

## Council asked to take action on noisy protests, graffiti, violence in front of Israeli consulate

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council June 9 heard repeated requests from residents to crack down on “hate speech” and “very offensive language,” and aggressive protesters around 1 Wood and Westmount Square, where the Israeli consulate is situated, and outside the Shaar Hashomayim Synagogue.

“Are you going to continue to let it

happen? What can you do about it?” Mayor Christina Smith was asked at the opening of the question period by a woman who said she had been spat on near Westmount Square in May. “This can’t go on. This is Westmount!” she continued.

“I am very sorry that happened to you. That’s assault. That’s not free speech,” replied Smith, referring to the spitting.

She was also asked why police stood by, watched and didn’t arrest offenders.

### Mayor responds

Smith explained that while Public Security did not have the right to make arrests, she had spoken that very day to the police commander at the local Montreal police station on Stan- .....  
ton St. about the *continued on p. 9*

## Meet Public Security’s park cadets



This year’s summer park cadets are, from left, Ange Kiénu, Quinn Burrows, Eric Chukwu and Sanaka Laurin. They work day or evening shifts acting as “the eyes and ears of Public Security,” explained Public Security director Greg McBain. Focussing on Westmount Park, King George (Murray) Park and Summit Woods, their role includes checking on dogs, city buildings and cycling.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT PUBLIC SECURITY.

### Indie publishing schedule

June 24: issue • July 1: no issue

July 8: issue

July 15, 22, 29 & August 5:  
no issues (usual summer break)

August 12 until Christmas: weekly

### 2024 legislation enshrined existing compromise

## City allocates \$30,000 to defend Summit Woods by-law allowing off-leash dogs at times

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The validity of the city’s amended By-law 1522 adopted in May 2024 allowing dogs to go unleashed at certain times in Summit Woods appears headed to Quebec Superior Court in a challenge by a local resident living near the wooded area.

City council at its June 9 meeting awarded \$30,000 for legal services to IMK Advocats to “protect the city’s interests in connection with possible litigation” concerning a potential dog attack in the area, which is entirely unfenced.

This was an applica- .....  
tion for judicial review *continued on p. 9*



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# Man issued ticket for defying park's midnight curfew

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A public safety officer in King George Park June 5 heard people talking after the midnight parks' curfew and found a group of eight at the soccer pitch, according to Public Security officials. They were advised the park was closed and they had to leave.

The group was described as "co-operative" but as they began leaving, one became more vocal and disregarded the order, at which point he was issued a ticket for \$81.

## Cyclist fined \$81 for riding through Summit Woods

A cyclist was spotted riding in Summit Woods June 8 at 6:56 pm, Public Security officials said. She was initially seen passing the no-cycling sign on Summit Circle as it led to the gravelled portion into the woods, but she was too far away from them for officers to stop her initially. They did manage to intercept her at the Oakland intersection as she exited Summit Woods.

She was issued a statement of offence for \$81 and identified as a 33-year-old city of Montreal resident.

## Woman taken to hospital after fall on steps at 1 Wood

A public safety officer was flagged down June 10 at 11:33 am concerning a woman described as in distress on the steps at 1 Wood. She was found in great pain, lying on her back with bloody knees and one arm outstretched that she was unable to move.

Public Security officials also said she had not suffered head injury. Officers cleaned the wounds and provided a blanket. Urgences Santé arrived at 11:45 am and took her to the Montreal General Hospital for what was believed to be a broken right

shoulder.

Aged 65, the woman has been wearing high-heeled shoes.

## Cars collide at Atwater and Dorchester

A city parking inspector reported a two-car accident at Atwater and Dorchester June 7 at 1:50 pm where one car remained in the intersection with a fender "hanging out," according to Public Security officials. The other car was parked at the side. Drivers were given a joint accident form to fill out. Police and a tow truck were called. No injuries were reported.

## In and out of consciousness, man taken to St. Mary's

Public Security officials went to the assistance of a man June 9 at the intersection of Victoria and Chesterfield at 11:57 am. He was described as passing in and out of consciousness and was transported to St. Mary's Hospital by Urgences Santé. No other details were reported. – LS

## No police report

Due to circumstances beyond the *Independent* editorial team's control, we are unable to publish a summary of recent police activity in Westmount. – MCB.

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Dodge on May  
real estate: Down, p. 14

A-dog-tions, p. 15

9 Lives, p. 15

Travel:  
Puglia, Italy, part 2, p. 17

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# New permanent stop, street signs disappear at de Casson-Wood



March 19

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



March 21

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



June 13

The new temporary stop sign at Wood and de Casson on June 13.

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.

After that, a temporary stop sign that measured three feet from the ground was *in situ* to instruct drivers to stop (see March 25, p. 14). A new street sign and a new, standard stop sign were installed by a city Public

Works team on March 20, but – by the week of May 26 – those stop and street signs had disappeared and a temporary stop sign was back. On May 30, the *Independent* reached out to Mugisha Rutishisha, director of the

city's Communications department, to ask what is going on. A response providing an explanation did not come in time to meet the *Independent's* press deadline. The temporary stop sign remained in place as of June 13.



www.ecs.qc.ca

## Congratulations CLASS OF 2025!

Our graduates will be pursuing post-secondary education at the following institutions:

- Canadian College Italy
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## Doug Ellis Memorial Garden to be dedicated in late summer



The dedication of the Doug Ellis Memorial Garden near the Westmount recreation centre will take place toward the end of the summer, city councillor and parks commissioner Mary Gallery announced at the council meeting June 9. This photo from June 13 does not show the construction fencing around the site, but it was still in place. The garden will commemorate the life of the late hockey prodigy Doug Ellis. It is part of the settlement of a lawsuit against the city regarding sexual abuse of minors by deceased hockey coach John Garland. Ellis's life has been described by his mother as having been "poisoned" by the experience, leading to his death at 44 in 2015 (see October 25, 2022, p. 1).

