of the start date.

### *Wood Ave. project coming, others possible*

Beginning June 23, work will also be undertaken on Wood Ave between St. Catherine St. and de Maisonneuve Blvd.

Other projects are under review, including a potential upgrade of the pavement on St. Catherine St. between Atwater and Wood, and other streets in the city.

Several projects will also address water upgrades and infrastructure.

### *Southeast update*

Alongside these infrastructure projects, a key urban planning initiative is progressing to the South-East sector's Special Planning Programme (SPP). After 12 months of analysis, community engagement and dialogue, the project is entering its final stage. We look forward to presenting the next stage of this process in the coming weeks.

This flexible and evolving planning framework will guide future development in the area bounded by Sherbrooke St., Atwater Ave., Dorchester Blvd. and Wood Ave. It aspires to revitalize the neighbourhood while respecting its architectural and heritage identity.

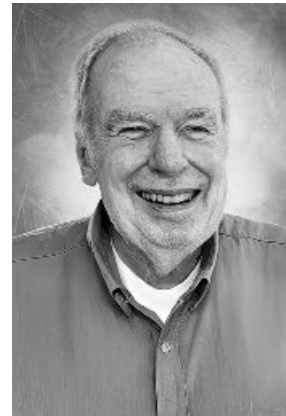
Together, we are setting a coherent path forward for building a vibrant district that reflects the character of our community.

\*

These projects demonstrate our commitment to investing in our infrastructure and to addressing the much-needed work. With your support and a shared long-term vision, we will continue to look towards a positive future for the city.

I want to thank you in advance for your patience and cooperation. There will be many orange cones throughout the city. Traffic patterns will be adjusted accordingly, and we encourage everyone to follow temporary signage to ensure the safety of all residents, workers and road users.

Wishing you an excellent start to summer!



## David Richard Gawley

November 23, 1936 – April 29, 2025

David Gawley passed away suddenly last week in the Intensive Care Unit of the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal two days after undergoing abdominal surgery. He was 88 years old.

David was the youngest son of Mae Lape, a German-American from Schenectady NY and Irish-Canadian Fred Gawley, who had met in Detroit and then moved to Toronto during the Great Depression

in search of work. The family's fortunes improved in wartime, and by the time David was in high school, his father was a stevedore and later a ticket agent for Canada Steamship Lines (CSL).

As a high-school student David worked part-time as a library assistant, and then on the CSL boats that took tourists from Lake Ontario to Montreal, Quebec City, Tadoussac, and up the Saguenay River. He graduated from Trinity College at the University of Toronto and trained as a teacher.

He moved to Montreal in 1960 and met his first wife Marjorie Cooper when they were both teaching at Cedarcrest Elementary School in Ville Saint-Laurent. By the time they were married in 1962, David had left teaching and was working at the head office of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Windsor Station, travelling widely on CP business and also on vacation with Marjorie in his beloved Italy and the Côte d'Azur.

In retirement, he took on volunteer responsibilities as treasurer of the Friends of the Westmount Public Library; as an editor at Canadian Rail magazine, at the railway museum Exporail, and on other activities of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association; at the Blue Metropolis Montreal International Literary Festival; and as secretary of the Volunteers' Association at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, which organized the annual museum ball.

After Marjorie passed away, David was introduced to the writer Linda Leith in 2010. They attended the Museum ball together that November, and he joined her literary press Linda Leith Publishing the following year as Chief Financial Officer. They were married in 2012 and were overjoyed by the love they shared.

David Gawley was a quiet, kind, charming, and thoughtful man who used his considerable skills to support colleagues and friends as well as charitable organizations whose values he shared. He also, extraordinarily, sent a "nightly letter" by email for over twenty years to members of his inner circle.

He had many gifts, among them an ability to find solutions to intractable problems—a talent appreciated by everyone from vice-presidents at CPR to members of his family. He enjoyed discerning a story from a spreadsheet. Above all, he had a gift for bringing people together. He will be sorely missed.

Predeceased by his older brothers Edward and Robert, David is survived by their children and grandchildren in Ontario and upstate New York: and by his wife Linda and her sons Adam Leith Gollner (Zoé Poirier Stephens) and Michael Gollner in Montreal, and Julian Gollner (Annie Briard) and their son Remy Kaslo Briard Gollner in Vancouver.

The family is planning a celebration of David's life this summer.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a contribution in his name via **Canada Helps** to one of the charities he loved best: the **Atwater Library** or the **Canadian Railroad Historical Association**.



Guest column

# The state of the city: Ballooning bureaucracy, more debt, insufficient roadwork

By Peter Trent

Recently, the city of Westmount tabled its 2024 detailed financial statements. They are not posted on the city’s website; but there’s a link to the website of the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l’Habitation (MAMH) where you can find them.

As one year’s statements do not give a full picture, you should really compare the 2024 statements with prior statements to see what’s going on. Fortunately, the MAMH site goes back to 2016. But I have saved you the trouble of doing that, at least for a few key trends.

I have also adjusted most numbers for either “regular” Montreal inflation and for Montreal construction cost inflation, as the case may be.

### Westmount’s ballooning bureaucracy

Polls revealed that Canadians were pre-occupied by economic issues during the recent federal election. Three quarters of responders listed income tax reduction, tariffs and the cost of living as issues that most influenced their vote.

I’m not sure how much of these worries have entered the awareness of Westmount city council. Certainly, little attention seems to have been paid to keeping costs – and therefore future tax bills – under control. The most glaring example of this, revealed by annual financial statements, is an explosion in the number of employees working for the city of Westmount.

From 2010 to 2016, Westmount’s average number of employees was 288; by 2017, there were 286. Today, there are 356 employees. Why? After all, the population that the city serves decreased slightly from 2011 to 2021, and there is no evidence at all of improved services – and, after inflation, there has been no increase in infrastructure investment.

Some new positions were created to handle an accelerated road infrastructure program, which is having some difficulty getting its construction boots on the ground.

A few positions were created for increased building maintenance – a task that was admittedly long neglected. But a 24-percent increase in total headcount? A 36-percent increase in the number of managers? A doubling of the number of professionals? Even the city of Montreal would blush at such overstuffed staffing levels.

All this happened on the watch of the

Total number of employees working for the city of Westmount: 2014-2024												
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2017-2024
Managers	35	36	42	42	46	44	49	49	54	61	57	36%
Professionals	14	12	11	12	12	14	15	18	23	26	25	108%
White collars	137	138	138	136	137	142	147	147	150	153	152	12 %
Blue collars	99	99	96	96	96	103	121	121	119	119	122	27%
TOTAL	285	285	287	286	291	303	332	335	346	359	356	24%
Increased staff from 2017				0	5	17	46	49	60	73	70	

last two city councils. While they seem to see their role as one of supporting the bureaucracy, it is less clear what importance they attach to their responsibility of oversight and to their duty of defending the interests of citizens and taxpayers.

Bureaucracies themselves will never advance serious strategies to cut their own costs; that is, cut into their very flesh and blood. This is why we need a new council, a council able to make the hard decisions to slice through the thicket of civil servants that have been allowed to grow in just seven short years.

And how much is this superfluity of staff actually costing taxpayers? Well, in 2016, in today’s dollars, total employee remuneration was \$30.8 million. In 2024, remuneration reached \$38.1 million, an increase of \$7.3 million a year.

### Debt and infrastructure

At the start of 2010, Westmount’s net debt was \$26.8 million in historical dollars.

What is “net debt”? you might well ask. It’s the total of all the city’s financial assets minus the total of all its financial liabilities (that is mostly long-term debt). Westmount was \$26.8 million “in the hole” in 2010. But by the start of 2017, Westmount had climbed out of it.

Was this done by cutting back on investing in infrastructure? No. In today’s dollars<sup>1</sup>, we invested \$171 million in infrastructure from 2010 to 2016, or an average of \$24.4 million a year.

