

Two now vying to be city's top elected official

Casgrain, Gallery enter mayoral race

Sitting city councillor Mary Gallery and resident Lynne Casgrain both informed the *Independent* last week of their intention to run for mayor of Westmount in the November municipal election. Their announcements were under embargo until publication date July 8.

Casgrain is a lawyer, former MUHC ombudsman and 40-year Westmount resident. She is running with the support of former mayors Peter Trent and Karin Marks.

Gallery is a two-term councillor for District 6, the area south of Sherbrooke from Melville to Atwater up until de Maisonneuve, but also including the 4300 de Maisonneuve apartment building and the 1 Wood condo complex. She was acclaimed in 2021 and defeated Joanne Wallace with a vote 597 to 128 in 2017. – DP.

- For our coverage of Lynne Casgrain, turn to p. 16.
- For our coverage of Mary Gallery, turn to p. 17.

Indie publishing schedule

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

August 12 until Christmas: weekly

*This is the last issue
before the Independent's
usual summer break*

Westmount Veterinary Hospital back in business



Westmount Animal Hospital owner Dr. Sébastien Kfoury, right, is seen here on July 3 with Dr. François Chamberland and the practice's resident cat, Ducky. For story, see p. 12. PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY.

Only Canadian institution honoured with 'prestigious' award

Westmount Public Library wins US\$10,000 award for 125th campaign

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The Westmount Public Library was one of only eight libraries across North America – and the only one in Canada – to win what was described as a “prestigious” annual award from the American Library Association presented June 28 in Philadelphia.

The award recognizes “outstanding achievement” in promoting library services

and programs. Westmount was chosen for its 125th anniversary campaign. Along with the honour, the library received a US \$10,000 cheque.

“It was an honour and a true privilege to accept the award on behalf of the Westmount Library’s 125th anniversary committee and all Westmounters,” said children’s librarian Wendy Wayling on her return *continued on p. 20*



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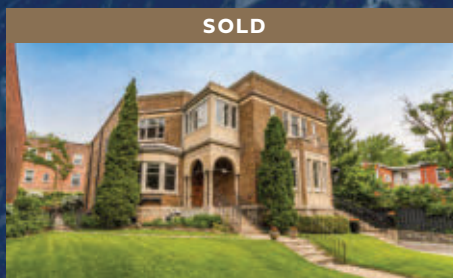
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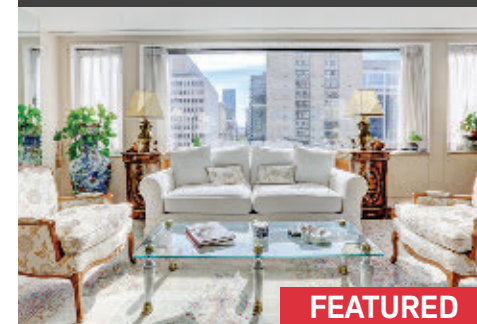
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O., apt. 512 | \$549,000

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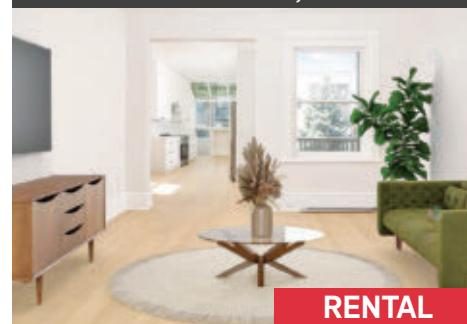
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Sherbrooke, Greene, Forden, Wood...

Road work to watch out for before and after holidays

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

This summer's major infrastructure projects by the city got off to a quick start with follow-up at the last city council meeting June 9 before this year's mandatory construction holiday July 20 to August 2. More approvals and updates are expected at the city council meeting July 7, after the start of *Independent's* usual summer break.

While the high-profile \$5.3-million work on Sherbrooke moved quickly into its second phase June 16, the \$3.9-million reconstruction of Forden Ave. and Forden Crescent began June 9.

Work to replace the water and sewer network on Greene in collaboration with the city of Montreal has also begun. Westmount's share is \$3.6 million.

Yet to come in August is the re-surfacing of Claremont from Sherbrooke to Marianopolis, one of the project contracts expected to be awarded sometime in July. This had been downgraded from a previous proposal that included a controversial major re-configuration with a raised concrete bike path and fewer parking spaces, all deemed too costly.

Ventec wins contracts

Another contract approved by city council June 9 included repairs to Wood



As seen July 4 where the upper portion of Forden meets Montrose. The portion below Montrose is not under construction.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

between St. Catherine and de Maisonneuve on a contract to Ventec at a maximum of almost \$1 million (\$994,316). Ventec is doing the high-profile work on Sherbrooke and was also contracted to build and replace existing trails in King George (Murray) Park and Westmount Park at \$592,075.

Re-surfacing of the bike path on de Maisonneuve – between Melville and Wood as well as from Prince Albert to Lansdowne – is being undertaken by Montreal as an agglomeration route.



The upper "island" between Forden and Forden Crescent was obscured by this massive refuse bin July 4.



The lower "island" between Forden and Forden Crescent was obscured by this massive gravel pile July 4.

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2 ticketed for climbing over wall at summit lookout



The summit lookout on July 6. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Two men in their early 20s were spotted climbing over the concrete wall, railing and steps of the lookout on Summit Circle June

26 at 1:09 am, Public Security officials said. The area has been closed off for ongoing work to reinforce the lookout. Caught in the act, the two were each issued a ticket for \$158 for violating the park's midnight

curfew.

New, Westmount-inscribed planters were put in place at the railing last year after work was started on the lookout (see photo July 2, 2024, p. 9).

This year, large parts of the area, including Sunnyside Park, have been closed to the public since May. The work is expected to be completed by the end of this summer.

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All aboard for reading!



In keeping with this year's "Around the World" theme of the TD Summer Reading Club (see story June 24, p. 1), local resident David Hannah, a train enthusiast, set up his train set June 26 in the children's library. Admiring it soon after were, from left, in front: Louis, 4, Élodie, 6, and Adélaïde, 8. Behind are mother and grandmother Carole and Dominique with children's librarian Wendy Wailing. Hannah is a member of the city's Planning Advisory Committee. PHOTO: LAUREEN SWEENEY.

'Window cleaners' ticketed \$158 each for door-to-door soliciting

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Public Security patrollers began searching for two men going door to door June 24 just after 11 am soliciting work to clean windows. Complaints came first from a resident on Murray Hill, followed by a second one on Belmont. A photo was also provided.

Two men fitting the description were eventually spotted near Côte St. Antoine on Lansdowne and advised of the city's nuisance by-law prohibiting solicitation without a city permit.

Police were called to check out the pair and confirm identification so that a ticket for \$158 could be issued to each. The pair was described as aged 20 and not living in Westmount.



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EDITORIAL

Put the southeast plan to a referendum (spoiler: I would vote ‘no’)

Short version: the city’s southeast plan should be put to a referendum, which could be run economically at the same time as the November municipal election. If this area is as important as both sides say it is, and if we believe in popular sovereignty, a referendum (with a clear question) is the way to go.