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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## Team Ian rides again



Some of the June 1 riders, including many Westmounters. From left, front row: Claudette Dwyer, Leslie Therriault, Andrea Van Toch, Jane Reichman; back row: Steve Dennis, Jim Cordy, Robert Bishin, Gavan Power, John Van Toch, Diana Bronson, Guy Melhuish, Alex Baillargeon, Bob Therriault, Vahan Kololian, Lori Spence, Ken Shaw, Keith Harradence, Jerry Wiviott and Rob Callard.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOHN VAN TOCH.

Local fundraising group Team Ian rode again in its own dedicated event May 31 and June 1, this time to and back from Bromont. Starting in 2012, supporters rode every year in their own ride (see for example June 23, 2015, p. 1) until 2018, as well as participating in other fundraisers before and after that.

With this outing, they raised over

\$82,000 for the Ian Lawson Van Toch Computational Biomedical Research Fund at Princess Margaret Cancer Hospital in Toronto, bringing the total raised so far to over \$500,000. “The fund is in memory of our son and brother who passed away at age 23, just as he was starting a promising career in cancer informatics,” said Ian’s father John Van Toch. – WI.



“The banner displays the logos of our generous sponsors,” John Van Toch told the *Independent*. Holding it, from left, are Steve Dennis of Martin Swiss Cycles (“who provided fantastic tech support”), and some of Ian’s family members: sister Andrea Van Toch, father John and stepmother Jane Reichman.

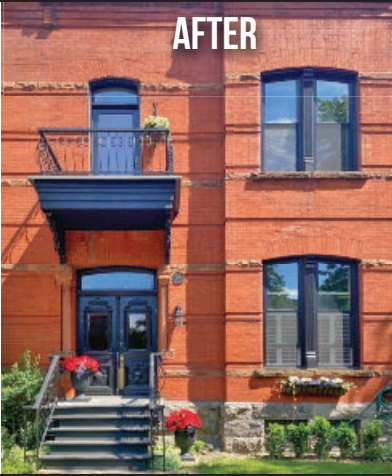


Ian Van Toch in 2006, one year before he died.



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## THANKS FOR RETURNING KEYS!

We would like to thank very much the person who found our car keys on a park bench in Queen Elizabeth Gardens and handed them to Public Security. It would have caused us undue hardship to replace them, so we are doubly grateful.

TIM CARSLY, BARAT RD.

## THANKS TO TWO GOOD SAMARITANS

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to each of the two kind ladies who took the initiative to assist us in the torrential rainstorm on Tuesday afternoon, June 10 and got rained on tremendously while doing so.

While we were on our usual health walk down Grosvenor Ave, the rain started to fall heavily while blown sideways by a very strong wind. We were caught off guard without umbrellas or rain gear. Surprised, we took shelter under a huge tree near Roslyn School, hoping that this weather would pass, but it did not.

The first lady driver stopped her vehicle and gave us an umbrella that offered some protection. The second lady driver, a resident of Westmount who knew the area well, parked her car and offered two drenched pedestrians a ride to our front door. Such kind and quick actions from both “good Samaritans” was very much appreciated and vividly displays the kindness of people.

LOUISE CARPENTIER & LAWRENCE KRYZANOWSKI, PRINCE ALBERT AVE.

## ‘WOULD THAT THERE WERE MORE LIKE HIM’

I wanted to add my voice to your editorial homage (June 10, p. 6) to a true Canadian hero, Marc Garneau, which includes your heartfelt elegiac words above.

I was also touched by Christina Smith’s words of gratitude in her mayor’s column (p. 7), where she reminds us that Marc Garneau “devoted 15 years serving us as our representative in the house of commons,” that “he embodied integrity, intelligence, humility” and “a deep respect for citizens” for whom he was “accessible and profoundly human,” adding that he “dedicated his extraordinary journey to the service of others with dignity, calm and commitment.”

He was a man, she wrote “who travelled among the stars.”

He is now among them.

RICHARD ORLANDO, SHERBROOKE ST.

## CURRENT COUNCIL ATTENDING TO LONG IGNORED NEEDS

I would like to thank Councillor Mary Gallery for her open letter of May 20 (p. 7) and Councillor Conrad Peart for his col-

umn of May 27 (p. 5). I am getting very tired of the constant mayor-bashing and council-bashing engaged in by some of your correspondents and, most recently, by a former mayor.

While the previous administration deserves credit for its accomplishments, such as the library renovation and the recreation centre, it is apparent that these were achieved at the expense of other needs.

For years, our parks were an embarrassment, with beds of weeds, dying trees, neglected playgrounds and a complete lack of maintenance. Public spaces and public buildings were not updated. The greenhouse was allowed to reach a state of disrepair such that it collapsed and much of it is now lost forever as the expenditure required to restore it is out of reach.

I can well imagine that attending to all the areas that were ignored for so long requires modernizing the administration and additional personnel. I applaud the steps that have been taken by the mayor and council to revitalize so many aspects of our community and make it a truly family-friendly and modern environment.

Yes, our road network needs work, but so does the road network of the entire island of Montreal. You need only drive to our neighbouring communities to realize that all municipalities are faced with an ageing infrastructure in an impossible climate. Are we prepared to have our property taxes significantly increased to ensure that we live with smooth roads throughout the city? I think not.

Our municipal administration is dealing with increasing demands and limited financial resources. To assume collective mismanagement and incompetence on their part is grossly unfair and does nothing to advance the discourse.

CLAUDETTE BELLEMARE, STRATHCONA AVE.