As well as paying cash for most of that new infrastructure, we also had more than a little help from our friends: 1) then-mayor Karin Marks had negotiated with Quebec, in 2009, a \$20-million grant (in historical dollars) for the then-future Westmount recreation centre. 2) Westmount citizens generously donated \$6.5 million (in historical dollars) to the construction of the WRC. This meant that Westmount taxpayers only shouldered 36 percent of the cost of build-

ing the WRC.

By the time a new council took over and started its first full year in office in January 2018, Westmount still had no net debt: in fact, we had \$11.0 million in net financial holdings.

### Infrastructure spending down!

Between 2018 and 2024, in today’s dollars, some \$147 million<sup>2</sup> in infrastructure has been invested – \$21 million per year.

This is respectable, but less than the yearly \$24.4 million achieved from 2010 to 2016.

But in spite of their deplorable state, in 2024, only \$6.5 million was spent on our roads – well under the \$9.7 million budgeted. If the recent Claremont fiasco is any indication, roadwork completed in 2025 will be equally anemic.

Unfortunately, the current council has

decided to fall back on borrowing, rather than continuing with pay-as-you-go for all infrastructure investments. This is why, at the end of 2024, we had only \$3.8 million in net financial holdings. By the end of 2025, we will likely be back in net debt.

Montreal construction costs have increased at a rate that is nearly double the increase in the consumer price index. Future Westmount councils, rather than borrowing or taxing more to cover this construction inflation, should look to cutting costs. Roughly two-thirds of local operating costs are salaries and benefits, so cutting back on the now-evident bureaucratic growth will pay off. It will also make for a more efficient organization.

*Peter F. Trent is a former mayor of Westmount. He was in office from 1991 to 2001 and from 2009 to 2017.*

## Inter-neighbour communication



As seen on Prince Albert below de Maisonneuve May 7. Circle added by Independent.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

<sup>1</sup>“Today’s dollars” are arrived at using the 2024 Montreal Non-Residential Construction Price Index for infrastructure investment, and the 2024 Montreal Consumer Price Index for everything else.

<sup>2</sup>To compare fairly with the pre-2017 practice – when infrastructure costs did not include employees’ capitalized labour (or the amount was nugatory) – all capitalized labour has been removed to arrive at this figure.



# Copy of Letter Submitted to the Mayor and Members of the Westmount Municipal Council

## Westmount Residents and Business Owners Supporting the Revitalization of the Southeast sector

**To:** Madam Mayor, Members of the Westmount Municipal Council and Urban Planning Committee

**Date:** April 24th, 2025

**Subject:** Westmount's Special Urban Planning Program (PPU) – Key Points and Recommendations

**Madam Mayor, Members of the Municipal Council, and the Urban Planning Committee of Westmount,**

As concerned residents, business and property owners, we are writing to express strong support for the City of Westmount's proposed Special Planning Program (SPP/PPU) for the southeast sector – an initiative that promises to address long-standing challenges facing our community, including crime, itinerance, pollution, and safety.

Let's be clear, the current state of this area is not just undesirable, it is unacceptable and frankly an embarrassment that one of Westmount's most prominent entrances, in one of Canada's most prestigious neighbourhoods, is marred by neglect, itinerance, and safety issues. Over the past several years, this area has experienced a concerning rise in crime, multiple daily police interventions, several stabbings, shootings, and homicides. One of the most promising avenues for change lies in the redevelopment of the neglected properties on the south side of Saint Catherine Street – an area that has become symbolic of decline and underutilized potential. As community leaders, we not only have the collective responsibility but the opportunity to offer our tenants, customers and residents a safe, welcoming and vibrant environment to live, work and play.

The SPP, being led by Lemay Architects, proposes a modern and thoughtful vision for the area – emphasizing safer streets, sustainable infrastructure, enhanced housing and commercial offerings, and heritage preservation. This public initiative is a long-overdue effort to revitalize one of Westmount's most critical corridors, transforming it into a vibrant and welcoming gateway to our city.

Advocating to maintain the status quo and uphold the current stagnation has regrettably allowed the current situation to decline exponentially. We applaud the Council's effort to restart development consistent with the surrounding buildings. Clearly putting one's head in the sand and hoping that the situation improves is not working. The existing zoning has not attracted positive development leaving lots vacant and buildings to decay becoming havens for crime and vandalism, putting our citizens at risk, reducing property values and leading to a sense of neglect and decline within our community, a cycle which has become self-perpetuating. We commend City Council for acknowledging the problem and having the courage to propose bylaws that promote revitalization and development aligned with the surrounding urban fabric. Through these proactive measures, City Council demonstrates a clear commitment to fostering vibrant, safe, and thriving communities.

The proposed redevelopment offers numerous tangible benefits to all Westmount residence and business owners:

- A safer, more dynamic urban environment.

- Sustainable infrastructure, including improved public transit and pedestrian amenities.
- A vibrant, welcoming gateway into Westmount, reflecting the city's prestigious reputation.
- Diverse housing and commercial opportunities that attract residents, families, and businesses, bolstering local commerce and community vibrancy.

Developers are reportedly eager to invest in the area, but the current zoning and vision has rendered such projects nonviable. Over the past several decades, there has been virtually no meaningful development or revitalization along this stretch. With shifting demographics, including aging residents downsizing from larger homes into smaller apartments or condos, as well as young families seeking accessible housing options, the current conditions along Ste-Catherine Street are untenable. By updating the zoning, Westmount will finally be able to respond to market demand, raise crucial tax revenue, and fund community improvements like pools and parks.

Preserving our heritage architecture is important and must be balanced with the evolution and future vitality of Westmount. While opposition to change is inevitable, progress and positive change is necessary. The Mayor and City Council must make difficult decisions that serve the long-term interests of residents, local businesses and property owners. We must support them in moving forward and rely on our mayor and City Council to make the tough, necessary decisions that safeguard the community's future.

Now is the time to act – boldly, responsibly, and with vision. Westmount has a rich culture and heritage, one that we all want to uphold. Together with the City's architectural board beautiful projects can be realised respecting the historical context. The southeast sector deserves to shine as a beacon of what Westmount can be and should be. Let us not stand still and hope for improvement. Let us make it happen.

### Collective Representation

We, the undersigned, collectively represent the largest grouping of existing businesses, properties, and developable land holdings in Westmount. Together, our portfolio comprises:

- **Total Built Area:** Approximately 3,000,000 square feet
- **Residential Units:** 626 units across multiple properties
- **Commercial Tenants:** 175 businesses operating in the district
- **Parking Facilities:** 1,800 parking stalls
- **Annual Foot Traffic:** Over 15 million

Sincerely,

*The Undersigned*

**Jonathan Wener, Stephen Bronfman, Avery Palevsky, André Jude, Sébastien Hylands, Sophie Desmarais, David Bensadoun, Mario Morroni, Wayne Heuff, Brett Miller, Pierre Leonard, Francis Charron, Sorab Alavi, Guy Laframboise, Daniel Valoatto, Gideon Pollack, Reza Tehrani, Benjamin Spencer, Olivier Desmarais and William Brock**



Guest column

# Canada's problem isn't trade or tariffs – It's leadership and policy

By NICOLAS MATOSSIAN

Trade between Canada and the US has surpassed the trillion-dollar mark for the third year in a row, making it by far the most active and fluid commercial traffic between any two countries, that is until Trump decided to throw in greed and larceny roadblocks.

Should we be surprised?

For more than 150 years, successive Canadian governments have used our natural resources as a cash cow, reaping royalties and tax after tax to finance their political agendas, with no concern for the preservation and promotion of the inventory of wealth that built our nation and is the property of the Canadian people, not of its government.

In the past decade, obstacles to the development of our natural resources, the denial of access to new markets and the enactment of Bill 69 have made our natural resources the pariah of Canadian investment opportunities, making us weak, vulnerable and open to attacks on our economy.

The total lack of sovereign and legal defenses put in place to safeguard what are crown jewels constitute negligence on the part of successive governments, and one for which the people of Canada are about to pay the price.