If residents like the plan, great. If they don’t and are willing to flush all that prep work and money down the drain, let them do so. It’s their money and their drain. Council has avoided the usually possible zoning referenda by making this project a Special Planning Program (SPP), as permitted by provincial law, but it can add back citizen review by only adopting the final southeast plan after its acceptance by the voters.

Long version: What a tangled web we have spun!

Let’s look at process first. As I’ve written before, this council’s policies do not seem popular. No one knows for sure since there is no regular (or even irregular) polling of Westmounters, but the mood is negative.

The change in garbage frequency pick-up and location was, in my estimation, the most unpopular thing done by a Westmount council in the last 18 years. The Lexington re-build did not seem popular. The Claremont one even less so (and was abandoned). “Imagine Westmount 2040” – remember that? – was abandoned halfway in. The proposals for Westmount Park were also unpopular – and abandoned mid-process. (Please note that this Westmount Park consultation was different, earlier and broader than the actual playground re-build of last year.)

So, what did this council do with its largest project yet? It pulled a provincially supplied lever that allows for extensive re-zoning that cannot be challenged by citizen petitions and referenda. Here is an interesting quirk of Quebec “democracy”: larger, more important changes are *less* subject to citizen review.

Is the southeast so important that it is not important? Irony and politics do seem to go together.

But even anti-democratic Quebec does not *mandate* this SPP route. That was council’s *choice* and its climax was always meant to be crammed into the final weeks of its term. Remember that in future.

Are we being forced to do this anyway?

Next, consider the information that this change is not just desirable (in council’s view) but *necessary*, since the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM) has

just mandated a density of 480 dwellings per hectare in Transit Oriented Development (TOD) zones, including 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,” wrote the mayor in our June 24 issue (p. 8).

But what is the Communauté? And what is the agglomeration? Let’s start with the latter. The “agglo” (as it is known to habitués) is an undemocratic abomination that came into being after the demergers of 2006, which were demanded by voters due to the totally unrequested, undemocratic, forced municipal mergers of 2002. The rules to demerge were complex and anti-democratic (thank you, Jean Charest!), but 15 “island of Montreal” cities did do so.

But they were not entirely free of the former mega-city (thanks again, Jean Charest). They found themselves stuck in the “agglomeration of Montreal,” on whose council the city of Montreal’s mayor has the majority of the votes. As a result, in Westmount’s case, about half of its municipal taxes go to the agglomeration, forcibly, but Westmount (and the other demerged cities, even in unanimous combination) have no say on how that money is spent (mainly on police, fire and transit).

Looking further into this tangled web of government, we find the Communauté, a shadowy structure of which few people are even aware, that exists “on top” of the agglo. It “re-groups” (in good Quebec municipalese) 82 municipalities of greater Montreal. At least it is cheap (costing “only” \$1,080,600 in Westmount’s 2025 budget of \$137.02 million), but what kind of democratic mandate does it have from anybody?

Let’s get this straight: These two distant, undemocratic entities are going to tell us what to do in one little corner of Westmount?

To be dictated to in this way would be wrong in principle, but is it even likely in practice? There is not some Communauté “Green” Beret team waiting to invade Westmount if – in the pages and pages and pages of Westmount’s zoning laws – there is non-compliance with this newfangled 480-dwellings-per-hectare mandate.

And, if it wanted to, what could a determined council do to fight and subvert this anti-democratic Communauté *diktat*? Lock two lawyers in a windowless room for three weeks with a mandate to come up with legal arguments, and we might find out. In such a struggle, Westmounters would be the local guerillas with something to lose; the Communauté/agglo

would be the distant imperial power with less at stake and many other priorities. We know how those wars often go...

And that leads us back to the current council. Obviously, its members are not the people to lead such a resistance. At least in the majority, *they support densification!* (We will see how the recent southeast dissenters – councillors Kathleen Kez and Elisabeth Roux – play their cards in the weeks to come.) So, is the majority complying with this 480-dwellings *diktat* out of unfortunate necessity after a valiant defence – or are they using the obscure Communaute’s obscurer mandate to push *a result that they already want?*

Why no work on Tupper lots previously?

This same bias towards a given result might explain the city’s inactivity on the Tupper parking lots, which it owns.

In my 18 years at this newspaper, I know of no effort to sell the Tupper parking lots for re-development under current zoning. If any sale work was done, it was done quietly! And ineffectively! (The city’s 2017-18 AGIL report and related work was also an attempt to change zoning.)

Could a developer make money there? There is currently an attractive, Westmount-sized three-storey duplex for sale on the south side of Dorchester for \$1.99 million. How many such structures could fit onto the two Tupper lots? Could they be built for less than the construction costs and the price of the land? If not, what tweaks would the developers need to make money? An extra floor up? Or maybe some extra floors down, for paid parking? This council does not love cars, but maybe the developer (and Greene merchants?) would appreciate more parking space.

Has anyone done the work on this proven Westmount type of housing (i.e. duplexes) to find out the economics of building them on the Tupper lots? Why hasn’t this avenue ever been explored? In almost 60 years! Why not simply reverse the city’s 1967-8 error? (See Editorial Addendum on p. 8.)

Could it be that the city has *always* had some grand development in mind for the Tupper lots?

What is a municipality able to do?

Additionally, there is an issue of credibility regarding the city’s ability to execute on all the goals it is taking on.

The city (in a very abstract sense – no decision maker is around from that period) failed spectacularly at urban planning in the southeast in the late 1960s. Perhaps the

What is this ‘southeast’ thing anyway?
See p. 8, “What the city is planning.”

municipal government of Westmount is up to paving streets and running athletic programs, but not up to executing major re-developments?

And why has the city made things even more complicated by trying to fix the St. Catherine St. blight at the same as time as re-developing the Tupper lots? Each area has its own distinct history, and daunting issues and complications.

And maybe the city isn’t even up to basic stuff.

Even in its core areas, it is falling behind. It seems obvious now that the municipal government of Westmount has underspent on maintaining its existing roads and buildings for years, and likely undertaxed its residents too – leaving a lot of spending and borrowing to do soon, all compressed into a short time period.

Perhaps the Smith councils of 2017-2025 are to blame. Perhaps the recent (2009-2017) or long-past ones (1991-2001) of former mayor Peter Trent are at fault. Perhaps it is a mix. You can read duelling columnists in these pages on this point.

Regardless, it seems clear that that underspending and undertaxing happened. If the city can’t maintain what it has, and can’t sensibly finance what it has long possessed, can we trust it with something more ambitious?

Will developers flock to the southeast after these unproven zoning changes? Will families follow? Into high-rises?

Will development benefit the city’s coffers, on a net basis?

On a similar note, the current council is betting that this development will financially benefit the municipal government.

Councillor Conrad Peart recently wrote, “The path forward will require every available tool: controlling costs, improving efficiency, increasing revenue and *eventually broadening the tax base*. No single lever will be enough. Progress depends on using all of them carefully and in balance” (emphasis added)(1).