## IF PAYROLL RISES OVER TIME REGARDLESS, ALL THE MORE REASON TO WATCH HEADCOUNT

I have to thank Councillor Conrad Peart for his column last week (p. 8). He confirmed the figures in my guest column of May 13 (p. 6), a piece that revealed, with 356 employees working for the city of Westmount, there has been a 24-percent increase in the number of employees since 2017. That is not all. He also confirmed that, for the 11 preceding years, the number of employees averaged out at 286, to finish 2017 with...286.

This happy concordance is hardly surprising, as both of us are drawing our data from the same source, the city’s annual financial statements.

I also agree with Councillor Peart’s statement that, even when the number of

employees was stable, the increases in the yearly payroll of a highly-unionized workforce are usually greater than just cost-of-living increases. This, of course, is yet another reason to keep a tight control on your headcount.

Where we seem to part company is in calculating how much all these new positions are costing every year.

Let’s keep it simple using the following premise: if you increase the number of employees by 24 percent, sooner or later, that has to cause an increase of, very roughly, 24 percent in the overall payroll. The 2016 payroll in today’s dollars of \$31 million, when multiplied by 24 percent, gives an increase of \$7 million. In fact, because there was a disproportionate (36 percent) increase in highly-paid managerial staff, the eventual increase in payroll costs will be even higher.

And as for suggesting the 2022 ransomware attack was one example of why staffing levels have increased: I was on the board of the Société de transport de Montréal (STM) in 2020 when it was the victim of a ransomware attack. Following the attack, you can be sure the STM didn’t measurably raise its headcount.

I must say, in spite of our obvious differences, it is always more productive to exchange views with someone like Councillor Peart, whose arguments at least start with agreed-upon data.

PETER F. TRENT, CÔTE .....  
ST. ANTOINE RD. continued on p. 8

## EDITORIAL

## Farewell, Beth Hudson – Enjoy your retirement!

I am rarely at a loss for words, but I am now. Our bookkeeper of almost 19 years, Beth Hudson, retires next month. Her last week will be July 7 to 11.

Beth has worked for us since before there was an *Independent* and she was the first employee of the company, ever.

I cannot say enough good things about her: She is honest, intelligent, diligent, quick to adapt to new challenges, funny and helpful. She is a delight to work with.

The *Independent* is a for-profit business, and the lifeblood of businesses is money. Here at the paper, we need it to pay for printing, layout, distribution, rent, writers, photographers and employees. Beth has been the heart of this enterprise, carefully moving that “blood” to where it is needed by getting the invoices done, the bills paid and making sure everything is tickety-boo from all the various angles: accounting, sales tax, income tax, deductions at source, banking.

Through it all, she has been amazing. I thank her. I wish her well in a much-deserved retirement. The team will miss her. The clients will miss her. I will miss her.

David Price is the editor of the *Independent*.

## WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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Editor

David Price: 514.935.4537  
editor@westmountindependent.com

Chief reporter  
Laureen Sweeney

Graphics  
Ted Sancton

Advertising sales

Arleen Candiotti: 514.223.3567  
advertising@westmountindependent.com

Classified ads  
514-664-6138

Accounting  
Beth Hudson: 514.223.6138  
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GALLERY’S LETTER  
SHORT ON SUBSTANCE

As a perhaps too frequent writer (usually about trees, parks and dogs), I have resisted responding to Mary Gallery’s letter of May 20 (p. 7) criticizing Peter Trent. Since then, one writer (May 27, p. 6) described Gallery’s letter as a “polished deflection” based on “defensiveness.” Another, on June 3 (p. 9), simply supported her defense of the current council. No one has, to date, noted my own concerns.

Gallery’s letter opens with claiming Trent’s column of May 13 (p. 6) contained “several serious inaccuracies,” but fails to explain just what these are. It goes on to charge him with “misrepresenting facts,” again unexplained.

Gallery also makes no reference to Trent’s current concern over the vast increase in highly paid civil servants.

The next three long columns of Gallery’s open letter are spent claiming times have changed and that the current council has had to “do more with fewer resources” and is striving to “modernize” the south-east sector of the city. Oh? With a series of high-rise buildings?

Anyone who has attended this council’s meetings (in person or on Zoom) will have noted that at least 50 percent of the council members never speak: they simply vote in the affirmative. The meeting of May 27 was typical in this regard.

As I said in an earlier letter (May 6, p. 6) we need a “new style of leadership.” Now I will be blunter: we need a new council.

JO LAPIERRE, METCALFE AVE.

TRENT CORRECT ON SAD STATE  
OF WESTMOUNT

The best mayor Westmount has ever had has spoken (May 13, p. 6; June 3, p. 6) and truer words have not been said regarding the sad state of affairs Westmount has fallen into.

A bloated bureaucracy, a deficit budget, a council that is deaf to the pleas of taxpayers, an increase in crime that has been pretty much unchecked, roads that are in deplorable condition and no sense of pride in our once great city of Westmount. And worse – no answers and no solutions.

Time to get out the broom, voters, and stop the incompetence. Thank you, Mr. Trent!

IVAN SPECTOR, ARLINGTON AVE.

LET’S LOOK AT  
THAT GRAPH AGAIN

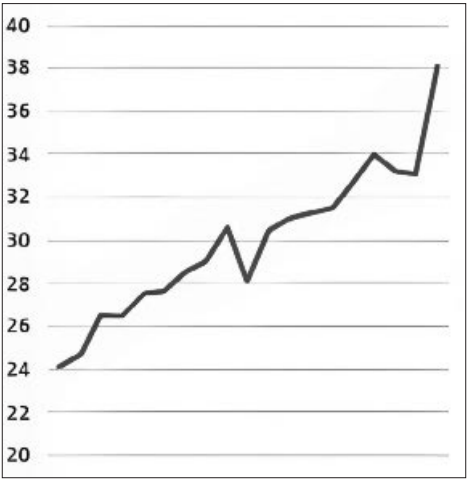
I thank Councillor Peart for his intervention providing payroll data (June 10, p. 8) to counter the argument of former mayor Trent. Of course [in my opinion], he

likes to produce tables to illustrate his data (e.g. at right) because graphs can be misleading. Compare that graph of the rise of the payroll from 2006 to 2024 with the one I have generated using his data:

Of course, by reducing the horizontal scale the growth appears more striking than Councillor Peart’s very elongated graph.