## Why do we import oil?

What oil-rich and exporting country in the world imports crude to meet its own domestic demand?

Canada is the one and only.

It exports 4.2 million bbls of crude/day to the US (i.e. 32 percent of US daily requirements), and turns around to import ½ million bbls of oil per day from Saudi Arabia, the US and Nigeria – a ridiculously dangerous situation that we have repeatedly been told by our governments to be

“for the good of the Canadian people”!

The US depends on Canada for 40 percent of its aluminum, 32 percent of its oil and 80 percent of its potash, plus Canada has nickel, uranium, lithium and all the critical minerals much in demand. It also sells the US\$6.5 billion per year of electrical power, \$7 billion of natural gas, and has enough lumber to re-build LA.

And now the US wants to charge us for all this? Who's leading the dance?

All other resource-rich countries have put in place legislation that protects their inventory and guarantees that the sale, extraction and stockpiling of resources is done legally, contractually and in a manner to maximize the long-term value of their common wealth.

As a rule, there are priorities assigned to domestic and strategic use, and buyers' exports are ranked as according to the seller's preference, the whole in order to optimize the allocation of exports in a negotiated and open market.

Any tax, tariff or unilateral un-negotiated economic imposition or constraint placed on any export, or on the economy, automatically triggers a right to interrupt or ration the supply of any export, or to make it only available at an export price that counters any expected negative imposition.

Canada has none of this.

## Learn from OPEC

By contrast, OPEC countries have set supply terms and conditions that all importers respect, knowing that any attempted disruption is met with production and supply reductions until the price of oil returns to OPEC's equilibrium price.

All the OPEC nations have long understood that oil not sold stays in the ground and whatever negative short-term employment effect occurs is more than compensated by the value of the oil retained in the

inventory of reserves. The producers who are licensed to exploit the resources follow the guidelines of the country that owns the resources.

A national resource inventory and supply management model has no nationalization aspirations. To the contrary, it is orchestrated in concert with all private and public enterprises for the long-term viability of the enterprises, for employment and for the safeguard of the people's capital.

In fact, as OPEC has consistently proven, the management of a national resource inventory's most powerful weapon is the rationing of essential supply through retention or stockpiling.

Case in point: if Canada were to turn down the oil tap to the US by 2.1M bbls/day, overnight, the US would be 15 percent short of its daily requirement and left without a short-term substitute.

In less than two months, Canada would also have eliminated Canada's \$50-billion trade surplus that Trump is so concerned about. Where Mr. Trump finds the missing oil to fuel the US economy is his problem. Meanwhile, our oil stays home safely until tariffs are lifted.

## We can stockpile aluminum

The tariffs placed by the US on Canadian aluminum specifically aim to destroy our productive capacity and create unemployment in our industry, however, if Canada reduces aluminum shipments to the US by half, it creates a 20-percent shortage in the US's yearly aluminum requirement. In the short-term, the US does not have the production capacity to fill the gap, nor the access to a substitute supplier. Not our problem.

Furthermore, Canada can keep the smelters running at an economic capacity to maintain employment. The production is then either sold on other markets or acquired by the government and stockpiled in its national inventory.

Aluminum doesn't rust, remains ours as an asset on Canada's balance sheet and is readily available for sale at the right price.

The same principles apply for aluminum as they do for oil: value is retained and employment is protected. The exact same strategy can be used for any and all resources in multiple combinations to promote or defend our resources.

## Problem is our political leadership

The problem is not Trump, Putin, Modi or Xi Jinping. It's right here at home with our feckless, pretentious politicians who have never taken steps to protect and safe-

guard our capital with any export monitoring or inventory management.

Instead, quaking with tariffobia, they now line up slavishly to make piecemeal deals and keep throwing our money at problems that they have created, instead of focusing on the obvious solution.

Strategic, critical and essential supplies dominate our exports. Their continued availability requires any buyer to pay the market price, no exceptions.

Canada needs to have a defence mechanism in place that runs like an ATM. You try to withdraw more money than you have? “Transaction denied.” Any resources subjected to un-negotiated charges, or the economy is tariffed? “Export denied.”

The model is comprehensive, automated, predictable and disclosed to all. No surprises for any buyer, just rigidly enforced rules and deterrents to any aggressor.

In the face of such a defense mechanism backed by strong leadership, Trump, the serial bully, would never have touched Canada, any more than he would pick a fight with a karate black belt.

So why has this basic protection that the Canadian people are owed never been put in place?

## Don't react with side deals, prepare with system

Where are the present-day's Winston Churchill and Beaverbrook, Mackenzie King and C. D. Howe?

Where are the people who rise up in wartime in the defence of their country's sovereignty, safety and economy, and act for the survival and welfare of their people, with no political agenda or designs on the next election.

No one has emerged in last decade's pathetic political parade of demagogues and wastrel sycophants, and no one has stepped up and answered the people's cry for unity, sovereignty and economic independence.

Canada needs a leader with purpose and integrity, a doer not a talker, relentlessly guided by courage and by the belief that Canada is strong, free and forever ours.

God help us or we will perish as a nation, scuttled by its own political cowardice.

*Nicolas Matossian is a former city councillor. He has a PhD (Econ) from McGill University and an MBA from Harvard, and has been an economic advisor to the governments of Canada, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and BC, in addition to managing engineering and construction companies.*

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## Fast response time



Reader Sam Beitel noticed an open gate leading to the CP train tracks between Abbott and Irvine on May 1. Someone had cut the lock. Public Security was notified, and arrived within 20 minutes to temporarily secure the gate. CP was notified and secured the gate with a new lock within about two hours from the initial call. Main photo: Public Security's fix. Insets: the cut chain, left, and new lock, right.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF S. BEITEL.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CITIZENS, SPEAK UP ON  
SOUTHEAST PLAN – AND  
WHY IS COUNCIL RUSHING?

On Monday, May 4, I attended Westmount city council meeting to ask how council was going to respond to the very large and growing number of residents who have expressed their concerns about the Lemay re-zoning plan for the southeast sector. This plan includes towers that in no way respect the high-density mix of three- to seven-storey buildings that characterizes middle and lower Westmount.

St. Catherine, Tupper and the north side of Dorchester do need a re-think. It is, in fact, a wonderful opportunity for some careful planning to add more residential, commercial and civic facilities to Westmount. A chance, with some vision, to give us a third vibrant area like Victoria and Greene. Council insists that no developers will invest without increased height and haven't done so in 30 years. No attempt has been made, however, to make St. Catherine St. itself more appealing, as was done on Greene and Victoria avenues, in order to spark development.

At the May meeting, the mayor informed us that there had, in fact, been changes made to the Lemay plan and they would be revealed at a public consultation on June 18. She also stated that the notice of motion (the intent to pass the by-law) for the southeast plan will be deposited at a special council meeting on May 27, three weeks before the consultation.

Mayor Smith stated, "You'll see the

results of feedback and input. There will be a public consultation that night and time for more feedback with plans to adopt a couple of months later [in September]." If, in fact, that consultation is to be a real opportunity to hear residents and make significant changes or to re-think the plan, why is the intent to pass the by-law being given before the consultation?

On May 8, the Atwater Library hosted a presentation to a full auditorium, with about 80 more on-line participants. Four well-known experts in the fields of architecture, urban planning and affordable housing – all of whom are or have been Westmount residents – were the presenters. They were Julia Gersovitz, O.C., Professor Annmarie Adams, Professor Nik Luka, and attorney and affordable housing consultant Robert Cohen.

They clarified how this proposed re-development would negatively impact the community and what sorts of other initiatives could be taken to provide more varied housing opportunities. They evoked the possibility of a livable, walkable, secure neighbourhood, designed to a human scale and inviting to young families. This could be a revitalized sector that integrates into the rest of the city and would not wall off the area south of Dorchester.