But former mayor Peter Trent is skeptical: “municipalities, in selling new development, often invoke marginal costs: the concept of ‘fixed’ costs that stay, ah, fixed, and ‘variable’ costs that increase to meet new demand. But even ‘fixed’ costs grow, but in a stepwise manner. Other costs – such as issuing building permits – exhibit

EDITORIAL

a smoother relationship between added demand and added costs. Over the long haul, an increase in population results in an equivalent increase in spending.”⁽²⁾

Can you blame Trent for his skepticism?

How will everyone feel if we pull the trigger on this change, and then end up *behind* financially?

This council reminds me of an athlete who loses a foot race and says: “I would have won if” Consider Peart’s comment: “We also face structural limits. Our population is shrinking, our tax base is constrained, and efforts to expand it through new development regularly face organized opposition.”⁽³⁾ Like our losing runner, the council seems to say: “We wouldn’t need to borrow if...”

Instead of musing about new, unproven sources of revenue, why didn’t council make things work within its existing tax base, including being upfront about increasing costs as they appeared and likely increasing tax rates more as it went along? If municipal inputs have become more expensive, municipal taxes have to go up, whatever residents may feel about it. Denial is a risky financial strategy. Instead, council has backed itself into a situation where \$76 million of borrowing is forecast over the next three years, in a city that usually did not borrow at all.

Or they want us to agree to a grand solution in the southeast as both an urban planning and financial cure-all. The gambler always thinks that the next throw of the dice will win it all back...

Council members are often the first to say “Westmount is great.” So why can’t they make it work as is, tax base included?

How did Westmount get a pro-density council?

There is a related irony with this council’s obsession with density. Its pro-density members ran to be the elected leaders of what was initially – by design – an undense city that has become the fifth-most dense municipality in Canada and the second-most in Quebec.

But what makes Westmount a good place to live? And what makes it function? Is it the four or five mega-buildings (and some smaller ones) added post-World War II that likely do much of the work propelling Westmount to these high-density rankings? Or it is the thousands of single-family houses and many duplexes? Given the chance today, would we un-do the work of the 1960s and replace those mega-buildings with old-timey houses? Just on an aesthetic level, are the mega-buildings loved?

Nevertheless, no amount of density – despite Westmount’s rankings – seems to

be enough for this council. But if we are all now in favour of endless density, let’s be consistent and have it everywhere, not just foisted upon our co-citizens in the southeast. We could even collaborate on one big land sale to a single developer, and then most of us would leave and live our lives elsewhere.

What is the role of a municipal government?

The hubris of the current proposal extends beyond just trying to attract families and forecast revenue that is net positive after incremental costs. It seems intent on what can only be described as social engineering.

It wants to make regulatory changes that help seniors stay in Westmount post-retirement or into their final years. It wants to work for residents who do not yet live here. As Peart puts it: “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.”⁽⁴⁾

(By the way, wasn’t Westmount built on *not changing*? It said, over and over again: “No, we won’t go along with that proposed house or building.” And when Westmount did go along with the newest fad, from time to time, didn’t it come to regret it?)

But back to Peart’s future, happy, plentiful, tax-paying residents. As with tax base, why won’t council focus on the task at hand, i.e. pleasing current residents?

And since when have municipalities promised cradle-to-grave residential options to people who happen to live within their borders at a certain point in time?

Councillor Peart even seems to want to mastermind the price of your house! And unlike some government officials who promise to make you richer in this regard, Peart actually seems to favour *lowering* its price (or the overall market), or at least mitigating Westmount housing’s rate of increase: “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?”⁽⁵⁾

Is this a realistic role for a municipal government? Desirable?

Peart accuses his opponents thusly: “If the past was marked by ambition and overreach, today is defined by nostalgia and deferral.”⁽⁶⁾ But what could be more nostalgic than trying to re-create the income *and* housing-price levels of 20 years ago so that a current version of you could buy your house? It is an unpalatable mix of

time-travel fantasy and *dirigisme* run amok.

I find nothing nostalgic about the majority of Westmount’s streets, which are lined with single-family houses. Those streets *work*. It is where most of you reading this editorial live! In contrast, the parts of Westmount that were tampered with, where owners had their single-family houses destroyed by their own city, are the areas that *don’t work*.

Why not keep it simple and build some houses or duplexes or triplexes on the city’s Tupper parking lots? Even better, have them blend in so well that, a few years from now, a lay passer-by won’t be able to tell that they were built 100 years after the ones on the south side.

Summing up

Whatever happens in the southeast, it will not be the end of the world or even of Westmount. If Westmount survived the urban planning of 1960s and the failed mergers of 2002-2006, it can survive a possibly bad decision in the southeast.

And, of course, this southeast area is a small part of Westmount. Many people, including me, will not be affected much personally by yet another urban planning disaster there.

And, of course, these are all First World problems. There are countless people locally and further away with much, much

more serious ones.

But why do something materially sub-optimal or even disastrous if we can avoid it? Why do something that contradicts what works everywhere else in Westmount? Why abandon our southeast co-citizens to a development that we would not want next to us?

Most importantly, let’s just see what the people think and go with that. No more guess work on how wonderful everyone thinks that this plan is.

Referendum in November, please.

David Price is the editor of the Independent. He has many friends in the southeast, but not one has asked him to write this editorial, nor does he know their precise views on the current, penultimate version of the city’s proposal. Indeed, they themselves have expressed varied views over the years on this topic.

- (1) “Infrastructure, debt and the road ahead,” May 27, p. 5.
- (2) “November’s municipal election: Time for a change at city hall,” January 21, p. 5.
- (3) “Infrastructure, debt and the road ahead,” May 27, p. 5.
- (4) “The southeast sector: A tale in three acts,” June 17, p. 10/16.
- (5) “The southeast sector: A tale in three acts,” June 17, p. 10.
- (6) “The southeast sector: A tale in three acts,” June 17, p. 10.

Why not just recreate this?



Looking west from Dorchester and Atwater at the north side of Dorchester Street before its transformation into Dorchester Boulevard in the late 1960s. These houses were demolished and replaced by the still-standing 1100 Atwater Ave. building (originally a Royal Bank computing centre) and the city’s two Tupper parking lots, which are situated between Dorchester, Greene, Gladstone Ave. and Tupper St.

HEADLINE BY DAVID PRICE. PHOTO COURTESY OF CITY OF WESTMOUNT.

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EDITORIAL ADDENDUM

When you make a mistake, just undo it

I once had a wonderful accounting professor (Professor Valliant, I remember you!) who said that when you made a mistake, do not try to fix it *and* do the correct version in a single step.

Fix the accounting mistake by reversing it, was his advice, and only then do the thing that you were trying to do in the first place – hopefully correctly the second time around. Combining the two steps will just lead to awkward netting, and more issues down the line.

I strongly suspect this is good advice when it comes to urban planning too.