In all the discussion prompted by Mayor Trent’s interven-

Westmount payroll (in \$ millions)  
between 2006-2024



tions, no mention has been made of the use of consultants. Not only is it an issue because of the amounts being paid but also of the results and their usefulness. I think a cost/benefit analysis of consultants’ contributions would be revealing.

BRIAN SLACK, UPPER ROSLYN

‘NO-MOW MAY’ NEEDS  
A SIGN FOR RESIDENTS

Further to David Searle’s enthusiastic support of Westmount’s interest in cutting back its mowing to encourage our essential pollinators (May 27, p. 1), perhaps the city could produce a small lawn sign (to be kept and installed each spring) for like-minded residents who join in this effort but might feel the need to explain to the Joneses why their lawns appear neglected!

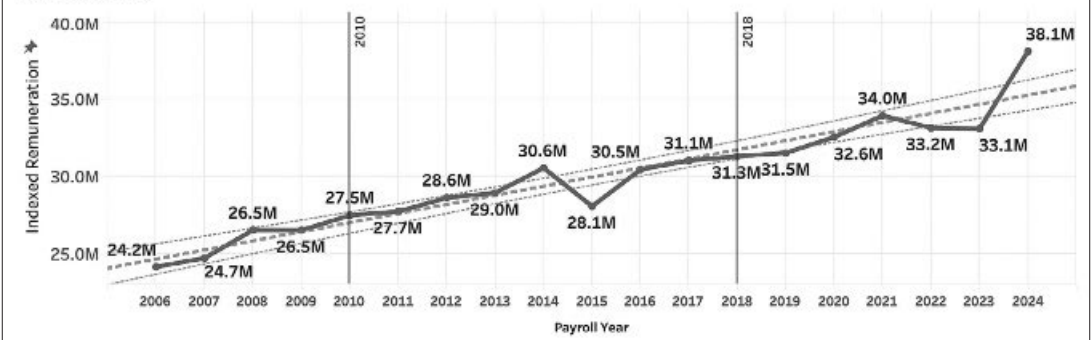
SUSAN KILBURN, REDFERN AVE.

PLEASE PAINT THE SPEED BUMPS

It’s all about painting speed bumps in a timely manner so that residents don’t lose their transmissions and shock absorbers. Any chance Public Works can respond?

HOWARD SCOTT, DOWNTOWN

C – WESTMOUNT (Demerged) : Annual Payroll & Trendline  
2024 Dollars



WE DON’T HAVE TO CHOOSE  
BETWEEN LEMAY PLAN  
AND STATUS QUO

I am writing about the proposed plan for the south-east sector. I am a longtime educator and former director of the School of Architecture at McGill University and a resident in the area.

Some of the letters you have published suggest that we have only two choices, to do nothing or to go with the Lemay plan. That is not the case. We could, instead, move ahead with a good plan.

Our family-friendly neighbourhood, sometimes affectionately called “SoDo” (south of Dorchester), is mostly two- to three-storey brick-and-stone Victorian houses, with picturesque silhouettes and highly pitched roofs, period decoration, delightfully variable windows and entrances, and small front gardens. The area has a rich and underappreciated alley life.

SoDo is defined in the south by a very hard, impenetrable edge: the tracks and the Ville Marie Expressway. Here is why that matters. Building a cluster of towers, as proposed in the Lemay plan, will mean the homes in SoDo will be effectively cut off from the street life of St. Catherine and Greene by this second, northerly barrier.

The Manhattan-like image on p. 54 of the city’s plan is alarming. Next to the beloved Atwater Library it shows a 20-storey tower, one of four [proposed] high-rises along St. Catherine. But what actually gets built could be even worse. The proposal includes “incentive zoning,” which means developers could be allowed extra height for providing certain amenities.

If city council truly sees the area as the “vibrant heart of Westmount,” as is suggested in the proposal, it should proceed cautiously with a plan that respects and builds on what makes the city vibrant. Certainly, it should not sell its heart to developers.

ANNMARIE ADAMS, COLUMBIA AVE.

SOUTHEAST DECISION WILL BE  
WITH US FOR GENERATIONS

In a public assembly at Victoria Hall on June 18 at 6 pm, the city of Westmount will present the greatest, most consequential development project in our city’s history, namely the revitalization of the southeast sector.

Council has already adopted a Special Planning Programme (SPP) for this significant part of our city. Documentation including a zoning map, tables of physical and spatial provisions, permitted building types and uses is posted on engage.westmount.org.

If you live, work, play, study, or commute in the area around Sherbrooke, St. Catherine, Atwater and Wood, this southeast sector is your neighbourhood. Consider what you like about it, or what you’d change.

June 18 is the last chance to have our say about density, open space, greening, livability and community. Young, old and in between – we will all live with these decisions for generations.

Let’s pay attention, and choose carefully.

LUCY FELLOWES, WOOD AVE.

Indie publishing schedule

June 24: issue • July 1: no issue

July 8: issue

July 15, 22, 29 & August 5:  
no issues (usual summer break)

August 12 until Christmas: weekly





**Summit Woods, cont'd from p. 1**

served to the city of Westmount May 29.

Moved by Councillor Kathleen Kez as commissioner of public safety, the motion was approved by a vote of 7 to 1, with District 1 councillor Antonio D'Amico being the lone opponent. Summit Woods is in his district.

This led to a debate on the issue, with District 7 councillor Matt Aronson saying he supported the by-law, but that the resident disagreeing with it had a right to challenge it. Though not named, she is widely known to be Maryam Kamali Nezhad.