Professor Luka said, sagely, "It is not how dense you make it. It is how you make it dense." He made reference to the Victoria village residential area, that is very densely populated, but without towers. In other words, there are many ways to approach density that council has not

adequately considered, even at this late stage of the planning.

This May 8 meeting at Atwater Library, attempting to develop a shared vision, should have been at the very beginning of this entire planning process, drawing on the expertise of people, like the presenters, who have both extensive professional experience and a deep understanding of the community.

As Phyllis Lambert stated at the end of the evening, it must be a call to action. Citizens must tell council that they chose this community because of its character and want to see that reflected in any new development.

It is laudable that Mayor Smith and council have started this planning process. However, this plan is extremely unpopular and controversial. The economic analysis and cost-benefit to the community have not been done. The consequences of increasing the zoning have not been properly analyzed, leaving this as a deeply flawed plan.

Elections will be held in November. Is it ethical and right for this council to push these changes through just as their mandate is ending?

KARIN MARKS, LANSDOWNE AVE.

WELL DONE, ATWATER LIBRARY!

On Thursday, May 8, the Atwater Library hosted a panel discussion on revitalizing southeast Westmount. During the event, panelist Robert Cohen proposed a vision of a 3-to-7-storey non-market, affordable housing development along Dorchester.

This is a welcome proposal. We urgently need more homes, and we need to elevate the conversation about how we build them. Instead of simply opposing the city's plan, the panelists offered a constructive and thoughtful vision that deserves serious consideration.

Well done to the Atwater Library for organizing such an insightful discussion!

JAMES MURPHY, MELVILLE AVE.

WHY NOT RE-DEVELOP  
RCMP BUILDING?

I attended the May 8 meeting's panel session organized by the Atwater Library. An overarching objective is to develop with density but without inordinate height, as exists at Mile End. The feedback endorses family housing, housing for the needy and, especially, reinforcing family values and community living.

It's not too far fetched to think of meeting these objectives by re-purposing the RCMP building situated just west of Greene Ave. between St. Catherine and Dorchester. For conjecture, let's assume the nation's police force could be enticed to move into a super-modern, newly built facility and vacate the present edifice, which could then become new housing.

This proposed RCMP headquarters could be the terrain [on Westmount's west side] on the south side of the railway tracks, across from Westmount's old station. The site remains unbuilt by the MUHC. It was originally designated for a neurology unit, but this will never happen. The province is broke, and McGill's neurology is apparently happy on upper University St.

The vacated Dorchester complex could also house a school – there will be kids moving in. The building looks functional, but the exterior could be enhanced by a wall painting like the artistic one at the corner of Milton and St. Famille.

Then, to complete the picture, the south side of St. Catherine St. on this "development island," between Atwater and Gladstone, could be graced by a row of Habitat-like apartments. These would align facing south, for maximum sunlight. The genius of this design is that each unit has an outlook and a balcony not on top of the next floor down. It's fun, unique, and of course interesting.

The ground-floor plans could include a meeting room for kids to display their art and the discoveries made on outings. Meeting rooms for seniors, and *de rigueur*, a

Clarification re: Claremont-to-Grosvenor Sherbrooke roadwork  
South sidewalks to be repaired 'punctually,'  
north ones to be completely re-constructed

There were questions from the audience when the city approved a contract at an April 22 special council meeting for roadwork on Sherbrooke St. between Claremont and Grosvenor (see April 29, p. 1).

In the back-and-forth, it appears that some nuances of the planned work were not fully made clear as regards to *sidewalks*. As a result, I asked the city afresh what is

planned.

On the south side in this stretch, there will be "punctual" sidewalk reconstruction.

On the north side, the sidewalk will be re-constructed due to, and after, Hydro Westmount work on the entire Claremont-Grosvenor stretch.

There will also be work on manholes at Sherbrooke and Victoria, and at Sherbrooke and Prince Albert. – DP

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

basketball court. Also, a bee, butterfly and hummingbird arbor in the sunny lee of the Atwater Library.

One questioner asked how the height of developed buildings would be determined. It's important. "Habitat Row" would be human scale. Breathtaking without inspiring bungee jumping.

JOHN FRETZ, LANSDOWNE AVE.

### PLEASE SAVE CENTENNIAL ACADEMY

I am the proud father of a gifted neuro-divergent teenager in grade 8 and am fortunate to have a wonderfully close and rich relationship with her. I count my blessings every day that this has always been the case and feel enriched by our shared experiences.

Tapping into her amazing creativity and her powerful scientific and mathematical mind requires tailored approaches and unique skills honed by sheer dedication and empathy.

Many of these skills and abilities will never be developed or found in a public school system, given the environment required to produce such dedication.

Centennial's teachers, student-success team and all those who come together to

make Centennial Academy the unique and powerful social and academic environment that it is for its 300 students and over 600 parents are part of an institution that is home to tremendous talent, know-how and expertise that our children need and are entitled to.

I know that I am not alone in expressing my sincere appreciation and recognition to the members of Centennial Academy for their dedication and the difference they make every day for our children and our families.

To the bankers of Centennial Academy and the honourable members of the Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec who will be deciding the fate of our school in the days to come, I hope you will consider the far-reaching impact your contribution to a decision to save Centennial Academy will have, not only on the current population of the academy, but also on the many future students and families who will be saved by keeping Centennial Academy open for years to come.

MICHEL LAGUEUX, ELM AVE.

### WHY NOT CANCEL THE TICKET?

Regarding the unjustified parking ticket (see letter, May 6, p. 6), if it had happened

to me, I would have gone straight to the parking office on Stanton St., upstairs from the police station, where the ticket would have been cancelled immediately.

The initial contact with Public Security shows a lack of training, and the lack of a decent response at three levels [of management] above is deeply disturbing. To have five Public Security vehicles attending to one disputed ticket seems like overkill, no? And, yet, [before going to court] no one had the common sense to cancel the ticket!

GORDON COHEN, LANSDOWNE AVE.

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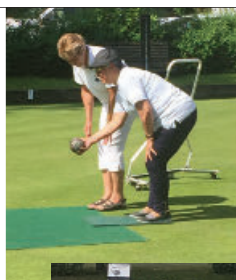
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**Anna  
Gainey**  
NDG-Westmount





Municipal election, cont'd from p. 1

So, with Westmount needing a new mayor and perhaps a few new councillors, what are the basic similarities and differences between the commitment involved in being mayor or a district councillor?

Council member requirements

All must be 18 years of age and Canadian citizens. But unlike candidates for federal, provincial and larger municipalities' offices who run for political parties, in the case of Westmount, interested persons have, to date, run on their own without the backing of a political party or explicit slate. In Westmount's case, serving on the council was once viewed as contributing a service to the community. That changed some 50 years ago when salaries were imposed on elected officials by the province over the objection of then Westmount mayor (1969 to 1971), the late Peter McEntyre.

As for the mayoralty, it is often considered beneficial for a candidate to have had the experience of having served as a councillor, as has been the case for the last three mayors (Smith, Peter Trent, Karin Marks), but not the one before that (May Cutler).

In all cases, candidates are required to have an official agent to track and report

expenditures and liaise with the city clerk's office, which acts as the returning officer.

Remuneration

Based on Quebec's "Act respecting the remuneration of elected municipal officials," an updated basic pay scale was adopted by the city June 7, 2024 in By-law 1622 (see May 28, p. 3, May 7, p. 25). This set the basic annual remuneration of the mayor at \$110,578. Added to this this was an allowance of \$19,422 for a total of \$130,000 to be indexed annually as of January 1 between 2.5 and 4 percent, "according to the statutory increases offered to management personnel."

Additional amounts for the mayor include pay from the Montreal agglomeration council and other committees.

Set, as well, was a councillor's basic yearly remuneration of \$24,576 plus allowance of \$12,288 for a total of \$36,864, also to be indexed annually. Whenever a councillor replaces the mayor in an "acting" capacity, the councillor receives additional pay equivalent to what would have been accorded to the mayor on a prorated basis.