Buying/expropriating and then demolishing 135 attractive houses on the north side of Dorchester was a disastrous mistake made by the city of Westmount in 1966-7, which should have been reversed as soon as possible, which would have gotten some of the city's money back (via land sales), plus recurring tax revenue for it from private owners over all the intervening decades, estimated last issue (p. 7) by former city councillor Patrick Martin at \$50 million in today's dollars. Those residents' presence might have helped stave off the blight on St. Catherine and had other good community-building effects too.

Even though almost 60 years have passed, it is not too late – subject to possible regulatory/Communauté issues – to just reverse what was done, and not perpetuate the grand-solution thinking that got the city into this mess in the first place.

I realize that there is an irony here. Every city is planned. The “original Westmount” was not some libertarian paradise. One can't have streets, and sewers, and potable water distribution, and all the rest of it, without a central plan.

My critics might well say: Why is this *anti-plan* editor espousing an old *plan*? Why favour one plan (the original one, built up from roughly 1880 to 1930) over another (the city's current one)?

Well, for starters, the initial planners of Westmount, who gave us much of what we still see today, look better every year. They mandated a human-sized city that, despite some bad subsequent decisions, remains a desirable place to live.

On the other hand, the planners of the 1960s, in Westmount and elsewhere, have been debunked over and over again, most famously by Jane Jacobs in her masterpiece, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

Put another way, if we could go back and un-do many of the urban planning decisions made between World War II and now, would we? Do we prefer the plan of 1900 or those of 1960?

To operationalize it: Does the current city proposal for the southeast resemble that of the 1880-to-1930 period, or the postwar one? Westmount is a democracy. Why not let the citizens choose?

–DP.

What the city is planning

In the area just west of Atwater, the city is planning to allow taller buildings on the south side of Dorchester, the north side Tupper and the south side of St. Catherine, as well as making other, less important regulatory changes.

The latest possible plan can be found by going to the city's website, then to the “City” tab at left, then to the “Citizen Engagement” tab in column 3, then to the “Engage Westmount” button, then to “See our latest projects,” then to the “Imagine Westmount Southeast” button (the third item from the top), then by scrolling down and choosing “Document presented at the Public Assembly on June 18, 2025” in the top of the top-right box.

Or type or click this:

https://engage.westmount.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/PPU_SudEst_Westmount_Assemblee-publique_final_version_Engage.pdf

This plan is still being tweaked by the city and is scheduled to be adopted, in some form, by council on September 8. The previous council vote on this issue was 6-2 in favour (see June 3, p. 1). For a long bibliography of the *Independent's* coverage, see June 24, p. 27. – DP

Lui in top one percent for 'Caribou' month contest



Roslyn Vice-principal Fabiana Ciacciarelli, principal Joanna Genovezos, student Milton Lui and teacher Noah Trister.

BY VERONICA REDGRAVE

At Roslyn School's 2025 grad ceremony, grade 6 student Milton Lui was presented a certificate for placing in the top one percent in the world in the Caribou Math Competition. There are 20,000 students competing globally for the best score. The 50-minute math challenge focuses on developing problem-solving and mathematical reasoning skills.

"I only studied the day before," said Lui.

The 12-year-old takes part in Roslyn's enrichment program, guided by McGill

University lecturer Dr. Camelia Birlean, the EMSB consultant for gifted and exceptional learners.

Roslyn principal Joanna Genovezos explained that teachers suggest motivated students who are above average to take part in the program.

Noting his sharp thinking, Lui's math teacher Noah Trister proposed him this year but the young student has participated in the contest for the past four years. Celebrating 117 years, Roslyn School has been part of the ESBM's enrichment program since 2022.



PRIMARY PROGRESSIVE APHASIA (PPA) RESEARCH STUDY

Phase II clinical trial of transcranial direct current stimulation in the treatment of primary progressive aphasia.

Primary progressive aphasia (PPA) is a rare neurological syndrome that gradually impairs a person's language.

Symptoms include:

- Difficulty finding words, understanding words or following conversations
- Using words incorrectly or mispronouncing them
- Abnormal word order in speech or writing

We are exploring the use of a brain stimulation technique called transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) that could slow or stop PPA symptoms. Transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) is a non-invasive process and is NOT electroshock.

We are looking to recruit older adults diagnosed with (PPA) to participate in a pioneering brain stimulation research project.

Eligible participants should be:

- Diagnosed with PPA.
- Be over 50 years old
- Able to communicate in English.

The study involves daily, short visits to the lab, over a 3 week period. You'll be asked to sit in a chair and name objects while the stimulation is taking place. This is a very safe procedure and the biggest drawback is the time commitment.

We are also looking to recruit older adults with no neurological illness to be in our control group. This group will not have tDCS stimulation.

Study participants would be compensated for any out-of-pocket expenses (Taxi, Parking, etc...)

LEADING THIS RESEARCH PROGRAM:

Dr. Howard Chertkow, MD, FRCP, FCAHS, Adjunct Professor, Department of Neurology and Neurosurgery, McGill University; Professor of Medicine, University of Toronto.

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LYSANNE FOWLER

Many thanks to our readers and neighbours who dropped by the Dream Home Rescue open house day hosted by Little Bear pet boutique of St. Catherine St. on June 14.

At right is a heartwarming group photograph of Little Bear staff and Dream Home Rescue volunteers on that day.

Neighbours and clients dropped by and there were many conversations about the puppies that are ready for families and the wonderful work done every day by the Dream Home volunteers around the world. Donations and raffle basket participation were also very appreciated.

*

Today, we are presenting Coco, a beautiful young Black Labrador-type puppy who was scooped up from abandonment on a beach on the island of St. Martin. When she was flown in and went through her first health check, the veterinarian found her strong yet with a heartworm condition, for which she was treated successfully.

She is now completely well, healthy, up to date with her treatment and inoculation

Dream Home open house a success – please adopt Coco



Staff and rescue volunteers at Little Bear on June 14.

schedule, and will be spayed when appropriate at a bit older age and microchipped then as well.

Coco is very friendly, cuddly and enjoys her walks. She remains a little skittish of

other dogs for her age, which is being worked on to give her self-confidence to palliate the remnant of fear from when was previously alone as a young puppy.

For more information on precious

Coco, please refer to the website at www.dreamhomerescue.com to fill out their adoption questionnaire form, or email them at info@dreamhomerescue.com to enquire about her, or call 514.297.6556 to speak with Julie about sweet Coco and discuss your interest directly.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



Coco.

Tuxy and Tout Beau – bonded siblings, sleeping together



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Tuxy is on the left, a handsome black-and-white tuxedo male who is very affectionate with people and enjoys his string toys and scratch pad. Tout Beau, Tuxy's sister, is on the right. She is bonded to him quite adoringly. She is a sleepy, cuddly girl until she becomes an energetic feather-toy swatter.

These beautiful siblings are both in



foster care for the Cause4Paws volunteer cat rescue group. The foster family reports that they enjoy their quiet home environment and fall into its routine very easily. They are both healthy, up to date with their inoculations, sterilized and microchipped.