**Proof of coverage**

Maintaining his opposition to dogs allowed to run unleashed at any time in the unfenced "bird and fauna" sanctuary, D'Amico – a dog owner himself – recalled how he had been following up with the Quebec ministry of Municipal Affairs on the issue and been told that in the event of a dog attack by an unleashed dog in the woods, the city would probably need a letter from its insurers stating the city was covered accordingly.

"Without it, you can't say you got a legal opinion," D'Amico maintained.

He referred to reports he had received this year through Access to Information of two dog attack incidents in the woods, as

previously reported.

**Standing by the by-law**

"We stand by this by-law," Mayor Christina Smith stated, adding that the city "takes dangerous dogs very seriously." As an example, she cited a recent incident in which an unleashed dog on private property in the area of Summit Woods "very violently" attacked a passing, leashed one but this did not involve Summit Woods.

The 2024 by-law included the whole of Summit Woods on a list of "dog run facilities" and "dog runs" (see May 14, 2024, p. 13), but did not change the rules on the ground, which have been in place for many, many years.

**Council, cont'd from p. 1**

ongoing issue.

"I'm very disappointed" with the situation, Smith said, adding that the right to protest did not include the right to block access to buildings and that the city was quick to remove offensive graffiti. She also agreed that places of worship "should not be targeted."

The city of Westmount does not control the Montreal police, although mayors have long lobbied Montreal police and Montreal officials on various law enforcement issues.

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Councillor's column

CONRAD PEART  
DISTRICT 4

“As a city grows it needs re-organization. As it ages, parts become outworn and have to be replaced. As the conditions of life within the city change, so must the city change to match them. And as the standards and values of the inhabitants alter, so must the city alter to accommodate them.”

These words opened the 1960 Southern Area Report by architect and planner John Bland. Most of its 60 recommendations were never adopted, but the report still left a lasting mark. It led to the closure of Prince Albert at Sherbrooke, allowing for the public square we know today. It also proposed eliminating de Maisonneuve Blvd. across Westmount Park, a change that now seems obvious.

But other parts of the plan badly missed the mark – and did so destructively. The report envisioned Dorchester St. as a grand, widened artery sweeping west and north to join Clarke Ave. The ranking of cars above communities came at a steep price.

# The southeast sector: A tale in three acts

## Act I – Yesterday: Death by 140 demolitions

More than 140 residential and commercial properties were expropriated and demolished. By 1968, Dorchester had doubled in width, from a local street to a four-lane parkway. Surface parking replaced street life and front yards. The construction of the Metro, the Decarie and Ville Marie expressways, and shifting demographics quickly exposed the plan's flawed assumptions. Momentum stalled.

Aside from a handful of commercial projects in the 1970s, re-investment withered. The promise of urban renewal went unfulfilled. Most of the report's more disruptive ideas were never realized, but the scars from that first wave of demolition remain visible today.

In 1991, the area was down-zoned, likely in response to the high-rise towers built in the late 1980s on Greene and Wood avenues. Once again, no re-investment followed.

In 2014, rules were revised again to allow more height. Still, almost nothing. A single project was approved in 2017. Demolition permission was granted. A \$1.4-million guarantee was posted. But the project never broke ground. The building was torn

down. The lot was left empty. The developer forfeited the deposit to the city. Even when the rules aligned, the numbers didn't.

Since then, no conforming applications have been filed under the current zoning.

We've had reports. We've had zoning revisions. We've had good intentions. But 60 years have yielded marginal results. The sector has remained stuck, waiting for something to change.

## Act II – Today: Arrested development

If the past was marked by ambition and overreach, today is defined by nostalgia and deferral.

The southeast sector isn't just neglected. It's become a place many actively avoid. Safety concerns are real. Encampments, public intoxication and occasional assaults have made a short stretch of St. Catherine feel unsafe and uninviting. Vacant spaces decay. Vermin roam. All of this unfolds just steps from a Metro station, on what should be a thriving commercial street.

Yet when new proposals surface, they are quickly dismissed. Too tall. Too dense. Too disruptive.

We say we want affordable housing, but only if someone else pays for it. We say we

want family-sized homes, but not the scale or form needed to make them feasible. We say we want restaurants and services, but not the new residents who would support them.

We say we're open to newcomers. But the message often says otherwise. We'll allow new neighbours only if they come quietly, with no disruption and no demands. We are not allowing newcomers to choose Westmount. We are choosing them.

And so we stall. We delay. We revise. We wait.

Let me ask: how many of you have lived in your home for 20 years or more? Now ask yourself this: could a younger version of you, with the same job or profession, afford your home today? Not with yesterday's salary, but with what that position typically pays today?

I couldn't. And we only bought nine years ago.

We may feel like nothing has changed. But everything has. And we are not adapting. We are resisting. We have built a system that makes it hard for bad actors to do harm. But in the process, we have also made it difficult for good actors to do anything at all.

Hubris prescribes continued on p. 16

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As seen on Lansdowne above Sherbrooke on June 11.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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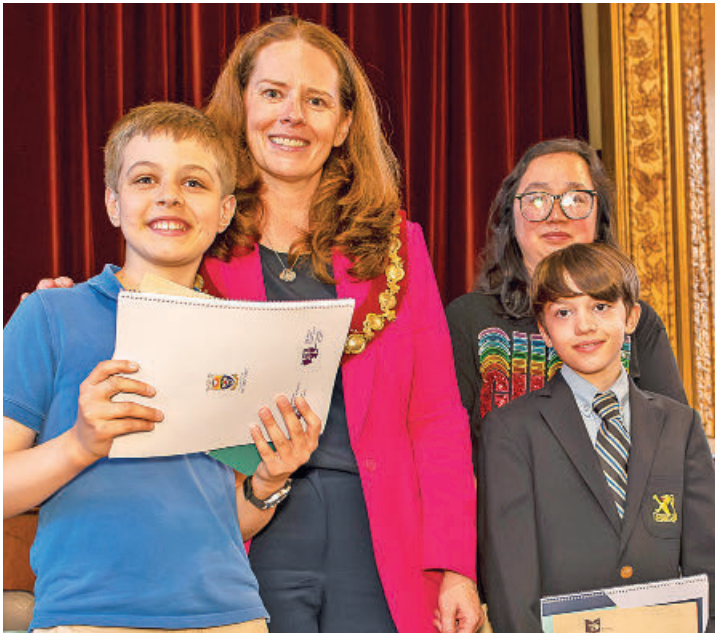
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# More McEntyre Writing Competition winners

Names of winners in photos have been removed by the *Independent* to comply with the spirit of the city's protocol and counsel on photos of people at its public events.