Time commitments

Councillors are expected to attend the public council meetings – one or two a month – as well as those of the general committee of council held *in camera* and

That is (or was) a lot of PBR!



These empty cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer were seen March 21 at the returns counter of the Metro grocery store on Victoria. The returner declined to be photographed, but "he is my new hero," said longtime semi-pro beer drinker and current *Independent* editor David Price.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

typically other meetings depending on their commissionership or other commitments on which they may sit.

The frequency of such events and meetings is often not expected when candidates run for office and count on attending "only" a couple of meetings a month.

There can also be committee meetings such as those regarding traffic and/or neighbourhood issues as well as special public consultation sessions involving the district or those held for re-zoning and other major urban planning projects. There are also several miscellaneous social and recreational events per year, and special events such as the library's 125th anniversary.

Motivation

So why run? Some council members are motivated by neighbourhood or district views concerning such issues as urban

planning, speeding, parking, dogs, bike lanes or the protection of trees or parks.

When it comes to the mayor's position, which could probably be appropriately referred to as a "full-time calling" rather than a "job," the role can invade family privacy especially when residents believe their concerns have been ignored and when there are disputes. There are also numerous emails and requests to follow up.

In short, if it's Family Day, St. Jean, Canada Day, opening of a new Westmount Park playground or the showcasing of a new entrance or service at the library, members of council are generally expected to be there.

These are all considerations for those running for a council seat that may not be raised or considered when candidates seek election. But they may play a key role in the decision.

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## Work on fire route scheduled June-October

# \$3.9M approved for Forden reconstruction contract

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The \$3.9-million reconstruction work proposed for Forden Ave. and Forden Cresc. received a go-ahead May 5 from city council as one of this summer's major road projects. It follows underground work there four years ago.

After two public consultation meetings, details of the final plan had been featured on the city's Engage.org website. This "preferred plan" for the avenue was to retain its traditional two-way traffic direction linking Westmount Ave. and Montrose. As such, it sticks "as closely as possible to the existing situation while maintaining new standards from Transport Quebec" such as widened sidewalks.

This two-way route not only provides a well-used route for drivers but also for fire-fighters from the Stanton St. station to quickly access the city's upper levels.

As well, the downhill curve of Forden Cres. remains one-way south as a link from King George (Murray) Park to the lower intersection with Forden avenue near Montrose.

The contract was awarded to Eurovia Quebec as "the lowest compliant bidder,"

at a maximum of \$3,853,863, according to the council resolution.

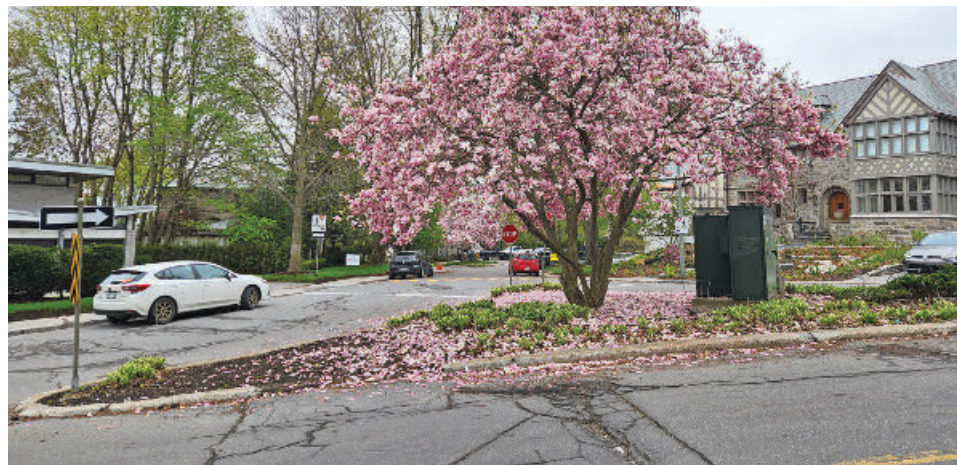
### Approved unanimously

Proposed by Councillor Conrad Peart, whose commissionership includes infrastructure, the contract was seconded by Councillor Jeff Shamie and approved unanimously with explanation from Councillor Elisabeth Roux, who represents the District 2, where the work will take place.

As a resident of Forden Crescent as

well, Roux said that she obtained legal advice regarding possible conflict of interest that might prevent her from "commenting" on the project, but that did not exclude her from voting.

Originally a two-way street itself, Forden Cresc. had been made one-way after a fatal collision between a northbound car whose driver had been blinded by the sun and a southbound cyclist (see story May 25, 2021, p. 3).



The northern/upper junction of Forden and Forden Crescent on May 9.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.


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 Co-Directors, Cedars CanSupport

Justin Sanders, MD, MSc, FAAHPM  
 Director, Division of Supportive and Palliative Care, MUHC

Camilla Zimmerman, MD, PhD, FRCPC  
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Camilla Zimmerman, MD, PhD, FRCPC  
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Lecture

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LYSANNE FOWLER

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For more information on him, please refer to the Montreal SPCA website, scroll to his information page from his identification number, A0053668814, and take a peek at the great photographs of him.

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# Adorable young Mika



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

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She is presently in foster care for the Gerdy's Rescues and Adoptions volunteer animal rescue group.

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

A keen playmate, she would be happy in a home with another young active cat companion to be silly with.

If you would like more information on Gerdy's, please do not hesitate to scroll to their website at [www.gerdysrescue.org](http://www.gerdysrescue.org) and email the volunteers at [info@gerdysrescue.org](mailto:info@gerdysrescue.org) for more photographs and information on adopting affectionate young Mika into your family.

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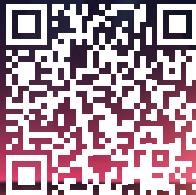
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## NOUVELLES

PROCHAINE SÉANCE  
DU CONSEIL

Lundi 9 juin

## NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL  
MEETING

Monday, June 9



### Sondage sur le Quartier Greene et le Village Victoria

**D'ici le 16 mai**, la Ville de Westmount, en partenariat avec l'organisme Rues principales, vous invite à partager votre avis sur le Quartier Greene et le Village Victoria. [westmount.org](https://westmount.org)

### Mai sans tondeuse

La Ville de Westmount a désigné 10 zones publiques pour l'initiative Mai sans tondeuse. Les résidents sont également invités à participer à cette initiative, qui vise à encourager une gestion plus durable des espaces verts et à soutenir des écosystèmes en santé ! [westmount.org](https://westmount.org)

### Travaux au belvédère Summit

À partir de la semaine du **12 mai**, des travaux de renforcement nécessiteront la fermeture temporaire de l'accès public au belvédère. [westmount.org/travaux](https://westmount.org/travaux)

### Reprise des collectes hebdomadaires d'ordures du 1<sup>er</sup> mai au 30 septembre

Entre le 1<sup>er</sup> mai et le 30 septembre, la collecte des ordures a lieu chaque semaine pour les maisons unifamiliales et les immeubles comptant de 2 à 8 logements. [westmount.org](https://westmount.org)

### Resurfacement d'une partie de la rue Sherbrooke à partir du 20 mai

La Ville de Westmount va procéder à des travaux de voirie sur la rue Sherbrooke O. entre l'avenue Grosvenor et la limite ouest de la Ville (à l'ouest de l'avenue Claremont). [westmount.org/travaux](https://westmount.org/travaux)



### Survey on Quartier Greene and Victoria Village

**Until May 16**, the City of Westmount, in partnership with the organization Rues principales, invites you to share your thoughts on Quartier Greene and Victoria Village. [westmount.org](https://westmount.org)

### No Mow May

The City of Westmount has designated 10 public zones for No Mow May, an initiative to adopt more sustainable management of green spaces and support healthy ecosystems. Residents are encouraged to participate as well! [westmount.org](https://westmount.org)

### Weekly Garbage Collection Resumes From May 1 to September 30

Between May 1 and September 30, garbage collection is weekly for single-family homes and buildings with 2 to 8 units. [westmount.org](https://westmount.org)

