

City holds last planned consultation

Questioners weigh in, again, on southeast project at special meeting

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

The concert hall of Victoria Hall was filled to capacity June 18 for a public consultation on the city's Special Planning Program (SPP) for the southeast. The meeting had been billed as an "important" final information session on the project.

This area involves a sector of the area from Dorchester to Sherbrooke and between Atwater west to Clarke and Wood

that has been under intensive discussion for more than a year proposing increased zoning heights and densities. A final version is to be voted by city council on September 8. Unlike traditional zoning changes, these new rules would not be subject to citizen referenda.

In brief, the city is proposing to allow tall buildings on the south side of St. Catherine west of Atwater, up from the current (mostly) seven-storey limit. The city is also proposing that taller buildings be allowed on the north side of Dorchester between Atwater and Greene, where the city owns the two Tupper parking lots.

The main difference between the previous iteration of this plan and the one outlined June 18 is distributing added allowable floors differently on St. Catherine

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Keeping an eye on things



Diane and Kona seen relaxing at the Westmount Park dog run June 21. See p. 15 for another dog-and-owner photo.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Indie publishing schedule

July 1 (next week): no issue

July 8: issue

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

August 12 until Christmas: weekly

Children's library marks 'around the world' theme

Summer reading club opens with multicultural party

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

All aboard! The train was "leaving" the children's department of the Westmount Public Library June 17 for a summer of reading "around the world" – the theme of this year's TD Summer Reading Club.

The event was launched, with "one big imaginary multicultural party," by sharing how families celebrate various traditions

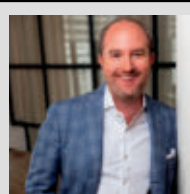
through food, music and party traditions.

While the event took place in the library's Westmount Room on the main floor of the library, downstairs the entrance to the library was decked out with a "ticket station," and included a model of the now-closed Westmount station at the foot of Victoria Ave. along with displays of books about people around the

continued on p. 10

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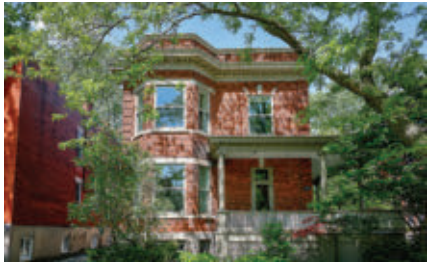
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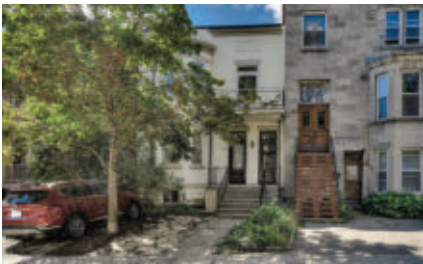
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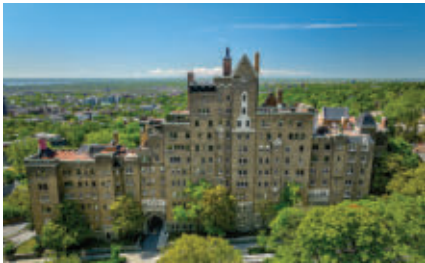
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Public Security warns against tossing cigarette butts into mulch

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

When Public Security answered a call for a possible fire at 507 Argyle on June 14 at 3:12 pm, smoke turned out to be coming from the front yard where garden mulch was found burning, officials said. A fire extinguisher was used to ensure safety while firefighters arrived to finish the job. The property owner was contacted to explain the situation was under control.

The incident serves as a reminder to residents to keep garden mulch well watered, especially during hot temperatures and to smokers, including passers-by, not to toss cigarette butts into garden areas but to dispose of them properly, said Public Security director Greg McBain.

The advice extends to discarding cigarettes in pots of plants, inside or outdoors – where, over the years, such fire incidents have been reported.

Driver stranded when car runs out of gasoline

A passing Public Security patroller was flagged down at Montrose and Aberdeen June 18 by a stranded motorist, department officials said. The car was stopped in the middle of the street at 8:07 am. It was pushed to the side and a towing service was contacted but could not attend for an

extended period of time. Officers drove the driver to the Esso gas station at Sherbrooke and Grosvenor to obtain more gas.

2 cars need towing after 'fender-bender'

A two-car accident June 17 at Sherbrooke and Mount Stephen was described as a fender-bender by Public Security officials. It nevertheless required tow trucks to remove both vehicles. Each had been moved to the side of the road at 4557 Sherbrooke at 5:49 pm and the drivers were given joint-accident forms to fill out.

No injuries were reported in the incident. It was discovered by officers hearing noise that sounded like a collision. They had been attending to a medical call nearby, at which an 18-year-old woman, feeling unwell, was believed to be dehydrated but was reported to feel better after being given Gatorade. Fire department first responders also attended.

94-year-old woman falls in park

A Public Security patroller found a woman lying face down in Westmount Park near the splash pad June 16, department officials said. She was unsure how she had fallen. Aged 94, she encountered problems speaking and was subsequently reported by Urgences Santé to have an irregular heartbeat. No further details were available.

Gas work closes St. Catherine

Emergency gas work required St. Catherine to be closed to traffic June 19 between Metcalfe and Kensington, Public Security officials said.

The closure occurred between 3:55 pm and 4:18 but the source of the incident was not reported.

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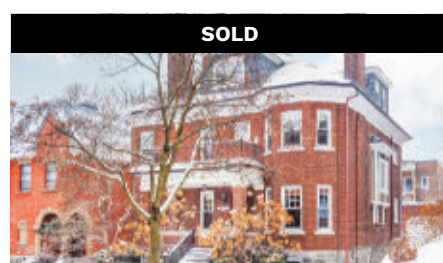


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You can't get there from Greene

"Chaos," summarized *Independent* reader Sam Beitel June 18 in an email to the paper. "Cars on Greene [southbound from de Maisonneuve] cannot go onto St. Catherine and therefore must turn around." The newspaper heard from another reader on the same subject at almost the exact same time. Another added his voice the next day.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF S. BEITEL.



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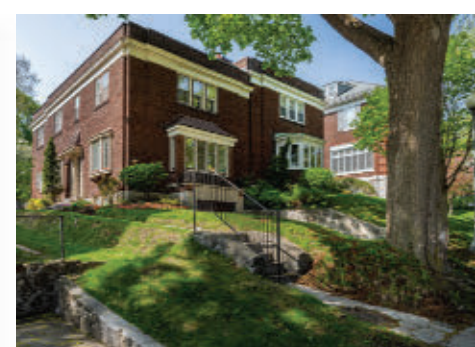
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (GENERAL MAIL)

PLEASE BE MORE WELCOMING

At the Melville/Melbourne access to Westmount Park, there is this massive empty flower box. Presumably it is strategically placed to emphasize that one is not permitted to ride bicycles in the park. While cyclists can easily get around it, it blocks entry to families with baby strollers, seniors with walkers, the physically handicapped and those in wheelchairs. Kindly remove this without delay.

ALAN KLINKHOFF, METCALFE AVE.



ADVICE ON NAVIGATING QUEBEC HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

RE: letter “Quebec health care: Dis-mantled, cruel, bureaucratically bloated,” April 29 (p. 8). Diana Hernandez is correct in describ-



The Queen Elizabeth Health Complex on June 20. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

ing the dwindling access to publicly insured healthcare services in the region. This is the result of provincial policies that have favoured improving health services in mainland Quebec over the Montreal area by restricting our recruitment of health professionals and hospital beds. For the last 20 years, because of the political consequences, no provincial party has dared to challenge the situation. The Queen Elizabeth Medical Clinic, at 2100 Marlowe in NDG, just west of Westmount, sees 25,000 urgent care visits a year. Arranging these appointments has become over-bureaucratized and the times are mainly reserved for people who go through the 811 number or are registered on the “Quebec Family Doctor Finder”

internet site. Few Westmounters know about this access and therefore we see a surprising number of patients from other regions, while our residents are turned away. I would encourage all Westmounters to call 811 when they have a medical problem that needs prompt attention and those without a family doctor to register with the “Quebec Family Doctor Finder” online or on the phone by dialling 811.

DR. MARK ROPER – CHIEF,
QUEEN ELIZABETH FAMILY
MEDICINE GROUP

WHY WOULDN'T PUBLIC SECURITY LISTEN?

Having been a resident of Westmount for 55 years, it is very upsetting for me to have to write this letter. The Westmount that I experienced had a staff that always exhibited a polite, thoughtful and charitable demeanor when dealing with the public. On May 21, 2024, I took my disabled friend to the RBC bank at the corner of Victoria and Sherbrooke and parked in the nearby handicap spot. She responsibly gave me her handicap placard and then proceeded to exit the car. I immediately got out to assist her as this was a difficult maneuver for her. I returned

to the driver's seat and as I was about to hang her placard up, a Westmount security person rudely shoved a ticket through my opened window and proceeded to turn his back on me, refusing to respond to my polite request to speak with him. Had this Westmount security employee been properly trained, he would have shown me the courtesy of speaking with him instead of arrogantly turning away and not allowing me to explain the circumstances. Because I pleaded not guilty to my ticket, my friend was forced to endure a very challenging trip to municipal court in order to help me contest it. The whole exercise NEVER would have happened had the Public Security officer behaved in a polite manner. Needless to say, the ticket was cancelled within 30 seconds with a justifiable reminder to always hang the placard first before proceeding with any other activity. On May 6, 2025 another Westmount resident (p. 6) was compelled to write a letter to your paper, also questioning Westmount's criteria for training their staff. I'm wondering what it will take for the people in charge to both acknowledge and correct the intimidating and bad-mannered attitude of their Public Security officers.