If you would like more information on them, please do not hesitate to contact the Cause4Paws volunteers by referring to their website at www.cause4pawsrescue.ca, taking a peek at their Facebook postings, and emailing them at montrealcause4paws@gmail.com. The volunteers would be pleased to share more photographs of this adorable duo and discuss your family's adoption interest.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

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More information: Temple's incoming, outgoing rabbis

After the composition and publication of our story "Temple retains American rabbi Luks-Morgan" (June 24, p. 22), Rabbi Lisa Grushcow of Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom shared that Rabbi Benjamin Luks-Morgan's hire coincided with Rabbi Lillian Kowalski taking a new position in New Orleans, which has happened.

Corrections: Women's Canadian Club schedule

Contrary to our June 24, p. 24 story, "Money buys happiness if spent wisely, finance expert Hollinger tells Women's Canadian Club," the Women's Canadian Club has historically met eight times a year at Victoria Hall, not weekly.

Also, it has not yet been approved to return in September, according to assistant director of the Westmount Public Library Donna Lach, so "will" should have read "hopes."

Corrections: Dramatis Personae

The lower left caption for our story "Dramatis Personae stages Ionesco's Rhinoceros, charts the dangers of conformity" (June 24, p. 23) should have read: "From left: Logician (played by Aaron Kenney), Old Gentleman (played by Clive Brewer), Bérenger (played by Helen Davies), Ann Elbourne (sleeping person), Jeanne (played by Nathalie Saint-Pierre) and musician Marina Roessler." Also Marina Roessler played the double bass, not the cello.

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Police Report

Armed thieves relieve sportswear dealer of cash and merchandise

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Forensics investigators with the Montreal police are hoping images taken by surveillance cameras will help identify the perpetrators of a daring armed robbery on June 29 against a St. Catherine St. retailer who specializes in luxury sportswear, including jackets, sweatpants and sneakers.

The thieves targeted a basement office unit located in a small interior mall at 4055 St. Catherine near the corner of Wood Ave. According to an incident report filed at Station 12 on Stanton St., Nike, Adidas and Jordan are among the brands sold there.

Around 1 pm, three suspects turned up and approached the store attendant. One of them then pulled out a handgun and demanded the attendant turn over a small safe containing cash. When the employee refused, they shoved, kicked and forced him onto the floor, while threatening him verbally.

When the attendant finally relented, the suspects grabbed the safe, and as much apparel and sportsgear as they could carry,



4055 St. Catherine St. on July 6. The 1 Wood condo complex is in behind.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

and fled on foot along St. Catherine, then northward along Wood.

“Right now, we’re digging out the security camera images,” Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit told the *Independent* late last week as he described the investigation that is now under way.

A witness to the incident’s aftermath, who was in an office in the building across the street, told the *Independent* in an e-mail

that he saw a man accompanied out of 4055 St. Catherine to a waiting ambulance with what appeared to be cuts to the face and an ear. Yigit confirmed this was the store employee.

Shoplifting suspect arrested at Bureau en gros

During an otherwise quiet period over the past few weeks, Station 12 recorded

only one other criminal incident of note, according to Cst. Yigit.

On July 2, management at the Bureau en Gros office supplies store on St. Catherine St. finally lost their patience with a suspected shoplifter who had dropped into the store for yet another visit.

According to Yigit, the staff had noticed, after checking their security camera’s recorded feed, that many of their recent shoplifting losses, involving headphones, seemed to coincide with visits from this particular customer.

“When he walked in on the second of July, they recognized him right away and called 9-1-1,” said Yigit. When police officers showed up a few minutes later, the manager pointed out the suspect and he was arrested.

He was found to be in possession of two pairs of Kraken BlackShark gaming headsets with a combined value of \$196.

The suspect was processed by the officers in their vehicle. He was issued a summation of the theft charge, as well as procedures to set a date in a few months for a court arraignment.

Current vets aim to continue Dr. Vaillancourt’s ‘holistic’ approach

New owner takes over at Westmount Veterinary Hospital

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Despite the recent retirement of Dr. Jean-Marc Vaillancourt as owner of the Westmount Veterinary Hospital, a new owner says the clinic is once again fully operational under new management.

Dr. Vaillancourt, now in his early 80s, decided to retire a few months ago after 56 years of service.

At around the same time, and as reported in early April by the *Independent* (April 1, p. 1), officials with the Quebec Order of Veterinary Doctors locked the doors of the clinic in late March.

This followed a decision by the professional order to strike Dr. Vaillancourt from their register of accredited veterinarians.

While neither Dr. Vaillancourt nor the veterinarians’ order responded at the time to a request from the *Independent* for a precise explanation, Dr. Sébastien Kfoury, the new owner, suggested it was a compliance issue that requires an animal hospital to be owned by a practising veterinarian.

“I think maybe the question was he didn’t want to practise anymore,” said Dr. Kfoury. “And for him to have a hospital, he had to be owner and veterinarian. So he had to transfer the ownership to a new vet-

erinarian who wanted to practise also. You can’t be a non-practising veterinarian.”

Dr. Kfoury maintained that a significant reason for the intervention was that “we were not fast enough to do the transition because of legal conditions. So it was just a question of transitioning from the old owner to the new owner. It was period when we had to stop operating.”

Following in Dr. Vaillancourt’s footsteps, one of the things Dr. Kfoury hopes to encourage at the clinic is a more holistic and less dogmatic approach. “Dr. Vaillancourt was a groundbreaker in a holistic approach, and this is what we want to carry

on,” he said.

The new team at Westmount Veterinary Hospital includes Dr. François Chamberland. Dr. Kfoury is well known for his veterinary medicine segments on French-language television, including Radio-Canada.

Over the past eight television seasons, Dr. Kfoury has hosted the Radio-Canada interview and talk show *Les Poilus*. During segments of the half-hour program, he and guests talk about care for a wide range of animals.

See p. 1 for photo.

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Cause unknown

Victoria Hall sprinklers cause water damage

By JENNIFER BALL

On June 25, the sprinklers went off in Victoria Hall, causing water damage to the stage in the concert hall, to lighting fixtures and to wooden floors. To clean up, the city engaged Belfor Canada, which is a large disaster recovery and property restoration company for residential and commercial properties.

Mugisha Rutishisha, director of the Communications department at the city, provided a statement on June 30: “We are still investigating the exact cause of the fire extinguishers’ [sprinklers]’ activation...

“BELFOR Canada has been on site to dry and de-humidify the premises. Some repairs or renovations to the wooden floor may be required, but no timetable has yet been set...

“The stage remains safe for future events, and the concert hall [was opened on July 1] for the concert by Ensemble Camerata, as part of the Canada Day activities in Westmount.”



Fans go full blast to dry to de-humidify the premises in the concert hall in Victoria Hall, as seen June 27.



Lighting had to be removed above the stage in the concert hall in Victoria Hall after the sprinklers went off on June 25, as seen June 27.

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Bilboquet disappearing?



A workman was seen removing the “Bilboquet” lettering from the Sherbrooke-at-Victoria ice cream shop’s window on July 4. It has been some time since the store was open regularly. All lettering and signage was gone when the *Independent* checked back July 7.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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Calling for ‘enhanced’ public consultation

Lynne Casgrain announces bid to seek city’s mayoralty

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Lawyer Lynne Casgrain was Westmount’s first declared candidate for the November 2 municipal election following Mayor Christina Smith’s announced decision not to seek reelection in January.