### Works at Summit Lookout

Starting the week of **May 12**, reinforcement work will require the temporary closure of public access to Summit Lookout. [westmount.org/works](https://westmount.org/works)

### Resurfacing of a Section of Sherbrooke Street Starting May 20

The City of Westmount will be carrying out roadwork on Sherbrooke Street W. between Grosvenor Avenue and the western limit of the City (west of Claremont Avenue). [westmount.org/works](https://westmount.org/works)

## BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

### Soirée pub quiz

**21 mai, 19 h**, Victoria Hall. Venez en équipe (6 personnes maximum) lors d'une soirée amusante de jeux-questionnaires. Les joueurs et joueuses en solo seront jumelés à d'autres participants. Billets à 5 \$, incluant une boisson. Bar payant et prix à gagner. [westmount.org/evenements](https://westmount.org/evenements)



### Ciné-club : Conclave (2024)

**27 mai, 14 h**, Victoria Hall. Joignez-vous à notre Ciné-club où nous regarderons un film sur grand écran, dans une ambiance décontractée. Conclave est un thriller politique réalisé par Edward Berger, qui explore les luttes de pouvoir au sommet de l'Église catholique, adapté du roman de Robert Harris. [westmount.org/evenements](https://westmount.org/evenements)

### Conférence — Let's Talk About Dementia

**22 mai, 19 h**, Victoria Hall. En anglais. Cette conférence publique avec le Dr Serge Gauthier, le Dr Josée A. Morais et Claire Webster, vise à sensibiliser et à informer sur la maladie d'Alzheimer et d'autres maladies liées aux troubles neurocognitifs. [westlib.org](https://westlib.org)

### Atelier d'écriture — Writing in Community

**Les mercredis 28 mai, 4 et 11 juin, 18 h**, Salle Westmount. Writers Collective of Canada crée des liens par la créativité en inspirant des histoires authentiques et puissantes partagées dans la communauté. Dans cet espace, les participants sont invités à raconter, écouter et se connecter à eux-mêmes et aux autres. [westlib.org](https://westlib.org)

### Concert : Hamtar

**25 mai, 14 h**, Victoria Hall. La musique classique persane, avec ses racines millénaires, a été transmise à la génération actuelle comme un héritage précieux. Ce concert s'adresse aux amateurs de musique classique persane et constitue une occasion unique de découvrir une musique persane authentique, interprétée par des musiciens de talent. [westmount.org/evenements](https://westmount.org/evenements)

## LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Pub Quiz Night

**May 21, 7 p.m.**, Victoria Hall. Bring a team (6 players maximum) and join others for a fun night testing your trivia skills. Solo players are welcome and will be matched with other participants. Tickets: \$5 (includes one drink). Cash bar and prizes to be won. [westmount.org/events](https://westmount.org/events)

### Lecture — Let's Talk About Dementia

**May 22, 7 p.m.**, Victoria Hall. This public lecture with Dr. Serge Gauthier, Dr. José A. Morais and Claire Webster, aims to raise awareness and provide basic information about Alzheimer's and other dementia-related diseases. [westlib.org](https://westlib.org)

### Concert: Hamtar

**May 25, 2 p.m.**, Victoria Hall. Persian classical music, with its millennia-old roots, has been passed down to the present generation as a precious heritage. This concert is for enthusiasts of Persian classical music and presents a unique opportunity to experience authentic Persian music, performed by talented musicians. [westmount.org/events](https://westmount.org/events)

### Film Club: Conclave (2024)

**May 27, 2 p.m.**, Victoria Hall. Conclave is a political thriller directed by Edward Berger, exploring the power struggles at the highest levels of the Catholic Church, based on the novel by Robert Harris. [westmount.org/events](https://westmount.org/events)



### Writing Workshop — Writing in Community

**On Wednesdays, May 28, June 4 and 11, 6 p.m.**, Westmount Room. Writers Collective of Canada ignite connection through creativity by inspiring powerful authentic stories shared in community. In this space, participants are encouraged to share, listen, and connect with themselves and others. [westlib.org](https://westlib.org)





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Police Report

Station 12 police seeking suspect in garage theft incidents

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Last week, police at Station 12 on Stan-ton St. had yet to make an arrest following an attempted robbery at a Sherbrooke St. apartment building’s garage near the corner of Atwater.

According to Cst. Mike Yigit, the sta-tion’s community relations officer, the per-petrator tried to enter the building on May 1 through the garage, but was quickly spotted on a video feed being monitored by a security guard.

Police, who arrived shortly after, were able to match the suspect seen in the video with another recent robbery incident that also took place at a local apartment build-ing garage.

The suspect’s *modus operandi* was straightforward. “He would sneak in through the garage when the door would open,” said Yigit. “He would then steal things inside. He would go for the lockers and the cars.”

Police generally advise condo and apart-ment dwellers who use an interior garage to always close the garage door when arriv-ing or departing, but also to be vigilant in making sure no one tries surreptitiously to enter the garage.

Toyota Tundra stolen

Last week was relatively quiet in West-mountain crimewise. The only other incident appearing in Station 12’s docket of reports for the period was a vehicle theft in the Westmount Square indoor parking area.

The owner of a 2024 Toyota Tundra filed a report at Station 12 that the full-size pick-up truck he’d parked at around 7 pm on the evening of May 3 was missing the following morning.

Although the truck was equipped with a GPS tracking device, the owner found that it stopped geolocating around 4:30 am, presumably because it had become dis-abled. The police eventually managed to find the truck in another part of the West-mountain Square parking garage.

According to the report, the front pas-senger-side window was shattered and the dashboard and steering column had been partly disassembled and wires cut, in an apparent attempt to either disable the GPS or override the vehicle’s systems that may have been stopping it from being driven further.

Invitations from police

Community relations staff from Station 12 are inviting Westmounters to come out

and meet them this week at security in-formation events.

The first, on Wednesday, May 14 be-tween 10 am and 1 pm, will be at the Mc-Donald’s restaurant on Sherbrooke at Claremont.

This will be followed by an event on Thursday, May 15 at 1 pm when the officers will speak to members of the Contactivity Centre at the Westmount recreation centre on the issue of fraud.

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The McDonald’s at Sherbrooke and Claremont is open, even though work is ongoing to the building’s façade, as seen this week. The police are inviting the public to meet with them there Wednesday, May 14 from 10 am to 1 pm.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



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# Dawson College marks Earth Day by creating wildflower meadows

BY JENNIFER BALL

Dawson College, which just won a “platinum” designation from the Associ-



Students and teachers sowing seeds for a wildflower meadow to celebrate Earth Day.



ation for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, celebrated Earth Day 2025 – April 22 – quite literally.

Teachers, students and volunteers spread black soil over large swathes of the campus in the hopes that two wildflower gardens will cooperate and join Dawson's broader living campus.

According to Chris Adam, associate director at the CEGEP's office of sustainability, it is the first CEGEP/college in North America to earn this distinction. The CEGEP is located in Westmount at 3040

Sherbrooke St.

Seeds sown will hopefully beget native flowers that can thrive in filtered sunlight and attract pollinators.

Christina Parsons, communication advisor at Dawson College, said it was all in effort to bring indigenous wildflowers “that belong here” back.

“In a few months, [the area] will be a wildflower meadow. We will have tables and it will be another spot to enjoy being in nature while cutting down on the lawn mowing and the noise pollution.”

◀From left, back row: Myka Taylor (professor), Shaneli Yaghoubi (graduate), Narcisse Hassan (graduate), Diane Gauvin (director general), Leanne Bennett (academic dean), Chris Adam (office of sustainability); front row: Azra Khan (office of academic development), Aisha Akram (student), Jennifer de Vera (office of sustainability) and Nicolas Urrea (graduate).