Photos: RALPH THOMPSON.

(see June 10, p. 14-15 for initial coverage of this city contest)



## McEntyre Writing Competition 2025 winners

### Grade 1

1. Miguel Jr Burnier	Roslyn School
2. Yuqiao Feng	The Study
3. Eva Volvakh	The Study
HM Milo Kim	Selwyn House School

### Grade 2

1. Margaret Pencer	Akiva School
2. Moritz Bossert	The Priory
3. Benjamin Carsley	Selwyn House School
HM Hudson Stroll	Akiva School

### Grade 3

1. Aila Parker	Roslyn School
2. Yasmin Gvili-Unreich	Akiva School
3. Sarah Yufe	ECS
HM Astrid Waschke	The Study

### Grade 4

1. Amber Purmal	St. Léon de Westmount
2. Jonah Levi	Akiva School
3. Laura Millette	The Study
HM Hannah Ellis	Akiva School
HM Julia Shingler	École NDG
HM Aya Ahdab	The Study

### Grade 5

1. Nat Godefroy	École internationale de Montréal
2. Joshua Rokov	Selwyn House School
3. Zhenming (Hardy) Han	Selwyn House School
HM Willem-Loup Arsenault	St. Léon de Westmount

### Grade 6

1. Sienna Purmal	St. Léon de Westmount
2. Ariella Wilner	ECS
3. Maya Wyse	Akiva School

### Grade 7

1. Edi Obenaus	Selwyn House School
2. Beatrice Kronish	Westmount High School
3. Benjamin Fraenkel	Selwyn House School
HM Sarah Sadani	ECS

### Grade 8

1. Sofia Olmos Forero	Westmount High School
2. Laya Khoury	École internationale de Montréal
3. Emily Pearce	The Study

### Grade 9

1. Jaya Lily Gérin	Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf
2. Sabine Chartrand	Villa Sainte-Marcelline
3. Yangyuhe Yang	The Study
HM Abby Iny	Royal West Academy

### Grade 10

1. Grace Fleming	Westmount High School
2. Ammar Al-Qadasi	Westmount High School
3. Xiran Wang	Westmount High School

### Grade 11

1. Yasmine Aouchiche	École internationale de Montréal
2. Noa Del Busso	Westmount High School
3. Anahita Bagheri	St. George's High School
HM Luciana Merchan	Westmount High School
HM Elias Khoury	École internationale de Montréal
HM = Honourable mention	



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Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

*Note: The following article relates to offers to purchase Westmount residential dwellings that were reported by local real estate agents as having been accepted in May 2025. Because they are not final registered sales, the addresses cannot be made public, but give a good idea of current trends in local real estate activity. The graph at right offers a picture of these trends over time.*



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# May sales: Volume, pricing down – Inventory up

The Westmount real estate market slowed noticeably in May this year, with only nine sales reported, compared to 19 in April and 18 in March. Usually, between February and May the monthly average number of sales in Westmount varies between 17 and 19 sales per month, so it is quite surprising to see the volume fall off between April and May, though the average volume for the first five months was about what it has been (65) over the past 10 years.

Prices appear to be getting weaker, though May did have one sale over \$6 million and one more over \$4 million, the same number of high-priced sales that we had in April. But while 12 of the 19 sales in April were over \$2 million, only five of the nine sales in May surpassed that amount. On the optimistic side, the average days-on-market plummeted to 48 from 92 in April, and the median in May was a mere 22 days to sell.