Casgrain has been a Westmount resident for 40 years and is a senior partner with Grey Casgrain. She worked 20 years running the ombudsman’s office at the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC). This involved listening to complaints and confirming or verifying their validity in order to find “concrete” solutions, she told the *Independent*.

Announcing her candidacy just before the *Independent*’s summer break starting July 8, Casgrain cited her concerns over what she described as “imposed” decisions from the current council “without adequate consultation.”

These included changes in garbage collection, the now-cancelled uphill bike path on Claremont and currently proposed high-rise tower densities as part of the southeast development project “without proof of financial gain.”

As the daughter of Claire Kirkland-Casgrain, Quebec’s first woman to be a cabinet minister, Lynne Casgrain said she was “instilled” with what she called “a strong sense of values, the desire to give back to community” and that teamwork is the way to get things done in politics.

‘Bicultural’ candidate

A graduate of McGill and the University of Montreal, Casgrain describes herself as “bicultural.” She is married to constitutional lawyer Julius Grey. Her candidacy is supported by former mayors Peter Trent and Karin Marks.

“My management style is simple,” she explained. “I’m a team-builder. I believe in people and therefore consensus-building on any given issue, once fair and balanced studies are made available.”

She said she was particularly concerned that the current council had “imposed” its plan for the pro-



posed south-east development “at the twilight of its mandate while offering *pro forma* consultation in the face of massive opposition.”

Working at the MUHC, she explained, had prepared her for the office of mayor of Westmount. “How one goes about something can be more important than what you do,” she added. “After detailed studies are made public on major matters, my council and I will thoroughly consult the citizenry before, not after, decisions are made.”

“Acceptable high density,” she maintained, “can be obtained with lower-rise construction especially on the [Tupper] parking lot property belonging to the city.” She cited a current approach in Paris “which limits heights of new buildings to 8, 10 or 12 storeys.”

◀Lynne Casgrain on July 4 at her home. PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



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Priorities include family programs, fiscal responsibility

Mary Gallery launches election bid to be next mayor

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Councillor Mary Gallery of District 6 threw her hat into the ring last week to seek a third term on city council – but this time as mayor. She is currently serving as commissioner of sports, recreation, parks and greenspaces and is a member of the city's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC).

Stating she brings “deep knowledge of the city and a background in municipal affairs,” she could probably claim to have grown up in the municipal world since she is the daughter of the late Brian Gallery, a city councillor (1975-1983) and mayor from 1983 to 1987.

Gallery states that details of her platform are to be announced later. But when asked for some of her ideas, she mentioned exploring policies “that allow multi-generational living through granny flats and accessory dwellings,” aimed at increasing housing options and promoting sustainable, inclusive neighbourhoods.

Among some of the projects she most recently championed is the new playground in Westmount Park, where numerous families are regularly seen on the new

equipment (see October 29, 2024, p. 1 for the story on its unveiling), and launching composting in larger apartment buildings.

Priorities listed

In a press release issued in time for the *Independent's* July 8 issue, Gallery listed priorities in summary as serving the community, ensuring fiscal responsibility, supporting families, seniors and youth as well as protecting and enhancing heritage.

Others are “smart strategic budgeting,” programs that support families at “every stage of life,” infrastructure renewal and “thoughtful realization” of the southeast development “grounded in careful planning and open dialogue.” She recently voted for its most recent iteration (see June 3, p. 1). A final vote on the plan is expected September 8.

She also told the *Independent* that “I will seek new and creative sources of revenue and actively



pursue federal and provincial funding to support critical infrastructure projects our community urgently needs.”

In her campaign platform for councillor in November 2021, she mentioned exploring the possibility of building an indoor pool, which is now one of the proposals for the city's southeast development project.

Among other highlights included in her first term on council were the creation of the refrigerated rink in Westmount Park during COVID as well as the machine grooming of the toboggan run in King George (Murray) Park.

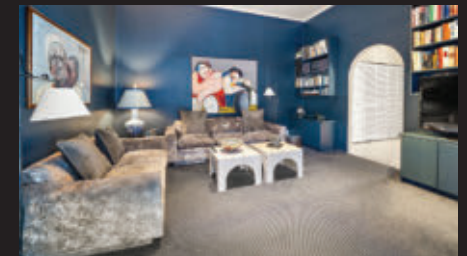
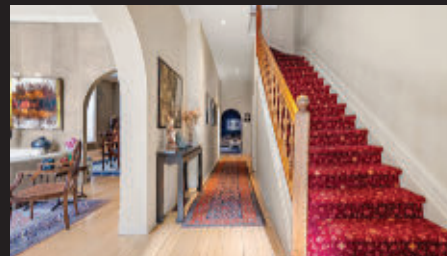
◀ Mary Gallery on July 6 in Westmount Park.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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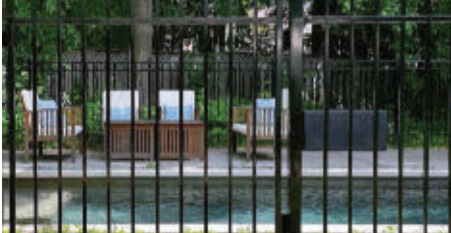
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Residential Pool Safety

Starting **September 30, 2025**, all residential pools must comply with provincial regulations. Please review the requirements and make any necessary updates. westmount.org

Travaux sur l'avenue Wood

À compter du mercredi **9 juillet**, la Ville de Westmount entreprendra des travaux sur l'avenue Wood (aqueduc, Hydro et chaussée), entre la rue Sainte-Catherine et le boulevard De Maisonneuve, pour une durée d'environ 11 semaines. westmount.org/travaux

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

Works on Wood Avenue

Starting Wednesday, **July 9**, the City of Westmount will begin works on Wood Avenue (water, Hydro and road), between Sainte-Catherine Street and De Maisonneuve Boulevard, for approximately 11 weeks. westmount.org/works

Dogs at 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

Collectes, tri et subventions vertes : ce qu'il faut savoir
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Travaux en cours : restez informés
Restez informés des dernières mises à jour sur les chantiers estivaux en visitant la page dédiée aux travaux routiers et projets. Suivez l'évolution des travaux pour mieux planifier vos déplacements. westmount.org/travaux

Collections, Sorting, and Green Grants: What you need to know
Learn more about accepted materials for collections, consult the sorting guide, and discover the City's Green Grants programme. westmount.org/collections

Current Projects: Stay updated
Stay informed about ongoing summer construction by visiting the City's dedicated page for roadwork and infrastructure projects. Follow the progress to better plan your travels. westmount.org/works

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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

Concerts d'été 2025
Cet été, venez profiter de la musique d'artistes variés dans le cadre enchanteur du parc Westmount ! **Du 6 juillet au 3 août**, les dimanches à 14 h, apportez votre chaise ou votre couverture et laissez-vous emporter par une série de concerts en plein air. En cas de pluie, le concert sera annulé. westmount.org/evenements

LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY 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

Summer Film Club
Share your passion for cinema by joining our Film Club. Four screenings will take place **every Tuesday in July** at 2 p.m. at Victoria Hall. Films will be shown on the big screen in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. No registration is required. westmount.org/events

Célébrez avec nous !
16 juillet, 16 h, Bibliothèque. La Bibliothèque publique de Westmount est honorée de recevoir le prix John Cotton Dana pour les relations publiques, le prix le plus prestigieux de l'American Library Association. Soyez des nôtres pour un thé, des gourmandises et une rétrospective de la campagne du 125^e anniversaire. westlib.org

Ciné-club d'été
Partagez votre passion pour le cinéma en participant à notre Ciné-club. Quatre projections auront lieu **chaque mardi du mois de juillet** à 14 h au Victoria Hall. Les films seront présentés sur grand écran dans une ambiance conviviale. Aucune inscription n'est requise. westmount.org/evenements

Celebrate with us!
July 16, 4 p.m., Library. The Westmount Public Library is honoured to receive the John Cotton Dana Award for Public Relations, the most prestigious award of the American Library Association. Join us for tea, treats, and a look back at the 125th anniversary campaign. westlib.org



Théâtre dans le parc : The Importance of Being Earnest
7, 8 et 16 août, 19 h, parc Westmount. Représentation en plein air de la comédie classique d'Oscar Wilde, présentée en collaboration avec Repercussion Theater, Persephone Productions et le Conseil des arts de Montréal. Aucune inscription requise. westmount.org/evenements

Summer Concerts 2025
This summer, enjoy live music from a variety of artists in the beautiful setting of Westmount Park! **From July 6 to August 3**, join us on Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. Bring a chair or a blanket and relax with a series of outdoor concerts. In case of rain, the concert will be cancelled. westmount.org/events

Theater in the Park: The Importance of Being Earnest
August, 7, 8 and 16, 7 p.m., Westmount Park. Outdoor performance of Oscar Wilde's classic comedy, presented in collaboration with Repercussion Theatre, Persephone Productions, and the Montreal Arts Council. No registration required. westmount.org/events

First manager of CEGEP's office of sustainability

Adam retires from Dawson College to become a consultant

By JENNIFER BALL

Chris Adam, founder and first manager of Dawson College's office of sustainability, is retiring from the CEGEP the week of June 30 to become a consultant. Propelling him forward is his belief that isolation in youth is at a crisis level and community – as a social construct – has been transfigured.

Dawson College is located at 3040 Sherbrooke St.

In 1987, the community, recreation and leadership department (CRLT) at Dawson hired Adam to offer a winter ecology outdoor program and then also a fall outdoor education intensive. The sustainability work commenced in 2006.

Adam taught at Dawson for almost 40 years. Has he reconnected with any former students who impressed him with what they have achieved through their own professional endeavours?

Yes, he said, and some have become educators and environmentalists themselves. "What I'm particularly proud of is



Chris Adam on July 2 in the Anastasia De Sousa memorial garden on the grounds of Dawson College.

those that have gone outside the environmental field but still have a strong sense of [it]...

"We all need to contribute."

In the late 1990s, Adam had the opportunity to meet and collaborate with Jane Goodall, the English primatologist and anthropologist, whom he credits with teaching him about accountability and humility.

"She gave her life to helping her chimpanzees and by extension, the planet..."

"She is just an amazing woman that represented so many [good things] that I've been thinking about. Courage, accountability and humility..."

"I met her at the right time in my life, and my career [pole-vaulted] into a different level."

Adam told the *Independent* he will be working on sustainable happiness projects on a national and international level as a

consultant as of July 7.

"This is not [about] sustaining happiness, but [a deep] sustainable happiness..."

"It is a beautiful gateway because we don't define it. We just say 'what makes you happy?' in these workshops and we analyze if are you happy at the expense of other people's happiness and at the expense of the planet."

Adam gave the example of enjoying a cup of coffee to explain the concept of the project. "Who picked the coffee, where did it come from, is it organic, was the forest cleared to make it?..."

"We can have a happy 15-minute coffee break and that is perfectly legitimate but how does that affect other people? Then we expand on that concept [within our own] lives."

Adam said they piloted the sustainable happiness program at Dawson with Dr. Catherine O'Brien. She has been actively

engaged in sustainability efforts locally, nationally and internationally for more than 25 years. She is a senior scholar with Cape Breton University, where she developed the world's first university course on sustainable happiness.

Adam told the *Independent* he needed to keep project specificity under wraps temporarily – to allow his new employer time to announce the collaboration – but that he will provide full details shortly to the *Independent*.

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Some of the *Independent's* previous coverage of Dawson College's office of sustainability

"Dawson College marks Earth Day
by creating wildflower meadows,"
May 13, p. 17

"Dawson releases 150+ painted-lady
butterflies from student-built
dome," September 24, 2024, p. 10

"Currently rated STARS/AASHE 'gold'
Dawson College aims for
sustainability 'platinum',"
September 3, 2024, p. 20

"Dawson College named
'Sustainability Institution of
the Year,' August 23, 2022, p. 19

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Reading club, cont'd from p. 1

from Philadelphia.

The library's submission was a thickly documented summary of how the library had marked its anniversary as the first publicly funded library in Quebec, founded in 1899, which continues to be the most used city facility.

Reception set for July 16

Displaying the plaque on her return, Wayling said she was looking forward to celebrating the award "with our community and staff at a reception July 16 from 4 to 5:30 pm."

In a press release dated July 2, Wayling explained that the exact name of the recognition was the John Cotton Dana Award for Public Relations. It was presented at a reception hosted by EBSCO Information

► Bringing home the award: Wendy Wayling, left, who accepted the plaque in Philadelphia on behalf of the library's 125th anniversary committee, displays it here July 2 with Daniel Miguez de Luca, programming and outreach librarian, and Lauren MacLean, interim library director.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Services. The award was also described as provided in conjunction with the H. W. Wilson Foundation, Core – a division of the American Library Association.

The public library's anniversary celebrated the history of the library, aimed at boosting community engagement, increasing awareness and spotlighting its services.

In accepting the award, Wayling highlighted how the library's bilingual 125th campaign "was meticulously planned and produced by a [city] council-appointed committee" comprising Marie-Christine Dufour (citizen member), Helaine Kliger (citizen member), Kathleen Roger (citizen member), city councillor Elisabeth Roux, Lora Baiocco (online services and archives librarian), Daniel Míguez de Luca (programming and outreach librarian) and Wendy Wayling (children's librarian).



'Winding up' the floral clock



Work on the city's iconic floral clock on Sherbrooke at Lansdowne continued July 4 with the return of the clock's hands and new planting.

PHOTO: LAUREEN SWEENEY.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDEPENDENT'S OMISSION
OF HUMAN STORIES RE:
SOUTHEAST DISAPPOINTING

The *Independent's* coverage of the public debate over southeast Westmount's re-development has overlooked some of the most poignant moments – ones that underscore the human cost of the housing crisis.