**Funds raised go to Ronald McDonald House**

## Station 12 police participate in McHappy Day at Alexis Nihon

BY JENNIFER BALL

Several Station 12 police officers were at work at the McDonald's restaurant in Plaza Alexis Nihon May 8 alongside fire-fighters from Station 10, which is located on St. Matthew St. and de Maisonneuve Blvd. downtown.

Their work serving customers was in support of National McDonald's McHappy Day, with a portion of all food sales going to Ronald McDonald House Charities and other local children's charities across Canada.

Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit spoke with the *Independent* and said “what is most interesting is that we get to know the [staff at the McDonald's] ...

“They see us walk in here every day and intervene but we do not really have that contact [with the owner and the staff at the

McDonald's] and oftentimes that helps us to all get along...”

“I know that when we did [community events in the past at the McDonald's] it was very impressive to see the teamwork [between the individuals working in the back of the restaurant.]”

Cst. Yigit said that he never worked in a McDonald's when he was a teenager but he wished that he had!

“My friends worked at one and they always had these parties and it was a big community that I wanted to be part of...”

“Being here today brings me back to when I was a [teenager.] I'm [finally] working at a McDonald's!”

▶From left, the owner of the McDonald's franchise at Alexis Nihon, Jean-Hugues Coudry; store manager Stephanie Hall; Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit and police officer Emmanuel Provencher.





# RMR greets new CO Langlois, cheers for outgoing CO Jonasz



By RALPH THOMPSON

A majestic and colourful ceremony was held at the Royal Montreal Regiment (RMR) armoury on St. Catherine St. May 4 marking the transfer of command from Lieutenant-Colonel Maciej Jonasz to Lieu-



Lieutenant-Colonel Kevin Langlois accepts the regiment's colours from Lieutenant-Colonel Maciej Jonasz.

tenant-Colonel Kevin Langlois.

The master of ceremonies for the formal event was Captain Paul Kavanagh, who welcomed the regiment and guests, and gave a brief explanation of the regiment's colours, stating: "The first and most sacred distinguishing mark of any

regiment is its colours."

All stood for a march past of the colours, accompanied by a band, La Musique Régimentaire Des Fusiliers Mont-Royal.

Kavanagh welcomed honorary colonel David Bensadoun, honorary lieutenant - colonel Isabelle Racicot, 34 Brigade commander Colonel David Shane and his sergeant-major, Chief Warrant Officer Mathieu Giard.

Shane led the senior officers to inspection of the regiment, followed by a final march past of the outgoing commanding officer Jonasz.

The annual rent payment of one dollar to the city of Westmount for the land that the armoury stands on was handed over to Councillor Mary Gallery, a tradition dating back 100 years.

Numerous honours, promotions and trophies were handed out by the RMR

commanding team.

The change of command proceeded, with Jonasz handing over the commanding officer's sword and the consecrated colours to Langlois, followed by the signing of the parchments.

The incoming and outgoing commanding officers' wives both received flower bouquets.

Shane and incoming commanding officer Langlois gave speeches, with Langlois emphasizing the troubled times that we are now facing from authoritarian regimes.

Three cheers were given to Jonasz. Langlois then led the regiment past the podium, the colours departed and all stood for the national anthem.

Refreshments and barbecued food were served after the closing address.

*See also p. 1 photo.*



The "signing of the parchments."



## Affordability not in council's 'vision:' Cllr. Peart

# Special meetings to finalize southeast project: May 27, June 18

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Concerns about the city's plans for the southeast development project were heard during the council's regular monthly meeting May 5 as it heads toward final decisional stages.

Mayor Christina Smith announced at the opening of the session that two special meetings are planned for May 27 and June 18. This still allows time for more public consultation, she said.

Kicking off recent concerns, former mayor Karin Marks, of Lansdowne, explained that the project had generated "a lot of concern" including due to the city's designation as a Canadian historic site (see story January 24, 2012, p. 1). Marks had also served for many years as the council's commissioner of architecture and planning before her mayoralty from 2002-2009.

This historical designation for a major portion of the city "gives more teeth to the city's architectural by-law," Marks explained.

Julia Gersovitz, a former chair of the city's Planning Advisory Commission (PAC), asked what steps and mechanism

the city envisioned for integrating the issue of affordability into the portion of this southeast area that the city owns. This involves the municipal parking lots in a section south of Tupper St.

Councillor Conrad Peart, whose commissionership includes urban planning, started to explain that this would be up to the newly elected Westmount council November 2, but when prompted by Gersovitz, agreed that "the short answer" to her question was that the issue of affordability was not "in the vision."

### Finding a balance

"Though the re-development of the southeast provides financial opportunities for the city, we must remember the necessity to balance this with the need to build community and enhance the quality of life for existing and future residents," according to Councillor Kathleen Kez, who represents the District 8. "A balance must be found."

Mayor Smith had stated at the start of the meeting, however, that her vision "has always been that we want to revitalise this area, to make it a livable and dynamic area



of the city." To this effect, "the current situation is not acceptable, and is not sustainable," she said. "The integration into the community is of great importance, and no building of heritage value would be."

While she "appreciated the community feedback," she said that it was "important to remember that this is not about one project or the architecture of a building, but it is a new vision for the area. [The state of] St. Catherine [in this area], in particular, is unacceptable."

◀Former mayor Karin Marks questions council at its meeting May 5.

### We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them.

Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. Email us at: [editor@westmountindependent.com](mailto:editor@westmountindependent.com)

## Vic village work includes night work, starting May 20

# City aims to minimize impact on merchants of Sherbrooke work

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In order to keep Sherbrooke St. open to traffic during re-paving through the commercial blocks between Grosvenor and the west city limits, much of the work will take place at night, despite noise and annoyance, Councillor Conrad Peart told the council meeting May 5. This is to minimize shutting down traffic.

Expected to start May 20, Peart said as commissioner of infrastructure that the overall work will be more "aggressive" than "scrape and pave" surface work on the street. It will include Hydro Westmount upgrades and "reconstruction" of sidewalks on the north side.

Mayor Christina Smith added that this first phase on the north side is being planned early to enable the two restaurant terraces there to open as soon as possible.

"We know that it impacts merchants and restaurants with terraces, in particular," she explained. "We have designed the schedule to minimize the impact on them, and hopefully, when their section is com-



City signage at Sherbrooke and Grosvenor previewing upcoming work.

pleted, they will have lots of nice weather to take advantage of their terrasses."

The high-profile work had been awarded to Ventec Construction at a special council meeting April 22 at a cost of \$5.2 million (see April 29, p. 1).

## Help save Centennial School

**Centennial Academy**, a high school that supports neurodivergent students and those with learning difficulties for over 50 years, is now at risk of closing.

Featuring **Rufus & Martha Wainwright, Patrick Watson, Sarahmée, and Emmanuel Bilodeau**, a benefit concert is taking place to secure a future for Centennial Academy students.

**Friday, May 23, 7 pm**  
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Partial tax receipt available with ticket purchase –  
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**[centennial.qc.ca/benefit-concert/](http://centennial.qc.ca/benefit-concert/)**



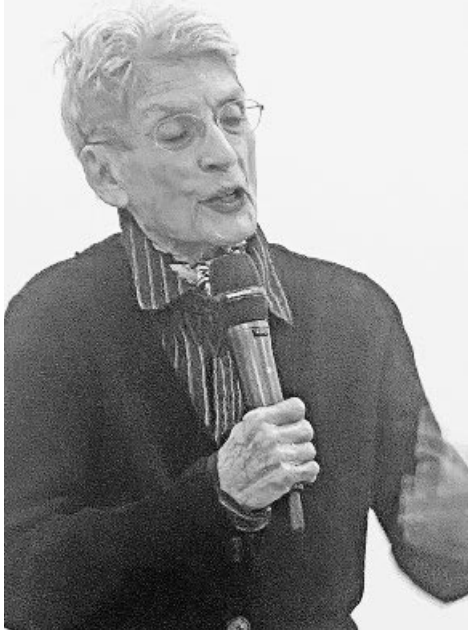
# Atwater Library hosts architecture experts to talk southeast, proposed 25-storey allowance at St. Catherine/Atwater

By JENNIFER BALL

Lynn Verge, the executive director of the Atwater Library, recently hosted a discussion on Westmount's southeast revitalization project that explained how the library would be affected should Lemay Architecture's proposal for a 25-storey building allowance, adjacent to the library, move forward.