SUSAN CHARLAP, SOUTHWEST BOROUGH

BOOKKEEPER'S COLUMN

Farewell to *Independent*, to readers & clients, to my second family

BY BETH HUDSON

Editor's note: Our bookkeeper of almost 19 years, Beth Hudson, is retiring after our July issue. Her last week at the newspaper is July 7 to 11. To understand one of her remarks below, I must explain to the reader that I deemed the accounting confidentiality clause in her employment contract to cover all matters to do with the business. As a result, when I had a COMPLAINT about something or someone, I joked that she was my therapist and I would let it fly! One more reason that I will miss her... –DP.

Retirement was a tough decision, and, if I were younger, I wouldn't even consider it. I came in with very little prior experience and have gratefully learned so very much. It has truly been an honour to work with David and to have been part of something meaningful to the city of Westmount's residents and business people. David has been a fabulous employer and I have worked for him longer than

any other. I can't say enough about his patience, communication and management skills, lack of micromanaging and, perhaps most importantly, the casual dress code! This has been a second home to me, and a second family. David, I will miss you and our therapy sessions, where I listen and nod encouragingly. Soldier on, my friend! I would like to thank all of our clients to whom I have not reached out to individually. It has been my pleasure to work with you. Best wishes to all of our contributors and to the community at large. It's time for me to pursue my many personal interests and spend time with my family.

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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
office@westmountindependent.com

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (SOUTHEAST PLAN)

LET THE NEW MAYOR DECIDE ON SOUTHEAST

While neither fully supportive or fully against the proposed re-development of the southeast sector, I think that it is unfair that Mayor Smith should permit the plans to proceed. Not running for re-election in November, the proper thing for Mayor Smith to do would be to leave the deliberations and decisions to whomever follows her into the mayoral chair.

Failure to do so is reminiscent of Mayor Plante's "scorched earth" policy regarding the closure of Camillien Houde and is not in the best traditions of serving the needs of the population.

ALLEN RUBIN, LEXINGTON AVE.

BRAVO FOR MAYOR'S LEADERSHIP ON SOUTHEAST

There has been a lot of controversy regarding exactly what development could or should take place in the southeast sector. And that is normal, especially for the informed and engaged Westmount citizenry.

But the sector saw the destruction 60 years ago of 135 residences on Dorchester to make room for a widened street and some parking lots. That has cost Westmount at least \$50 million of lost municipal tax revenue (in current dollars) that could have helped the city maintain its infrastructure.

Prior to Mayor Smith, 10 different mayors and councils never solved the problem, including some who served multiple mandates, kicking the can down the deteriorating road. The current state of our roads, buildings, parks and Hydro Westmount infrastructure are testimony to this.

Regardless of what one may think of the various proposals put forward by the current administration, Mayor Smith and council are to be commended for finally addressing this issue with the importance with which it is due, and engaging the citizenry in many consultation opportunities over and above what is required.

I was pleased to take note of Mayor Smith's comment to *The Gazette* that "I refuse to saddle the next council and the next generation with this same problem." It shows, at last, leadership. Bravo!

PATRICK MARTIN, THE BOULEVARD

REGARDING THE SOUTHEAST, ALLOW THE PEOPLE TO BE HEARD – GENERALLY AND VIA THE UPCOMING ELECTION

Rather than continue the fact-based debate on the southeast that Peter Trent usefully started (May 13, p. 6) and to which Conrad Peart made a constructive contribution (June 10, p. 8), Peart's latest salvo (June 17, p. 10) reverts to this administra-

tion's tiresome reflex to call anyone opposed to their plans for the southeast guilty of "obstruction," "nostalgia," "disrespect[ful]," "counterproductive," and "attacks" (Gallery, May 20, p. 7), "resisting," "refusing change" and "not allowing newcomers to choose Westmount" (Peart).

Critics are not opposed to all change. Everyone wants the southeast revitalized. The debate is about how, and what will our community look like? Will it be a more human scale of development or towering buildings that revitalize the southeast? Trumpian mudslinging against those who are constructively voicing a different vision is not helpful.

Bizarrely, Peart argues the plan will allow "new families" to "start a chapter in this city." Really? In a 20-storey or higher high-rise? Like the ones across the street on Atwater – full of very expensive condos and almost no families? Whom are we kidding? The evidence from a stone's throw away suggests the contrary, which is why Peart and his allies choose to ignore it.

Peart litters his article with emotive arguments (like the one just cited), but advances no *substantive* evidence to demonstrate how the new "vision" will achieve even the council's own objectives, never mind what most Westmounters see as appropriate for our city in terms of density and height – views which most of this council patronizingly reject.

What is the point of public consultation if the public is *ab initio* always wrong? All input is welcome. *Audi alteram partem*. [Listen to the other side.]

We have a thin-skinned, sulking council easily wounded by robust, democratic debate; offended because residents, even former mayors (God forbid!), should dare to express differing views. Someone needs to explain to this council that that is not how our democracy works, councillors Kez and Roux excepted, because they understand – courageous voices in the politburo.

Current rules are amply supportive of development, just not high-rises. So why has nothing happened? Peart does not offer any evidence-based analysis of why past efforts failed and why the current proposal will be successful. This adds nothing useful to the debate. It mires us in puffery and the murky realm of speculative thinking and emotional string-pulling.

I do not have all the answers, but every developer I have spoken to expresses no desire to develop anything in Westmount, no matter the density or height, because Westmount's Urban Planning department is famously difficult (some say impossible) to deal with. It's not the rules; it's the execution.

Engaging with Westmount often takes years of frustrating effort and enormous

expense, one step forward and two steps back, over and over again, tying up a developer's energy, focus and resources more productively spent elsewhere. Had they known then what they know now, many current developers say they would have left well enough alone.

Given how important this issue is for Westmount, it might be best to allow a vigorous debate in the next election – only months away – and let the next council, with an informed democratic mandate on this issue, move it forward.

PETER F. HOFFMANN,
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

WHAT WILL SOUTHEAST DEVELOP COST TO THE CITY?

When any government approves a significant development on behalf of its residents, it is obligated [in my opinion] to tell them the expected cost. With the southeast re-development, Westmount is not following this rule.

The anticipated approval by council this coming September will set the stage for a massive re-building in the southeast by the city. The infrastructure will include water, sewage, run-off, power, streets, sidewalks, lighting and green/public spaces. The bill for this will be immense. How will the city finance it? Can it even finance it fully or will it hit mandatory borrowing limits? The city does not say and gives no indication that it will provide this information in the future.

When questioned, council and Urban Planning reply that they are looking at it. No public southeast documents even remotely bring up the cost to the city.

Westmount now has a huge infrastructure "deficit" built up over decades. Mayor Smith called it "staggering." The city has not informed residents of the size of this burden. To help finance the current three-year capital budget, it already plans to borrow \$76 million from 2025 to 2027 as it has run out of ready cash. Where is this all heading? Then add on the southeast.

Council claims the city first needs to know what actually will be built in the southeast before estimates can be prepared. This is nonsense. A prominent Westmount architect stated at the June 16 public assembly that the city should expect all developers to build to the permitted maximum. Building under the maximum is unheard of.

The task of estimating the cost of infrastructure is not complicated.

Citizens must demand that, before the current council approves the rezoning of the southeast, they be told the size of the bill and how the city intends to finance it. Sleepwalking into it is not an option.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (GENERAL MAIL)

CITY OF WESTMOUNT COULD DO MORE FOR PEOPLE IMPACTED BY PROTESTS

I find the juxtaposition of two front-page articles by Laureen Sweeney (June 17, p. 1) so painfully coincidental, and a sad commentary of the priorities of Westmount city council.

On the one hand, the dedication of substantial funds to make life better for our dogs (“City allocates \$30,000 to defend Summit Woods by-law allowing off-leash dogs at times”). This is a worthwhile cause indeed.

On the other hand, there is the claim of helplessness for us, the residents of 1 Wood, where demonstrations have disrupted our lives for so long now (“Council asked to take action on noisy protests, graffiti, violence in front of Israeli consulate”).

How long can Westmount claim it is all up to the Montreal police? Where are Westmount security people, supported by our high taxes? They cannot arrest anyone, but so what? They can make their presence felt.

Secondly, the parking constables are not present to enforce parking regulations during demonstrations. Why not? Pick-up trucks of the demonstrators are often parked illegally at the corner of Wood Ave. and St. Catherine, and at the northwest corner of Wood and de Maisonneuve, both no-parking, no-stopping spots.

Being a resident of 1 Wood, I must also mention the fact that we have many senior citizens living here, and access to our building is often impossible. People have medical appointments, and this just adds to the stress. One can easily imagine a medical emergency, or a fire situation, where each minute counts.

All four levels of government (municipal, agglomeration, provincial, federal) are letting us down, even though they have responsibilities. The RCMP is responsible for protection of diplomats, and the other levels of government are there to enforce laws that allow us to live our lives in peace.