**Average mark-up down from April**

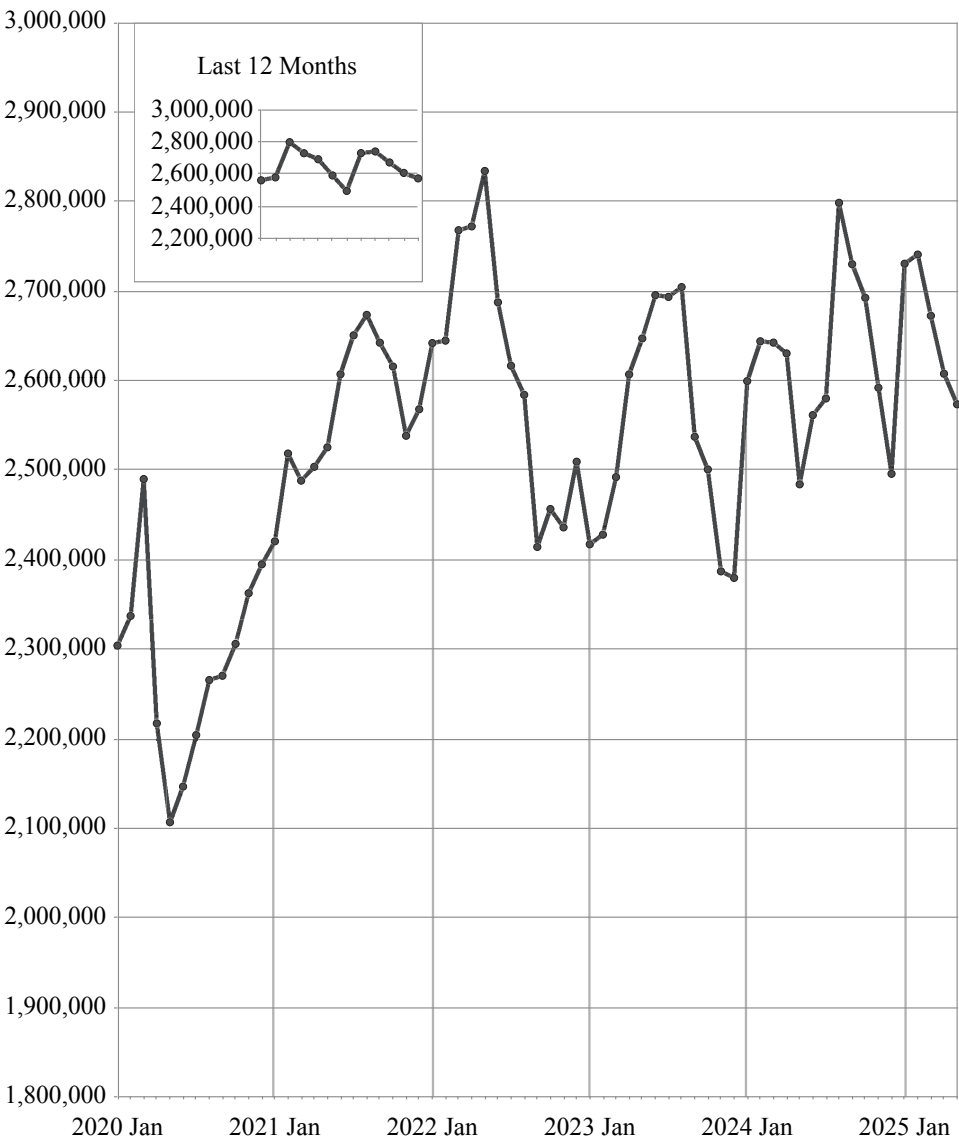
Three of the nine May sales registered mark-downs from municipal evaluation, the lowest being -22.7 percent, with the highest mark-up at 39 percent and the average of 7.2 percent, down from the 14.1 percent average mark-up in April.

Two May condominium sales added to four others in April to bring the second-quarter 2025 sales list to six, but only one over \$1 million and that in 1 Wood Ave. The others ranged down to \$350,000 for a tiny bachelor apartment at 399 Clarke Ave. In all, the six sales averaged \$805,800 for five apartments and one flat, with an average valuation of \$740,867, thus an average mark-up over valuation of 8.8 percent, about the same as for single-family dwellings.

**Record inventory**

And if the market was not active enough, house listings jumped from 134 in mid-May to 148 in the middle of June, the highest monthly volume since 2016. The

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



extra listings are in every price range, but mostly between \$2 million and \$3 million

(up from 40 to 45 listings) and \$5 million to \$10 million (19 to 23 listings).

Some 19 houses have been rented this year and another 20 are listed for rent, for rental rates from \$4,500 to \$25,000 per month, but in fact none of those rented so far this year has surpassed the \$10,000 rate.

**Westmount adjacent**

Another nine real estate sales were logged in adjacent-Westmount areas, with five of those in the Côte des Neiges district just north of Westmount, for prices ranging from \$900,000 to \$1,800,000. With Roslyn Ave. north of Westmount accounting for 10 sales in 2023 and another eight in 2024, it is hardly surprising to see that two of the five sales so far in that district were for houses on Roslyn Ave.

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Your neighbour,  
Lysanne



Westmount  
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Graceful and elegant, here is petite Prada, a miniature pinscher-Chihuahua mix.

She is presently in foster care for the Gerdy's Rescues and Adoptions volunteer animal rescue group. Her foster family is enjoying her company as she is attentive, affectionate and a little darling.

She also enjoys other dogs so she would do well in a forever home with another buddy. Prada is housetrained and, being tiny, she is also pee-pad trained. She is quiet, not a barker, so an apartment-style home is appropriate for her temperament.

Prada is a very healthy eight-year-old, up to date with her vaccinations, spayed and microchipped. She enjoys older children, which is best as she is delicate. She has not been "cat tested" yet.

If you would like to find out more about Prada, do not hesitate to go to her information page and link to the adoption application form on the rescue's website at [www.gerdysrescue.org](http://www.gerdysrescue.org) or write to them at their email, [info@gerdysrescue.org](mailto:info@gerdysrescue.org). They

## Elegant Prada



would be pleased to share more information on Prada and wonderful photographs.

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# Alhashemi of The Study on top of the world after perfect chemistry score

The Study's head girl, Rama Jamal Alhashemi, earned a perfect score May 15 in the University of Waterloo Avogadro chemistry contest. Waterloo also offers such competitions in math, including the Gauss, Fermat and Pascal competitions.

"Now in its 37th year, the Avogadro contest has challenged more than 173,000 students globally since its inception," explained the school in a press release. "Of those, only 389 students have placed in the top 10. Rama's first-place finish, which included a perfect score, not only puts her in this elite group but places her at the very top."

This year, 4,981 students participated in the contest worldwide, 3,386 of whom were from Canada.

"Winning this award is a huge honour because of how much I love chemistry. I discovered my love for the subject thanks to The Study's science department, which has continuously supported me throughout high school and helped me succeed.

"It's still unbelievable to have placed first in the world, but I know I wouldn't have been able to do it without my teachers!" Alhashemi was quoted as saying in the release. – WI.



Rama Jamal Alhashemi on June 12 at The Study in the school's renovated front garden. She told the *Independent* that her interest in chemistry began when she entered high school. How did she learn all those complicated terms? She replied that she worked hard and, when you read a lot, you remember the words.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

# Montreal paid for, conceived of de Maisonneuve bike path project

Work has recently been done to repave large sections of the de Maisonneuve bike path. In response to a proposed, unpublished letter to the editor criticizing the city in this regard, the *Independent* asked Mayor Christina Smith about Westmount's role in the project.