The library is located at 1200 Atwater Ave., in Westmount, and the event took place there on May 8. According to a graphic that the Atwater Library website published on its website, the Lemay proposal is for a 25-storey tower to be built adjacent to the library, at Atwater Ave. and St. Catherine St. on the site of the former Miso and McDonald's restaurants currently occupied by the Resilience Montreal day shelter.

Four panelists made presentations that critiqued the proposal: conservation archi-



Phyllis Lambert at the mic.

tect and former Westmount Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) member Julia Gersovitz, McGill urban planning and architecture professor Nik Luka, McGill architecture professor Annmarie Adams, and affordable housing expert and lawyer Robert Cohen.

The *Independent* has been reporting on this story for years. It reported in the February 18 issue, (p. 1), "The southeast area, which had a zoning freeze renewed in 2023, comprises a large zone between Dorchester and St. Catherine from Clarke to Atwater and one to the north between St. Catherine and Sherbrooke between Wood



From left: panellists Julia Gersovitz, Annmarie Adams, Nik Luka and Robert Cohen.

and Atwater...

"The development of the city's southeast has been under discussion for many years and was subject to previous recommendations that led to a report by AGIL but that were never acted on by the city councils elected in 2018 and 2022."

Gersovitz, Luka, Adams and Cohen had the following five recommendations:

- Re-knit the urban fabric – create community,
- Welcome all generations – ensure a diversity of choices,
- Ensure affordability – plan for families, re-build the population,
- Reinforce liveability: walking, shopping, being safe, playing,
- Re-green: continue the mountain into the sector.

A slide summarized the four brief presentations of the panellists:

- "Density is not the issue: Westmount has already met its obligations,
- "The plan should reflect Westmount's character, NOT Montreal's downtown core,
- "There is a unique opportunity to build affordable housing on city-owned land,
- "Legacy: the legacy of this council will rest on putting this important project on a sound track, not on meeting an artificial deadline of August 2025."

Phyllis Lambert, who, in 1975 founded the heritage preservation group Heritage Montreal and in 1979 founded the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA), told the packed room, "I was very much involved with [the development of] Westmount Square. I knew Mies van der Rohe really well and I was called in to make that a project that would work: the conversion of the office building into residential

space...

"Whoever said that this [25-storey building] project would never go ahead is so right! It is absolutely ridiculous because nobody wants to do it! Who wants to?"

"Who would come [to build a 25-storey tower] in Westmount [just to face] Alexis Nihon? It just doesn't make sense..."

"Please! All of you get together and really send in petitions, send in everything that you can, use your energy because that is the only way that you can save the city. It is always people power..."

"If Westmounters don't stand up for their own city, nothing will happen..."

## When the Habs are out...



... Montrealers look for other Canadiens/Canadians. As seen on St. Catherine St. near Kensington on May 12.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.





## Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

# No faults in *Fawlty Towers* reprise

Sybil (whom he privately calls “the dragon”) and an equally inept Spanish waiter Manuel.

Although a hotel owner, Basil finds most guests annoying. That is unless they have a title, such as “Lord Somebody.” In that case, Basil, played by John Cleese in the series, becomes a simpering sycophant.

Recently, a group of thespians staged a reading of *Fawlty Towers* as a fundraiser for Scapegoat Carnivale, the award-winning theatre company co-founded by **Alison Darcy**, daughter of **Maurice Podbrey** and

**Elsa Bolam**.

Maurice and Elsa both “starred” in the reading; Maurice as Major Gowen from the series and Elsa as Mrs. Morris and a “news-paper kid.”

Other Oscar-worthy volunteer readers were **Vincent Prager**, **James Loye**, **Philip Johnston**, **Krystyna Tomiuk**, **Betsy Mitchell**, **Roberto Menegati** (hilarious as Manuel famously repeating “Que?/what?”) and **George Bowser** as Basil Fawlty.

George had John Cleese’s mannerisms

down to an art. He brought the audience to laughing tears as he pantomimed breathing fire on a piece of bread to show how his wife Polly (“the dragon”) made toast.

Indeed, the entire cast mastered their roles, perfecting accents and comic timing. The episodes were directed by Darcy.

Former Westmounter **Peter Blaikie** handled stage directions, reading out scene descriptions, after which the reader-actors then spoke. Held at the Segal Centre, the uniquely memorable eve was sold out.



Philip Johnston, Krystyna Tomiuk, Vincent Prager, Betsy Mitchell, George Bowser, Roberto Menegati, Elsa Bolam, Maurice Podbrey and Peter Blaikie



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Social Notes  
VERONICA REDGRAVE

# Batshaw jumpstarts spring social season

April is the cruellest month, according to poet TS Eliot. However, the spring social season offers warming thoughts. One can read about worthy causes and those that support them. Signature events signal the start of praiseworthy initiatives.

The season was jumpstarted by the annual Batshaw Foundation's evening at Entrepôts Dominion. Pots of paper-white narcissi nodded elegantly as guests shed winter wraps and paused to pat a furry wanderer.

Yes, a tail-wagging guest was a magnet for pet lovers. Attending with handler **Isabel Poulin** of Pawz Thérapie, Chewie is a specially trained dog that provides pet therapy for Batshaw clients.

Foundation board members noted included president **Bisma Ansari** and executive director **Wendy Khan**, **Tina Khan** and **Laura Lavy** (event co-chairs), and **Andrew Clark**, **Michael Udy**, **Ben Wearing**



Michael Udy, Tina Khan, Laura Lavy, Bisma Ansari, Wendy Khan and Ben Wearing.



Mark Lowe and Andrew Clark.

and **Trevor Bishop**.

The evening was greatly assisted by PR guru **Mark Lowe**. The owner of PRagmatic Communications, he usually works with corporate clients but he volunteered to help the Batshaw cause.

Speakers were **Tina Khan**, event co-chair; **Bisma Ansari**, foundation board

president, and **Bekaye Dembélé**, chef de service, transition vers la vie adulte, CIUSS-ODIM.

Others noted in the packed room included **Courtney Beckerleg**, **Lucie Raikes**, **Alex Heidemann**, **Anthea Dawson**, **Vic Drury**, Westmount city councillor **Mary Gallery**, **Suzanne Wexler**, **Sophie Palmer**,

**Veronica Osborn**, **Nicholas Kaulbach**, **Sara O'Brien**, **Andrew Sofin**, **Adrian Dunn** and **Amanda Jelowicki**.

The concept behind the event was foodie-fun. The "Taste of Montreal" menu was crafted by Chez Mylo and offered smoked meat sandwiches, poutines and locally sourced charcuterie. *Délicieux!*



Suzanne Wexler and Sophie Palmer.



Anna Gainey, Anthea Dawson, Courtney Beckerleg, Veronica Osborn and Amanda Jelowicki.



Lucy Raikes, Alex Heidemann and Sara O'Brien.

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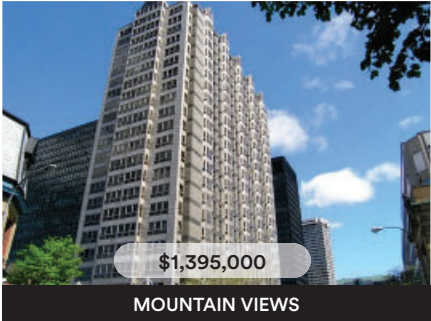
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A smiling woman with blonde hair, wearing a light-colored top and a tan blazer, stands in the foreground. Behind her is a white and blue Praetor 500 private jet on a tarmac. The jet's cabin door is open, and a man in a dark suit is standing near the entrance. The scene is set against a bright blue sky with some clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm glow and long shadows on the tarmac.

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