There have been demonstrations that

went on very noisily until 11:30 pm. There have been public prayers across Wood Ave., at which time it was impossible for pedestrians to walk to their homes. Some of the demonstrators have come onto our private grounds. The police have told our staff that they do not want a confrontation. Is that an approach for a police force to have? What about maintaining peace and good order?

These demonstrators should be directed to have their demonstrations in public areas, which are available nearby. Protesting at a building where the consulate has an office, and at times when it is usually closed, makes no sense.

There are many offices in Westmount Square, including urgent medical facilities, as well as a place of worship. Do they not deserve to have access?

The mayor was quite upset when a few striking employees showed up outside her home. Are we, ordinary tax-paying citizens, of Westmount, less worthy of protection, and the ability to live our lives in peace?

History has shown us that great societies make every effort to protect the innocent and vulnerable. Where, pray tell, is any effort to do this in Westmount?

BERNARD SHUSTER, WOOD AVE.



PHOTOS: JENNIFER BALL



Shaping the southeast – thoughtfully, responsibly and compassionately



Mayor's Column

CHRISTINA SMITH

First, I want to thank everyone who attended the public assembly on the future of the southeast sector on June 18. Your presence, questions, perspectives – all of it – send a strong message that residents are engaged, thoughtful and deeply invested in the future of their city.

Cities are living organisms that grow, adapt and evolve. Many communities across the country have reached a crossroads: housing has become scarcer, less affordable and increasingly out of reach for young people, families, seniors and even the workers who keep our cities running.

The reality is simple: we need to build more homes. This means change, but it's a necessary change, and responsible cities must lead the way. The new federal government prioritizes this, and infrastructure support will be tied to it.

I understand the discomfort that comes with shifting the landscape. Concerns about traffic, parking, schools and character are valid. However, equally valid – and urgent – is the fact that this is an area that without action, risks further decline, leading to shrinking populations, struggling retail and abandoned lots.

For too long, our zoning rules and housing policies have made it easier to say “no” than “yes” to any project or construction that would address some of these issues. In many areas, only single-family homes are permitted, locking out more affordable options like duplexes, townhouses and low, mid and higher rise apartments.

These rules were built for a different era, with different priorities. But the world has changed: our children are staying home longer, our seniors want to downsize but remain in their neighbourhoods, and newcomers vital to our economic future need a place to live.

Mandated density

Many of you have asked questions about density in the area. Is the proposed density a local choice or an imposed requirement?

The revised Plan métropolitain d'aménagement et de développement (PMAD), adopted on June 9 by the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM), imposes a minimum density of 480 dwellings per hectare for hypercentre Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zones such as the

Atwater Metro station area.

These aren't suggestions. They are formal requirements that the agglomeration of Montreal must integrate into its land-use plan. Municipalities like Westmount will then be obliged to do the same. Adopting this now ensures alignment and avoids future irregularities. These regulations target areas like St. Catherine St. that have development potential, and they do not impact the built heritage in the area.

Why not delay?

Delaying compliance doesn't avoid the requirement – it simply pushes it into the future, potentially forcing Westmount into rushed or reactive planning later. Acting now enables coordinated, proactive development, rather than a piecemeal approach.

Densification isn't about building towers everywhere. It's about smart, intentional densification – adding homes and people near transit, in walkable areas, close to services, parks and jobs. It's about creating vibrant communities where people from different generations can live together. That has always been the goal.

Change can be difficult. However, what's far more challenging is a future that will continue to decline if we don't take action. Our guiding principle is to attract more people to an area that has experienced decline since the 1960s.

This means revisiting outdated zoning, investing in infrastructure that supports growth, including roads, hydro, transit and green spaces, while working with developers who build the right kind of housing, not just the most profitable.

Many are growing impatient for the city to act and have been waiting far too long for this area to improve. We have heard that clearly. Many others are concerned with the density levels, the height on St. Catherine and Dorchester, and the desire for more green space. We have also heard that clearly.

Shaping our future, together

Leadership isn't about maintaining the status quo; it's about preparing for the future while honouring the past. We can do both. But it starts with recognizing that more homes and inclusive communities are not threats. They can be great opportunities.

The question isn't whether our city will change. The question is whether we will shape that change together – thoughtfully, responsibly and with compassion – or whether we will fall behind, locked in indecision. I choose to lead by looking forward.

We must revitalize this area and we must do it wisely. Our future as a thriving community depends on it.

A Hidden Gem in a West Island Residence

The adage “sharing is caring” holds profound truth, especially when exceptional acts of integrity come to light, demanding to be celebrated and communicated.

This is the story of **Mary De Santis**, an estate sale liquidator whose passion and unwavering commitment to helping others set her apart in an industry often marked by uncertainty. For those familiar with estate sales, the process typically involves surviving family members navigating the emotional task of selling a loved one’s belongings items both significant and trivial to the highest bidder or a discreet operator. During such times, grief can cloud judgment, hastening decisions amid emotional turmoil. Imagine the added burden of not knowing the true value of possessions or whom to trust for a fair appraisal.

Mary De Santis transforms this challenging landscape into a blessing. Her work embodies a rare treasure: the scrupulous integrity of a professional as valuable as the truth she upholds. In December 2023, Mary was approached by a certified financial planner acting as the executor of a client’s estate. With transparency

and accountability at the forefront, she implemented a meticulous coding system to tag every item a practice uncommon in the industry. Furthermore, she ensured accurate appraisals by collaborating with knowledgeable experts, a decision that proved both financially and informatively beneficial. During the unpacking process, a remarkable discovery emerged: a first-edition antique book from **1636 by Gabriel Sagard**, titled *Histoire du Canada*. A rare find, indeed, and a testament to Mary’s keen eye for valuable antiques. Determined to secure its worth, she researched independently, even as a book collector boasting thousands of antique volumes offered a modest \$2,000 CAD. Undeterred, Mary’s diligence paid off. She uncovered the book’s true value, and through her company, **MDS Estate Sales**, it was sold at Sotheby’s USA on June 28, 2024, for \$24,000 USD. This achievement speaks volumes not only of her expertise but of her decency in dealing with clients. In an industry where stories of exploitation and undervalued appraisals abound, **Mary De Santis** stands out. I have yet to hear a single negative remark about her or her impeccable ethical standards a rarity as precious as the treasures she uncovers. This is a story worth sharing, for “**sharing is caring**” extends beyond words into action. Sometimes, pausing to express gratitude or perpetuate goodness can make a difference. Writing this piece is my contribution, a source of contentment knowing it may inspire others. We learn from each other’s stories, passing them on so someone else might benefit.

In the end, the greatest treasure unearthed through this book is the decency **Mary De Santis** exemplifies a hidden gem shining brightly in the West Island.

Tips and Advice for Executors of a Will or Liquidators of an Estate

Navigating the responsibilities of an executor or estate liquidator can be complex. To ensure a smooth and transparent process, consider the following best practices:

1. Verify Professional Credentials:

- Always obtain a business card with full contact information from the estate liquidator.
- Cross-reference the corporate name on their business card with their official website to **confirm consistency**.
- Check their Google reviews to assess their reputation for transparency and dedication.
- Seek referrals from trusted friends or contacts.

2. Protect Valuable Assets:

- Never allow anyone to leave the premises with your valuables without proper documentation. This includes items such as fine art, gold jewelry, gold coins, and other precious items.
- Maintain a clear paper trail via email for all valuable items removed from the premises. This documentation should detail what was removed, by whom, and when.

3. Ensure Transparent Sales Records:

- Insist on a detailed paper trail via email for all items sold on your behalf, regardless of the payment method (especially for cash transactions). This record should include item descriptions, sale prices, and dates.
- Request a detailed inventory list that includes estimated values for all items on the premises.

4. Handle Jewelry Wisely:

- Do not discard costume jewelry. These often contain precious metals (like gold) or hidden value. Many buyers (“pickers”) may offer very low prices, knowing their true worth.
- It is crucial to obtain your own independent evaluations for all valuable items, including jewelry,



Mary De Santis

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before making sale decisions.

5. Strategize Sales and Liquidations:

- Before consigning items to auction houses, explore whether an estate liquidator can achieve a higher sale price. If their offers do not meet your expectations, you can then consider auction houses.
- When an estate liquidator takes possession of your valuable items, always request a copy of the consignment sheet from the auction house. Ensure your name is clearly indicated on this document in case of unforeseen circumstances involving the liquidator.

6. Be Aware of Industry Practices:

- Understand that many individuals in this industry are knowledgeable about art, antique books, and coins, and may articulate their expertise in ways that appeal to you. However, be cautious, as some of these individuals are “estate sale pickers.”
- An “estate sale picker” is a person who attends estate sales or visits customers specifically to acquire valuable items, often seeking them at prices below their true market value.



Reading club, cont'd from p. 1

Montreal author Mitali Banerjee Ruths read to the group before all found places at tables set up for refreshments.