She clarified that Montreal funded the work in its entirety and selected the initial project sections, while Westmount coordinated with it on scheduling, timeline and other logistics.

Certain proposed sections were not done at Westmount's request due to either anticipated work in 2026 (i.e. Claremont to Prince Albert) or other factors.

Montreal obtained Westmount's permission to proceed with the project, which was first presented to Westmount's Engineering department in late summer 2024.

Bike paths are an agglomeration of Montreal responsibility. – DP.



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 REFERRED FOR A REASON 

Peart, cont'd from p. 10

the future. Humility prepares for it.

Act III –  
Tomorrow: Adapting to change

The Special Planning Program (SPP) is not a building. It is a framework. It doesn't dictate what must happen. It creates structure and clarity for what could.

This does not mean anything goes. It means we stop pretending the status quo is free of consequence. The cost of inaction is not zero. It is the decay, division and missed opportunity we live today.

The SPP re-starts the clock and moves us from deferral to possibility. It gives the southeast sector a path to evolve, just as the rest of Westmount once did.

Westmount was not built by refusing change. It was built over 150 years by accepting it, gradually, with care and vision. We must do the same – now not just for ourselves, but for those not yet here. For the young adults who want to live near their parents. For the seniors who want to downsize within the community. For the new families hoping to start a chapter in this city.

This isn't about approving one project or another. It's about deciding whether Westmount's most struggling sector deserves a future – or just more of the past.



# Puglia, part two: Architectural, gastronomic discoveries



Travel

VERONICA REDGRAVE

The village of Alberobello was declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1996. The *commune*, full of *trulli* (conical roofs), is a fairy land.

Dating back to the end of the 1300s, the buildings are constructed without mortar using limestone boulders collected from the surrounding fields. Their conical roofs often have painted symbols, ranging from crosses to pagan markings.

Plan to go early to avoid the crowds. (Be forewarned: Mass tourism takes on a new meaning in these narrow, stepped alleys.)

One of the best parts of adventuring in the region of Puglia (also called Apulia) is discoveries. In a hot dusty town called Speziale, a *trattoria* (restaurant) called Il Cor-tiletto seemed closed, with a traditional beaded curtain hanging listlessly at the front door. However, inside, the little courtyard was a delight and the establishment was open. Food was simple and amazing.



"Hobbit houses" at Alberobello, complete with the signature trulli roof.

I learnt that the Italian sweet pepper *friggitelli* is called *cornaletti* in Puglia.

Later on, private chef Alessandro D'Andrea (Pugliadelicious.com) prepared a simple-but-sumptuous supper at the villa where I was staying, serving each dish with

an explanation of the local ingredients.

Puglia is a farming area. The estates are called "*masserie*." Today, most have been transformed into B&Bs. Offering boutique hotel accommodation in a bucolic environment, one of my favourites was Masseria

Moroseta. I knew it would be special as I arrived through security gates to view fields of...massive cactus!

Their large paddle-like leaves sport *fico d'India*/prickly pear ..... fruit. Picked – very care- *continued on p. 18*

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*Travel, cont'd from p. 17*

fully! – the fun fuchsia fruit tastes a bit like a combo of watermelon and bubble gum.

A tour of the garden revealed 500 olive trees, companion planting, fruit trees and fragrant masses of aromatic herbs. The restaurant is sold out weeks in advance, with globetrotters following rave press reviews.

I admired the chic courtyard, once stables, as I walked over the crunchy pale gravel with its symmetrically placed little trees.

Masseria Moroseta owner Carlos Lanzini worked with architect Andrew Trotter on this minimalist masterpiece. Antique and vintage furniture balance the building's clean architectural feeling. Vaulted ceilings and thick walls ensure a mid-summer coolness. Stone walls, complete with lounging lizards, add a rustic texture complemented by contemporary Italian lighting. For dining, there are only a few long tables but you are seated a bit apart from others with your guests. The tasting menu could have been from any of the world's starred sites.

As dusk slowly settles, there is a palpable peace. No look-at-me social megaphone media posts. Indeed, to my great surprise, no one even used their phone. Just quiet conversations and evening crickets.



A Zen-inspired gravel courtyard at Moroseta.



Dining at dusk at Masseria Moroseta.



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*My Two Cents*

*Is your home truly enhancing your best life? This summer, discuss with your family if a move could bring more ease, safety, and joy. The mortgage being paid off is not the right excuse.*

FEATURED PROPERTIES FOR SALE

HUDSON



**32 MAIN ST. | \$2,295,000  
MLS #26874760**

Amazing waterfront opportunity to create your dream home. 3.5 acres.

WESTMOUNT ADJ.



**5011 ROSLYN | \$1,395,000  
MLS #26112181**

JUST LISTED! Lovely 4+1 bedroom, 2+1 bath home with double garage!

VILLAGE



**1900 BEAUDRY | \$799,000  
MLS #11982447**

Adorable 2 bedroom, 1 bath home with parking and huge backyard!

SAINT-HIPPOLYTE



**365 CHEMIN DU LAC-MORENCY  
\$699,000 | MLS #20802411**

3+2 bedroom, 3 bath home on over 1 acre bordering a stream.

SAINT ZOTIQUE



**99 2E RUE | \$599,000  
MLS #19125970**

Fabulous log home on a corner lot on the canals. Boater's paradise!

DOWNTOWN



**3455 DRUMMOND #508 | \$449,000  
MLS #20989160**

2 bdrm, 2 bath, + garage. 71% of the municipal eval. Great renovation opportunity!

Thinking of making a move,  
but unsure where to start? Call me!

Let's write your next chapter TOGETHER...



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