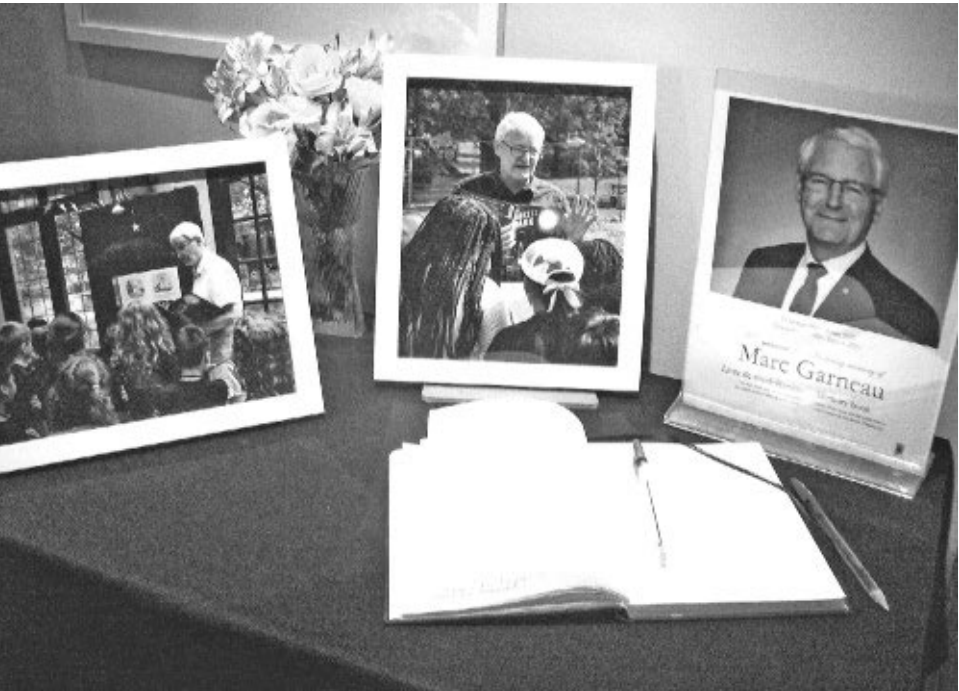
At the library's main entrance upstairs was a tribute to the late Marc Garneau, Westmount's former longtime MP and first Canadian in space. Garneau had officially participated in the national opening

of the TD Summer Reading Club held last year in Westmount June 20 (see story July 2, 2024, p. 12).

In recognition of this year's theme for the event, the library's story walk in Westmount Park, opened June 16 featuring the book *Let's Go! Haw kwa!* by Julie Flett, whose title uses a Cree idiom sometimes translated as "moving forward."



From left, children's librarian Wendy Wayling explains the summer program to the attendees as author Mitali Banerjee Ruths listens, who also read to the children.

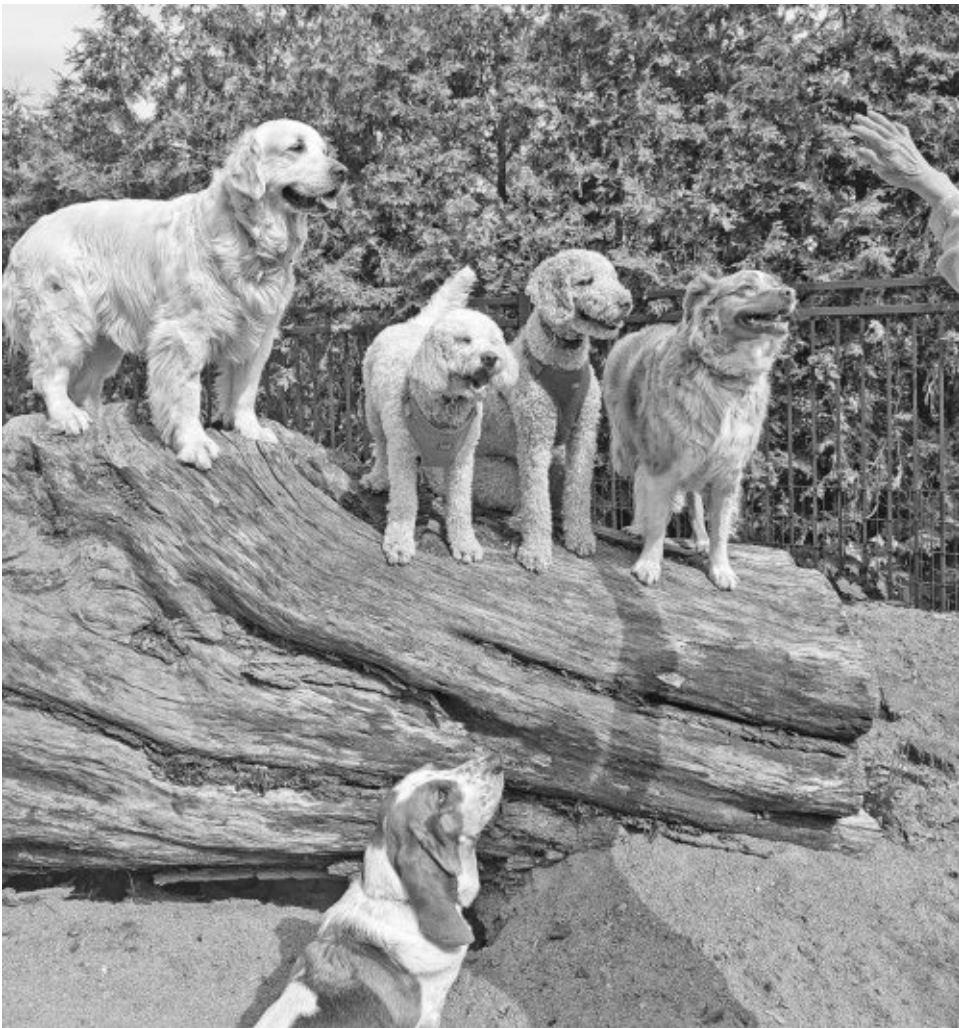


A tribute to the late Marc Garneau, who opened the national launch last year of the TD Summer Reading Club.



The entrance to the children's library downstairs was decked out as a train station for the event June 17.

La classe de M. Earl



This June 2 photo is from the dog run at King George (Murray) Park. From left are Buddy, Pauline, Ginger and Filou, with Louie down below. Filou's owner, Earl, gives the dogs lessons in agility that are "*fort appr ci es*," according to *Independent* reader Marie-France Raynault.

PHOTO COURTESY OF FLORENCIA NUNEZ VEGA; HEADLINE COURTESY OF M.-F. RAYNAULT.

Police Report

Police seek masked suspect after series of house burglaries

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Police at Station 12 on Stanton St. are warning Westmounters about an elusive suspect who is being sought in connection with a string of break-ins and burglaries committed in Westmount and NDG over

the past few months.

The *Independent* reported in April on at least five burglaries committed over a period of less than 24 hours at homes on Roslyn, Grosvenor, Lansdowne, Victoria, Belmont and possibly others.

According to witness accounts as well

as complaints filed at Station 12, a suspect was seen wandering around on those streets late at night, while trying front and back doors as well as windows.

Earlier this week, Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit said the suspect has usually been spotted between two and four in the morning. He described him as a tall, thin, white, middle-aged male wearing a hoodie and surgical mask across the face.

"Sometimes he enters back yards, then checks for patio doors, front doors, windows that are unlocked," said Yigit. "He just opens it, goes in, steals what he can and walks out."

Some of the most recent similar burglaries in Westmount being attributed to the suspect include two incidents near Sherbrooke St. and Metcalfe Ave. around 3:30 am on June 2.

In both cases, according to Yigit, the suspect was able to get in because the owners left a window and a patio door unlocked.

A similar burglary incident that same night in NDG is believed to have also been the work of the same individual. Yigit's advice should anyone spot the suspect is simply to call 9-1-1.

Distraction thefts continue

An ongoing wave of "distraction" thefts in the Victoria village in Westmount continues to keep staff at Station 12 busy.

As previously reported in the *Independent*, pickpockets who use distraction as a means to steal from victims have been active in Westmount at least since March.

The victims have included an elderly retiree who had a large sum stolen out of her bank account after scammers stopped her in the aisle of a Victoria Ave. supermarket ostensibly to ask innocuous questions.

After stealing her wallet containing debit and credit cards, they contacted her

by phone shortly afterwards while posing as bank officials, then managed to extract enough additional information to steal \$10,000.

According to Cst. Yigit, similar distraction thefts involving wallets took place on Victoria Ave. on June 13, 14 and 15. One took place outside on the street, while the two others were inside commercial establishments.

He said images taken by security cameras provided proof to the police that the incidents all appeared to be the work of a male and a female suspect.

As seen in security camera videos viewed by the police, the man opens up a conversation to draw the attention of a potential victim, while the woman stealthily goes through the victim's purse.

After consulting merchants on Victoria Ave., Cst. Yigit and a second Station 12 officer are taking part in a plain-clothes undercover operation, with the merchants agreeing to notify the police should they spot the suspects.

According to Yigit, he and the other officer also went undercover recently in the middle of the night in an attempt to catch up with the masked burglary suspect.

Be ready for occasional head-on traffic on one-ways



An eastbound car on de Maisonneuve east of Prince Albert on June 20 travels against the one way. It arrived southbound from Prince Albert. The relevant one-way sign at the intersection is clearly visible (see p. 24).

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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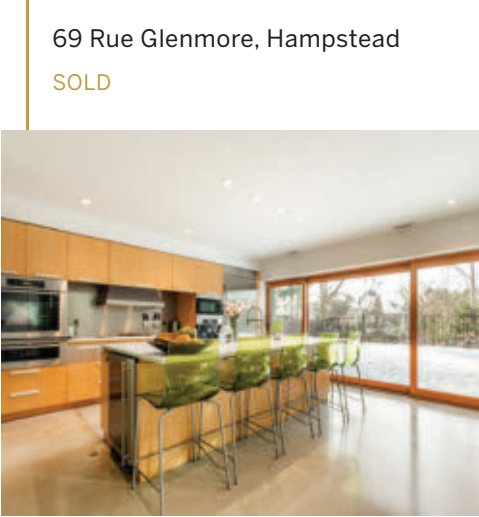
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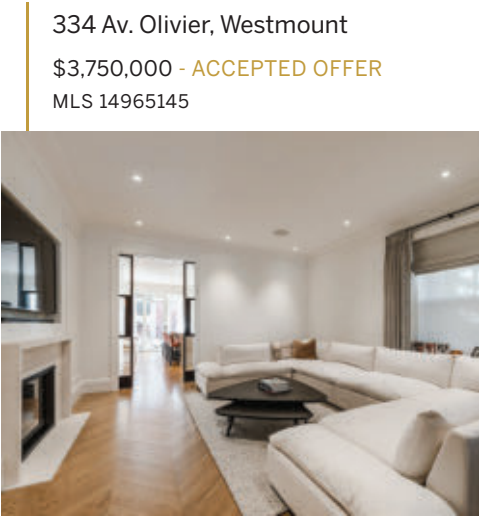
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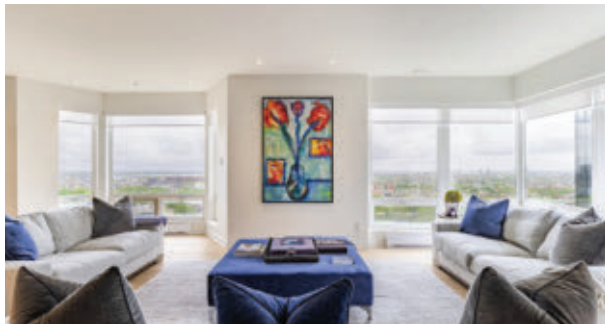
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St. Andrew’s pre-kindergarten class visits St. Margaret’s, Place Kensington seniors’ residences

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

The “Explorers,” a pre-kindergarten group at St. Andrew’s school on Hillside Ave., performed a play they created and called *Candyland* to seniors at St. Margaret’s Residence April 22 and Place Kensington on May 16.

According to their educator Sue Goh,



PHOTOS COURTESY OF S. GOH.



this was a story they had created as an “instrumental drama play inspired by Tchaikovsky’s *The Nutcracker Suite* ballet.”

“They drew the pictures to create a book,” she said, “narrated their story in a video, selected the music, made the props and costumes, as well as played several musical instruments live, including the harmonica, bells, tambourines, shakers and tone sticks, at different times throughout the play.”

At St. Margaret’s, their inter-generational activity was one “in which the seniors were invited to make their own shakers with the children, who carried out a little sing-along session while the seniors played their shakers.”

At Place Kensington May 16, they followed their *Candyland* with a repertoire of five songs and have been requested for more performances in the near future, she said.

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Replacing floral clock's 'mechanism'



Workers dug up the city's iconic floral clock in Westmount Park June 16 to "replace the mechanism," they explained. City director general Julie Mandeville told the *Independent* that the clock "should be fully operational by July 1."

Bordering Lansdowne, the landmark was originally installed in 1926 as the brainchild of then mayor Peter William

McLagan. It was designed to showcase the city's horticultural skills and offer a beautiful public display. Inspired by a similar floral display in Edinburgh's West Princess Street Garden, in Scotland, it has been described by the Westmount Historical Association as the only floral clock in Canada. Its face typically consists of some 8,000 bedding plants.

PHOTO: LAUREEN SWEENEY

Westmount's own NFL linebacker



Keith with his St. Bernard, Butkus (named after the American professional football linebacker Dick Butkus), at the Westmount Park dog run June 21.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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Joyce fans celebrate ‘Bloomsday’ – June 16 – at Westmount Public Library

By MARTIN C. BARRY

If you have ever felt overwhelmed at the thought of trying to read James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, you could take heart and join a group of Joyce fans on “Bloomsday” (marking the day the novel unfolds and named after its protagonist) to discover the people and places in the famed Irish writer’s novel.

Bloomsday Montreal, which celebrates the life of Joyce, culminated last week with a dramatic reading of excerpts from Joyce’s 1922 book at the Westmount Public Library.

Starting on June 12 with special events in Montreal up to June 16, the 14th edition of Montreal Bloomsday was not only a tribute to Joyce’s groundbreaking literary genius, but also a reflection of the city’s rich Irish heritage, with 40 percent of Quebecers claiming Irish ancestry.

From Leopold Bloom’s whimsical conversations to Molly Bloom’s sensual soliloquies, readings by local professional and amateur actors brought Joyce’s complex, humorous and deeply human characters to life.

Bloomsday celebrations, which take place all over the globe, can go on for days. The Bloomsday Montreal Festival is the second-largest in the world, after one held in Dublin.

The readings that were part of Westmount’s Bloomsday contribution began at two in the afternoon and continued until 8 pm, with a break at 6 pm for dinner. Attendees were encouraged to drop by for an hour or stay for the full length, with tea and coffee served throughout.

While most were content to listen and react to Joyce’s ponderous reflections and musings, some in the audience, such as Hua Jin of NDG, chose to become more involved, reading along out of their own copy of *Ulysses*.



Seen here at Westmount Public Library on Bloomsday, June 16, NDG resident Hua Jin, seated, celebrated James Joyce’s literary accomplishments in her own way, reading from a copy of *Ulysses*, while Westmounter Ann Elbourne, left and Jenny Chopra read out excerpts from the famed novel.

Westmount’s Bloomsday was led by Kevin Wright, a retired educator, who is the president of Festival Bloomsday Montreal. He is also the leader of a *Finnegans Wake* reading group in Montreal, “The Boaters and Sifters of ALP,” which meets every third Wednesday of each month.



Westmount’s Bloomsday was led by Kevin Wright, a retired educator, who is the president of Festival Bloomsday Montreal.

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A political campaign poster for Anna Gainey. It features a portrait of Anna Gainey on the left. To her right is the text 'Anna Gainey' with a small red maple leaf icon, followed by 'Member of Parliament | Députée' and 'Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Westmount'. On the right side, the Quebec flag is flying on a pole. In the center, the text reads 'Happy | Bonne FÊTE NATIONALE DU QUÉBEC'. At the bottom, a red banner contains the address '408-5165 Sherbrooke West/Ouest', email 'anna.gainey@parl.gc.ca', and phone number '(514) 481-1897'.

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Rappels saisonniers

Consultez la page des rappels saisonniers pour l’été afin d’en savoir plus sur les collectes, la réglementation municipale et les activités sportives offertes. Restez informé pour profiter pleinement de la saison !

Deuxième phase du projet de réfection de la rue Sherbrooke
La deuxième phase des travaux de réfection de la rue Sherbrooke, entre l’avenue Grosvenor et la limite ouest de la Ville, a débuté le **lundi 16 juin**. westmount.org/travaux

Participez au concours de photos !
Jusqu’au 2 juillet, partagez vos photos de Westmount ! La photo gagnante sera mise en vedette sur le site Web de la Ville tout l’été et partagée sur ses comptes de médias sociaux. westmount.org/concoursphoto

Chiens au bois Summit
Du 16 juin au 31 octobre, les chiens peuvent être sans laisse au bois Summit seulement de 5 h à 10 h et de 17 h à minuit. En dehors de ces heures, la laisse est obligatoire et la réglementation sera strictement appliquée. westmount.org

Fermeture des bureaux administratifs durant les jours fériés
Les bureaux administratifs de la Ville seront fermés le **24 juin** pour la fête nationale du Québec et le **1^{er} juillet** pour la fête du Canada. westmount.org/evenements



Phase 2 of the Sherbrooke Street Resurfacing Project
The second phase of the Sherbrooke Street rehabilitation work, between Grosvenor Avenue and the western boundary of the City, began on **Monday, June 16**. westmount.org/works

Participate in the Photo Contest!
Until July 2, share your photos of Westmount! One winning photo will be featured on the City’s website all summer long and shared on its social media accounts. westmount.org/photocontest

Seasonal Reminders
Visit the seasonal reminders page for the summer to learn more about waste collection, municipal regulations, and available sports activities. Stay informed and make the most of the season!

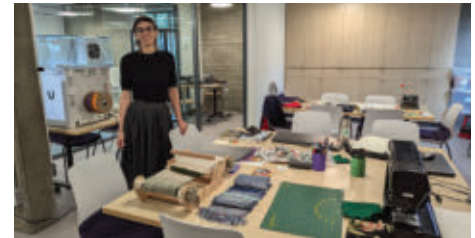
Summit Woods
From June 16 to October 31, dogs may be off-leash at Summit Woods only from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to midnight. Outside of these hours, leashes are mandatory and regulations will be strictly enforced. westmount.org

Administrative Office Closures for the Holidays
City administrative offices will be closed on **June 24** for la fête nationale du Québec and on **July 1** for Canada Day. westmount.org/events

BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

Club de lecture d’été TD (6 ans et plus)
Du 16 juin au 30 août, la Bibliothèque publique de Westmount invite les jeunes explorateurs à participer au Club de lecture d’été TD, dans la section pour enfants. Tout au long de l’été, profitez d’une multitude d’activités gratuites et amusantes telles que la marche littéraire, les heures du conte et bien plus. westlib.org

Concert : Ensemble Camerata
1 juillet, 14 h, Victoria Hall. Célébrez la fête du Canada au Victoria Hall avec un après-midi exceptionnel de musique classique présenté par l’Ensemble Camerata. Au programme, des œuvres de grands compositeurs interprétées par Berta Rosenohl, Luis Grinhauz et Joshua Morris. westmount.org/evenements



Splash Bash pour la fête du Canada
1^{er} juillet, 12 h, parc Westmount. Célébrez la fête du Canada à Westmount avec vos amis, vos voisins et votre famille ! Barbecue, splash bash, gâteau, musique et jeux vous attendent pour une journée mémorable ! westmount.org/evenements

Ciné-club d’été — Dog Day Afternoon
8 juillet, 14 h, Victoria Hall. En anglais. Rejoignez-nous pour la première des quatre présentations de films du mois de juillet ! Réalisé par Sidney Lumet et écrit par Frank Pierson, ce film basé sur des faits réels raconte l’histoire de Sonny Wortzik (Al Pacino), un criminel amateur dont le braquage de banque à Brooklyn tourne en prise d’otages dramatique. westmount.org/evenements

L’été au Studio
Le Studio est un espace où les personnes de tous âges peuvent laisser libre cours à leur créativité et fabriquer toutes sortes de projets. Les inscriptions aux ateliers d’été sont maintenant ouvertes. Venez participer à des activités variées, amusantes et adaptées à tous les niveaux ! westlib.org

LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

TD Summer Reading Club (6 years +)
From June 16 to August 30, the Westmount Public Library invites young explorers to take part in the TD Summer Reading Club, in the children’s section. Throughout the summer, enjoy a host of free, fun activities such as the literary walk, story times and much more. westlib.org

Concert: Ensemble Camerata
July 1, 2 p.m., Victoria Hall. Celebrate Canada Day at Victoria Hall with a remarkable afternoon of classical music presented by Ensemble Camerata. The program features works by great composers, performed by Berta Rosenohl, Luis Grinhauz, and Joshua Morris. westmount.org/events

Splash Bash for Canada Day
July 1, 12 p.m., Westmount Park. Celebrate Canada Day in Westmount with your friends, neighbours, and family! Enjoy a barbecue, splash bash, cake, music, and games for a fun-filled day! westmount.org/events

Summer Film Club — Dog Day Afternoon
July 8, 2 p.m., Victoria Hall. In English. Join us for the first of four film screenings this July! Directed by Sidney Lumet and written by Frank Pierson, this film—based on true events—follows Sonny Wortzik (Al Pacino), an inexperienced criminal whose attempted bank robbery in Brooklyn quickly escalates into a tense hostage situation. westmount.org/events



Summer at the Studio
The Studio is a creative space where people of all ages can let their imagination run wild and bring all kinds of projects to life. Registration for summer workshops is now open! Join us for fun, hands-on activities suitable for all skill levels. westlib.org

Solarium sets the mood with 'Aube/Nocturne' performance

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The Montreal-based jazz fusion quartet Solarium gave a small group of Westmounters a preview of their latest album, *Aube/Nocturne*, in Victoria Hall on June 7.

Set to be released in August, the album – their second – is an anthology of 18 eclectic pieces, oscillating between moments of high-level improvisation and carefully composed passages.

The performance was one of a series of concerts presented in Westmount over the past few months in conjunction with the Conseil des arts de Montréal, which supports the creation, production and presentation of professional arts in Montreal.

Solarium's sound, which borders on rock, is influenced by contemporary and traditional songs of Quebec. The band members composed and arranged the album from a venue located in Petite Vallée in Quebec's Gaspésie region. It was recorded at Studio Piccolo in Montreal.

► Seen on stage at Victoria Hall on June 7 are, from left, the members of Solarium: Karl-André Rozankovic (piano/keyboards), Louis Plouffe (saxophone), Vincent Dessureault (bass), and Leo Minville (drums).



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New assistant rabbi

Temple Emanu-Beth-Shalom retains American rabbi Luks-Morgan

By JENNIFER BALL

Temple Emanu-Beth-Shalom is welcoming Rabbi Benjamin Luks-Morgan into its fold. He will serve in the capacity of assistant rabbi and starts full-time on July 1.

Located on Sherbrooke at Wood Ave., Temple is a reform congregation committed to inclusivity and creating a place of worship where Jews by birth and by choice find a place that feels like home.

At the Temple's *bimah* (speaking platform similar to as pulpit) already are senior rabbi Lisa Grushcow, Rabbi Lillian Kowalski and rabbi emeritus Leigh Lerner. The *Independent* asked Luks-Morgan what specific role he would be filling.

He said his mandate is three-pronged:

- leading and being present with the Temple's Torah school,
- working with young adults,
- creating and disseminating an introduction to Judaism.

Rabbi Luks-Morgan had his rabbinic ordination at the Hebrew Union College in New York at the beginning of May and is emigrating to Canada to start his professional career at a time when 82 percent of Canadian Jews feel less safe after October

7, 2023, according to a 2024 survey by the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA).

What causes anti-Semitism?

The *Independent* offered him the opportunity to contextualize this distress. "I am new to living in Canada. My personal experience with anti-Semitism is an American one..."

"Anti-Semitism is a fear of perceived Jewish power that does not exist. Jews are no more effective at organizing power and world affairs than any other group of people. Anti-Semites hold onto these views because they want an answer to the reason the world feels out of their own control..."

"Jews operate for anti-Semites as an easy explanation for their own lack of control and a scapegoat for the world's very real problems. This is still all true post-October 7."

If he had the opportunity to sit down with them face to face, what would he then say to those behind the vandalism of the Montreal Holocaust Museum or those who firebombed a Montreal synagogue?

"I would open the conversation with a question, as I try to do with everyone I meet. What's going on in your life? Who



Rabbi Benjamin Luks-Morgan on June 18 at Temple Emanu-Beth-Shalom, which is found on Sherbrooke at Wood Ave.

and what do you love, and what's breaking your heart?...

"And then try to get the person to understand what really lies beneath their pain – and to see that whatever's going on, it's not Jews who are to blame because Jews are simply people."

Excited to start work in Montreal, at Temple

Rabbi Luks-Morgan wanted to convey how deeply excited he was to be starting his professional career and to be moving from the Washington area to Montreal with his wife, Sasha Luks-Morgan.

"One of the things I love about Reform Judaism is its inclusivity and recognition of the sacred in each person..."

"When I interviewed with Temple, their lived approach to this was what made me want to be the assistant rabbi here. I can't wait to be a part of this community and get to know this great place."

Rabbi Luks-Morgan wanted readers of the *Independent* to know that there is an open house on July 2 at Temple.

"I will be on the *bimah* for the first time on July 4, so I would love to meet Westmount [*Independent*] readers..."

Less likely right now?



As seen on de Maisonneuve at Victoria Ave. June 18, on a hot, muggy night.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Sherbrooke/Vic village sidewalk work continues



Looking west on the north side of Sherbrooke from Victoria on June 21.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Dramatis Personae stages Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, charts the dangers of conformity

By JENNIFER BALL

Eugène Ionesco's play *Rhinoceros* deals with a mysterious and eventually all-engulfing appearance of a rhinoceros in a small French town and charts how its arrival causes transformation of individuals and mistrust of others.

Dramatis Personae, a Westmount community theatre group founded in 1985, chose to stage it for its second 2025 production and the play ran May 29, 31 and June 1 at Victoria Hall.

Ionesco was a Romanian-French playwright and one of the leading figures of the Theatre of the Absurd. His works are known for their unconventional style, combining elements of surrealism, existentialism and black comedy.

The play is often read as a response and criticism to the capitulation of Germans to Nazism and Italians to fascism preceding World War II. It explores the themes of



conformity, culture, mass movements, mob mentality, philosophy and morality.

It was first performed in 1959.

Over the course of three acts, the large cast of 11 actors inhabit a small, provincial

French town that is turning people into rhinoceroses. Ultimately, the only human who does not succumb to this mass metamorphosis is the central character, Bérenger (played by Helen Davies), a flustered everyman figure who is initially criticized in the play for her drinking, tardiness and slovenly lifestyle and then, later, for her increasing paranoia and obsession with the rhinoceroses.

Giving life meaning

The transformation of Bérenger from an underachiever into the saviour of humanity constitutes the major theme of *Rhinoceros*, and the major existential struggle: one must commit oneself to a significant cause in order to give life meaning.

On stage, Jeanne (played by Nathalie Saint-Pierre) continually exhorts Berenger to exercise more will-power and not surrender to life's pressures, shortly before her own skin turns into a hide and a rhino horn sprouts prominently from her forehead.

As the plot unfolds, more townspeople transform, showcasing a disturbing shift in societal values. The transformation is

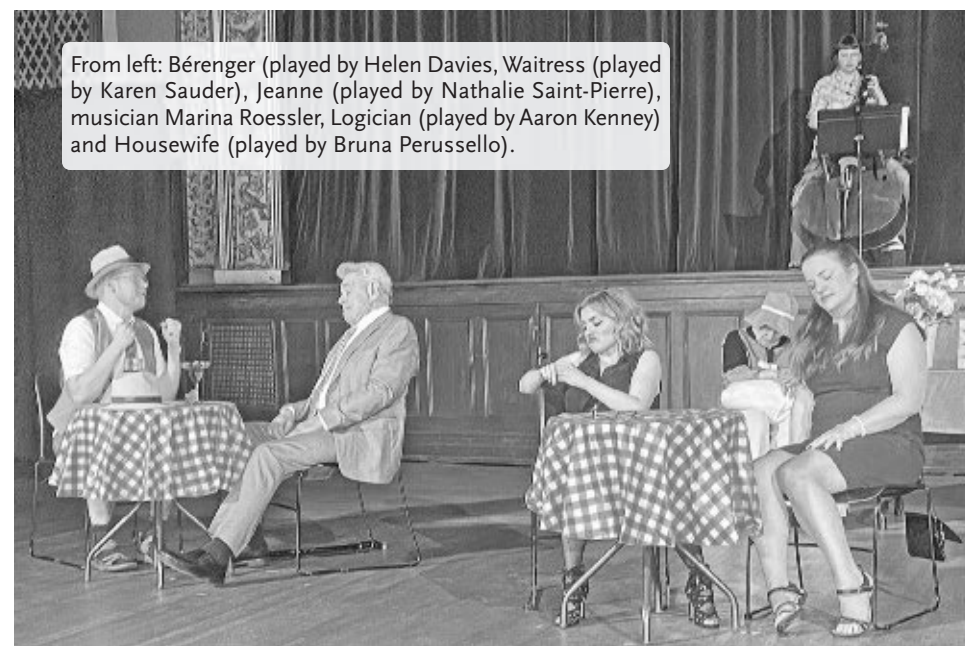
emblematic of the loss of critical thought and the all-consuming nature of collective acceptance.

The rhinoceroses move as a relentless herd – killing family pets in the process – and asserting dominance, as well as forcing Bérenger into a position of increasing isolation and eventual singularity.

Marina Roessler played mournful cello throughout sections of the drama and the sound design by Sid Wilson brought off a powerful feigned stampede.

The play was directed by Marissa Blair and her director's notes say: "When I first read *Rhinoceros*, I was struck by how quickly it starts to feel familiar. People change – in body, belief and behaviour – and those around them either rationalize it, follow or fall silent..."

"In this production, we've chosen to make those transformations grotesque and sensorial. We've also re-imagined the gender of several characters – not to modernize or make a statement but to open the door to fresh questions: 'Who changes? Who is heard? Who resists and who gets left behind?'"



From left: Bérenger (played by Helen Davies), Waitress (played by Karen Sauder), Jeanne (played by Nathalie Saint-Pierre), musician Marina Roessler, Logician (played by Aaron Kenney) and Housewife (played by Bruna Perussello).

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To all the patients that consulted Dr Ionata while she practiced at Dr. Brenda Puchinger and Associates, located at 4695 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount (QC) H3Z 1G2, please be advised that your files have been transferred to Dr. Brenda Puchinger, who practices at this same address.

Money buys happiness if spent wisely, finance expert Hollinger tells Women’s Canadian Club

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

On May 20 in Victoria Hall during their final lecture meeting of the season, members of the Women’s Canadian Club of Montreal welcomed Lindsay Hollinger, a financial services expert.

Part of her message: women need to be better informed on personal financial matters, rather than leaving everything up to a spouse, as is often the case.

Hollinger, a Westmounter, started out as a portfolio manager at Jarislowsky-Fraser and once pondered a career in philosophy. She is the co-founder of the financial services firm Granite Family Office.

By definition, a family office is a privately held company that handles wealth and investment management for multigenerational families with at least \$50 million in investable funds.

“Money isn’t something people always enjoy talking about, but it’s



very, very important,” Hollinger said.

She said it isn’t necessarily true that men are better than women at handling money, or that people who are rich have a better understanding of wealth.

Hollinger: Everyone could do better

Everyone could do better with more investment education, according to Hollinger. “Money isn’t only about what can I afford to spend,” she said. “Money is power. Wealth can be power.”

Quoting American economics and social science author Arthur C. Brooks, Hollinger listed the five things that can be done with money: you can buy things, you can buy experiences, you can buy time, you can give it away and you can save it.

“Money can buy happiness if you spend it well,” she continued, citing another line of thought promoted by Brooks. She said lots of women are very good at saving their money and not spending it, although they tend to keep it in a savings account rather than investing it.

“You get rich by learning what to do with your money,” she said, while adding that this doesn’t mean you have to be an expert in finances, only that you need to understand your own finances thoroughly.

Following a break over the summer, the Women’s Canadian Club will be returning with a program of speakers in September, every Tuesday from 12:30 to 1:30 pm. A sandwich lunch is available beginning at 11:30 am.

◀ Westmounter Lindsay Hollinger, an investment and financial services expert, addressed the Women’s Canadian Club of Montreal on May 20.

It’s hard out there for a street sign



As seen on de Maisonneuve at Prince Albert June 17.



PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

Tube at work? No problem



A westbound car on de Maisonneuve at Victoria June 13 as it maneuvers under a tube being used in a sewer opening. Cyclists did so too.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Cuddly Simmy



at their email address info@gerdysrescue.org in order to discuss adoption and how Simmy is evolving in foster and planning to be the family who welcomes her home.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

Junior prepared for cuddles, walkies



Westmount
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Junior is a perfect little guy. Handsome, keen on walks and drives, bright as can be. Everyone is attracted to him!

He is at the Montreal SPCA kennel and, being little, he needs to be adopted as soon as possible. This is moving time in Montreal and the rescue is full – with more to come.

Junior is very affectionate and perky, a young 10-year-old since he is a small breed. He is up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

If you would like more information on Junior, please refer to the Montreal SPCA website a www.sPCA.com, scroll to his presentation page by his identification number, 2000286328, and plan your trip to the rescue to visit him and discuss your interest with the adoption coordinators.

The shelter is open every day, Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm. It is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte



des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4.

Do not hesitate. Junior is such a cutie, and would likely be a great little friend in the home.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

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Consultation, cont'd from p. 1

(see box below), and lowering the maximum height of two buildings on Dorchester from 10 to 7 storeys, excluding “bonus” floors available in some cases.

Mayor speaks

“I understand that any proposed development can be a deeply sensitive issue,” Mayor Christina Smith said in opening the meeting. “People naturally want to see concrete details before embracing change,” but “what we’re asking is for residents to consider a broader vision.”

St. Catherine St. scenarios

Status quo – beginning at Atwater and moving west: the former McDonald’s/ former Miso/current Resilience building, the Imadake building, an empty lot where 4014-22 St. Catherine once stood, the derelict former Packard/ Subaru building and a Bureau en Gros with its own parking lot.

Max. heights of four possible buildings, from Atwater west

City’s fall 2024 proposal: 25, 15, 15 and 15 storeys (see city’s “Public consultation presentation (November 14, 2024),” p. 40),

City’s current proposal: 20 storeys each (see city’s “Document presented at the Public Assembly on June 18, 2025,” p. 33).

She explained that the rundown situation and gradual decline along St. Catherine St. “is not sustainable” and is a similar challenge to cities across the country. “Doing nothing is simply not an option.”

Instead, she called Westmount’s proposal “a path toward revitalization,” adding that “with input from residents, professionals and experts, I believe we can shape a plan that not only restores vitality to this key area, but also strengthens Westmount for generations to come.”

After her introduction and words from Councillor Conrad Peart, commissioner of urban planning, Frédéric Neault – the city’s Urban Planning director – provided an hour-long presentation on the most recent version of the project and its re-development potential.

The SPP was described as a planning “tool” or framework to guide and direct the long-term planning of a district having “specific challenges.”

Questions asked

A two-hour question period that followed the initial presentations generated comments from 30 of the attendees, many which also brought hearty rounds of applause from the audience and/or had already been heard and reported from surveys launched by the city and its Lemay consultants, and at city council meetings.

The city was asked to consider what demand there would be for new large proposed buildings of various heights given a number of existing commercial and residential vacancies.

“You can’t have massive buildings in a residential area,” said one questioner. “How will the city be able to pay for all the infrastructure to service these high-rise buildings?”

No projected costs have been released for new city services that might be required by the new buildings.

Wener raises many concerns

“More time is needed,” said last questioner Jonathan Wener, founder and former longtime chairman of Montreal-based Canderel, described as one of Canada’s largest privately held real estate companies.

Identifying himself as a resident of Greene, he said the city needed to consult with developers on their needs. He challenged a lack of assisted living in the city plan as well as for related parking in the area.

“Change is motivation and you won’t be ready,” Wener told the council. “You need a plan in place.”

Much of the project’s presentation focussed on updates and technicalities depicted on a large screen which some attendees could not see when seated behind those occupying the first two rows.

What’s ahead?

Mayor Smith has said that the comments arising from this meeting would possibly be worked into revisions in the SPP. This consultation meeting had been described as a final one specifically devoted to the southeast project before its projected adoption, in some form, at the council meeting September 8.

More Indie coverage: Projects blessed – nothing built

“[4014-4022] St. Catherine site near Atwater okayed for demo, building”, February 27, 2018, p. 1,

“It’s a go! 4216 Dorchester Blvd. gets final council approval,” January 24, 2023, p. 1.

Please note that the 4216 Dorchester project is just outside the city’s Special Planning Program.

Some of the Independent’s coverage of SE’s buildings

“Refugees find temporary shelter at Y’s Tupper St. residence,” November 20, 2018, p. 10,

“1100 Atwater tenants are mix of local, world-wide firms,” August 18, 2020, p. 1,

“Possible pavilion site [4014-4022 St. Catherine] was south side of St. Catherine west of Atwater – Cancelled Dawson expansion affects city’s hopes for district,” February 8, 2022, p. 8,

“Construction guarantee confiscated from 4014-4022 St. Catherine,” March 14, 2023, p. 1.



Urban Planning director Frédéric Neault makes the main presentation on the city’s planned zoning for the southeast.



At bottom right, the city’s senior director of project management and land use, Tom Flies, makes a note. To the left is city director general Julie Mandeville, also seated. Standing at top left, former mayor Karin Marks is speaking into the mic. Melville Ave. resident James Murphy is next in line behind her.



Looking southwest on June 21 from Atwater and St. Catherine at the empty lot where 4014-22 St. Catherine St. once stood, with the very large building that housed the former Reddy Memorial Hospital on Tupper St. visible at top left. The former Packard/Subaru dealership is to the right/west of the empty lot. For another aerial photo of a part of the Special Planning Program area, see February 18, p. 16 for a view of the city's Tupper parking lots, which front onto Dorchester.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Some of *Indie's* coverage of city's 'southeast project'

2013 council – Mayor: Peter Trent (Christina Smith starting April 24, 2017)

"Rezoning consultation for SE sector Dawson CEGEP, Temple reveal plans for facilities at public consultation meeting," November 25, 2014 p. 1.

"New zoning in southeast changed by citizens," December 9, 2014, p. 1

"Citizens weigh in on SE development – Make it 'green,' safe & low-rise, vision workshop hears," January 26, 2016, p. 6

"Narrowing of Dorchester, building heights proposed – minus bike path," June 21, 2016, p. 1

"'Street view' of southeast vision targeted for June presentation," March 21, 2017, p. 1

"Update on Dorchester vision expected in June," May 16, 2017, p.1

"Draft Dorchester vision sent back," May 30, 2017, p. 1

"Planning vision deferred to incoming council," September 12, 2017, p. 4

2017 council – Mayor: Christina Smith

"City to prioritize St. Catherine before Dorchester, Tupper lots," October 30, 2018, p. 1

"AGIL report now translated into English," February 12, 2019, p. 5

2021 council – Mayor: Christina Smith

"City imposes 90-day interim freeze on southeast/Tupper lot development," August 29, 2023, p. 1

"City extends freeze on southeast development," October 31, 2023, p. 1

"Design contract awarded for revitalizing city's southeast sector," January 23, 2024, p. 1

"Next southeast report should reflect neighbours' wishes" (letter), February 20, 2024, p. 6.

"City planning for southeast back on front burner, seemingly," June 18, 2024, p. 1

"Residents weigh in on 'preliminary' designs for the southeast, November 26, 2024, p. 1

"Pros & cons voiced at overflow meeting on southeast draft by-laws," June 3, 2025, p. 1

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Travel

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Puglia, part 3: Sandstone, ceramics and views



Speckling a plate by hand at Nicola Fabiano (in Grottaglie).



Antennas overlook statues overlooking tourists.

Travellers used to *pietra serena*, the blue-gray sandstone of Florence, will be surprised in Puglia (also known as Apulia). Buildings are white. They are whitewashed to beat the heat, the same reason that town alleys here are narrow.

In the town of Lecce, there is also a creamy, softer feel due to the local *pietra leccese* (Lecce stone) quarried in the area. Initially quite malleable, which makes it easy to sculpt and shape, it hardens, ensuring that buildings last for centuries. Lecce is often referred to as “the Florence of the south” as it is full of incredibly embellished buildings.

Little is left unadorned. “Baroque” takes on a whole new meaning, with ornamentation literally everywhere: under “Juliet” balconies, columns, statues, church facades *et al.*

All this work is the Catholic church’s response to the Reformation, which started in 1517. After the council of Trent (1545-63), theatrical architecture was meant to wow *continued on p. 30*



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A Baroque façade peeking through a street of classic, simple homes.



Basilica San Croce in Lecce – Baroque abundance!

Travel, cont'd from p. 29

the worshipper. The medium was the message.

A prime example is the Duomo de Lecce, first built in 1144 (long before Baroque!), with its over-the-top sculptural richness due to the final re-build in 1654 during the Baroque era.

Architectural artisans left no stone unturned. A must-see? The belltower of 1666. Luckily, an elevator takes guests to the top, where four outlooks offer a pigeon's view of the Adriatic, Lecce's mass-

ive defensive ramparts and gorgeous private roof-top gardens.

The town's Roman colosseum is also worth a visit. The walls, once covered with Greek marble, tell a tale. Only recently discovered, they offer an ancient Instagram. Carved stone friezes show animals against animals, dogs versus bulls, men against lions.

Next stop was a discovery in the town of Grottaglie: local ceramicists Nicola Fasano (fasanocnf.it). Their famous "spattered" pieces are sold in design shops all over the world. Like many success stories,

their style has been copied and reproduced industrially.

However, here every piece is made by hand: Literally. Each potter has a special expertise: one makes jugs, another pasta bowls (my favourite!) and so on.

Their sought-after speckled tableware? Also done by hand. In this day and age, the time-consuming artisanry is amazing. And considering the individual workmanship, the prices are more than reasonable.

I noted huge boxes, labelled and ready to be shipped to major international design shops. *Bravo!*



A Baroque column.

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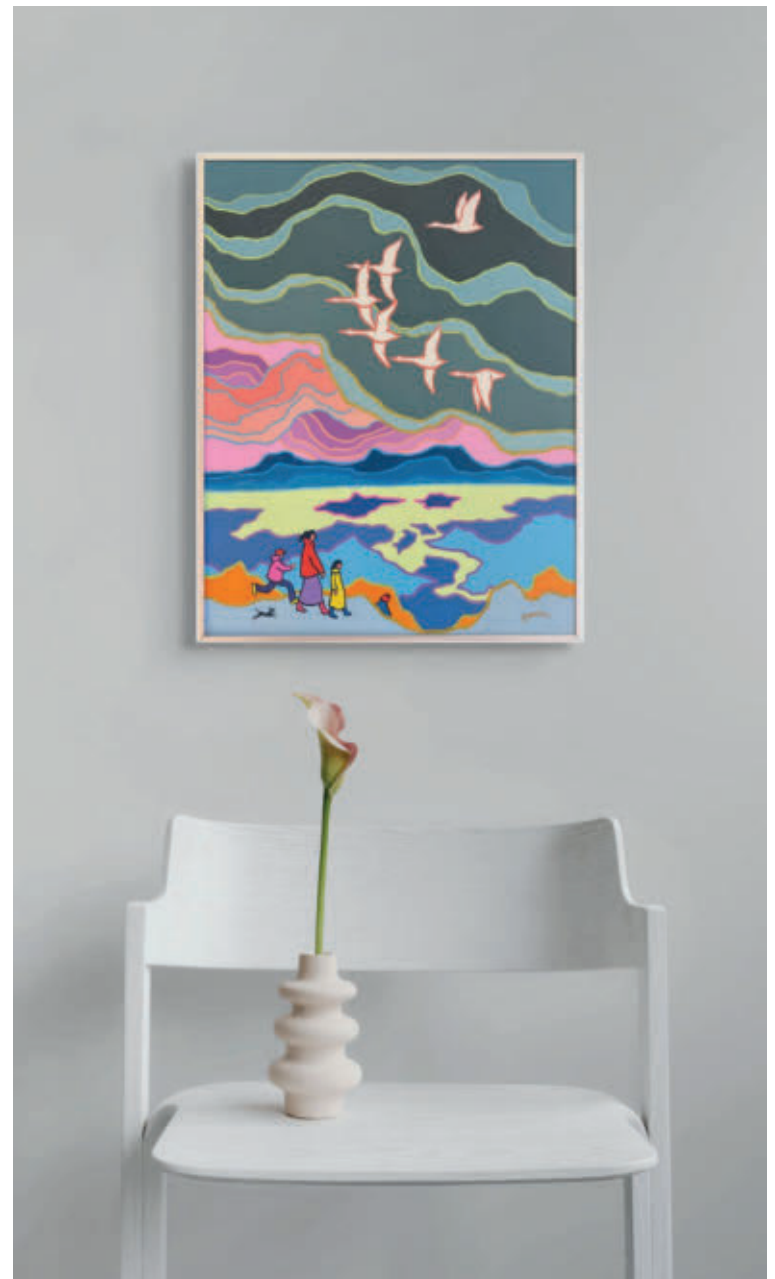
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