Your coverage of the May 27 city council meeting (June 3, p. 1) emphasized support from business and development interests, as if these were the only groups in favour of the project. Yet arguably the most powerful moment of that meeting came when Jessica Winton confronted councillors Kez and Roux for opposing the draft by-laws. She warned that their stance could leave her stuck living with her parents – or force her out of her own neighbourhood altogether.

Similarly, your coverage of the June 18 public assembly (June 24, p. 1) omitted any mention of the support expressed for the re-development. In another powerful moment, Egor Matveev shared that his apartment building [in St. Henri] had burned down, and that the housing shortage had made finding a new home even harder. He argued that building more housing could help people like him.

These testimonies – by Ms. Winton and Mr. Matveev – vividly illustrate the real, personal toll of failing to build enough housing. It is disappointing that the *Inde-*

pendent chose not to include them in its coverage.

JAMES MURPHY, MELVILLE AVE.

DID CITY COUNCIL READ
DISTRICT 8 CITIZENS' REPORT?

Having attended the southeast meeting on June 18, I came away with the opinion that the city was not, and would not be, accepting any suggestions from the citizens in District 8. This has been a recurring problem since I moved here over 50 years ago!

When I went back to review the surveys of what the citizens had most wished for District 8, I found it to be the "greening" of the area.

We, a small group of concerned citizens, already knew this – for, in 2021, we had commissioned a comprehensive study of District 8 to be done by the graduating students in urban planning at McGill University. The 90-page study was very thorough, dealing with – among other topics – demographics, and the built and natural environment. The conclusion was that District 8 was the densest area of Westmount contributing financially above its weight while it had the least amount of green space.

The study concluded with three possible models that addressed both adding density and green space. The students were indeed aware of environmental concerns and we thought it would be interesting to perhaps generate new ideas and so

we sent it to the city.

Sadly, the council did not read it [in my opinion].

Every day, we read about the deteriorating environment and, as I write this, Europe is undergoing a deadly heatwave.

The mayor was so proud of having walked, some 5 years ago, in the Greta Thunberg march, but it seemingly made no lasting impact on her thinking.

In the last couple of years when I check the air quality index, I usually find that District 8 is a point worse than Montreal.

I am well aware that the Tupper parking lots are a heat trap as I cross them by foot most days along with a few others. This unhealthiness must be a deterrent to pedestrians.

Our need and our want is for more open space for air circulation and greenery. Greater heights on Dorchester will stop air flow and, with less real vegetation (not green roofs) to clean the air, we will find ourselves sitting in a bowl of fetid air.

HONOR ROBERTSON, CLANDEBOYE AVE.

CITY SHOULD LISTEN, NOT
RUSH, ON SOUTHEAST

I am a resident of Clondeboye in the 8th district. For the last dozen or so years, a good many of us in this southeast sector have been responding to each of the city's commissioned planning reports, be it on the narrowing of Dorchester or the raising of five- or six-storey buildings on its north side.

We have attended meetings, held meetings and on our own initiative worked with students of the McGill School of Urban Planning in 2021 to provide a design concept for the Tupper parking lots that was expected to lead to a productive dialogue with the city.

Not so. Nary a word about it and amazingly not referenced in the [city consultants'] Lemay report.

The meetings that we held and the surveys conducted clearly established a general consensus for this area. To mention only a few, we asked that the street not be narrowed significantly; and that buildings on the north side mirror, as best possible, those on the south side and be affordable for families. Useable green space in that locale and as a buffer to St. Catherine was of great importance to the residents. Density was also a very great concern because this sector is already the most densely populated in all of Westmount.

The Lemay report clearly indicates the city is not interested in what we have said and done. At the consultation meeting on June 18, a number of Westmount residents who are professionals had harsh criticisms to make of the direction the city seems

intent on heading and they provided constructive comments. These professionals were offering to meet with Westmount planning officials. If the local residents will not be heard, at least let those among us who have considerable professional gravitas and experience be permitted to improve the planning for this sector.

There is no need to rush through an ill-suited design concept for St. Catherine and Dorchester-Tupper.

TOBY MORANTZ, CLANDEBOYE AVE.

FEWER CITY EMPLOYEES,
NEW COUNCIL, PLEASE

Former mayor Trent (May 13, p. 6, June 3, p. 6, June 17, p. 7) makes a compelling, evidence-based argument that the number of Westmount's public employees has grown far too quickly, that they are too costly, and that they must be reduced *tout de suite*, particularly in view of the large costs that seem to be required for our crumbling infrastructure.

And, as my fellow former Dawson faculty member Jo LaPierre mentions in her letter of June 17 (p. 8), no amount of happy talk from certain Westmount council members will alter these facts.

Jo also makes the excellent points that far too many councillors do not speak and simply vote with the herd and that a brand new council is needed.

ALEX SIMONELIS, SHERBROOKE ST.

DENSITY NOT A THREAT
TO WESTMOUNT

As someone who has called Westmount home for a while, I wanted to share my support for the PPU and the much-needed re-development of St. Catherine St.

Let's be honest – St. Catherine has seen better days. The empty lots and aging buildings don't reflect the dynamic, welcoming neighbourhood many of us love. It's frustrating to walk down a main street that feels like it's been left behind. This isn't just about appearances – it's about making our community livable, functional and forward thinking.

The proposed plans to increase residential density aren't a threat to what makes Westmount special – they're a smart, thoughtful way to ensure people of all ages and stages of life can find a place here. Downsizers, young professionals and even families need more flexible housing options. And let's not forget the boost that more residents would bring to our local shops and cafés. A livelier street is a safer, more connected one.

I hope city council recognizes how important this moment is. We can't keep putting off changes that are long overdue. Let's give St. Catherine the attention it

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We are Westmount

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Please include your name and street for publication (or borough or municipality if you do not live in Westmount), but not your address (unless you want it published).

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

deserves – and make it a street that truly reflects the heart of Westmount.

KAROLINA JEZ, MOUNT PLEASANT AVE.

ST. CATHERINE ST. WOULD THRIVE AGAIN UNDER PPU

I am in my twenties and I've noticed recently how vacant St. Catherine St. has become, especially in Westmount. It feels like our city is dying. I've lived in Westmount all my life and it saddens me deeply to see the area go in the direction it has.

I also work nearby and I see how much potential there is for this area to thrive again. More high-rises and dense housing close to public transit would bring new energy and help small businesses that rely on local foot traffic. We need to think about what will keep Westmount strong and vibrant for the next generation.

Urban planning like the PPU is a step in the right direction. New projects with mid- to high-rises would bring life back to the area.

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DENSITY IS A SOLUTION

As a long-time resident of Westmount who also works in our community (directly on St. Catherine St. West in the affected area), I fully support the PPU and the urgent need to revitalize St. Catherine St. The vacant lots and neglected spaces do not reflect the vibrant city we all care about.

Density is not a problem; it's a solution. More residents will bring life, safety and stronger support for our local businesses. Let's move forward with this plan and give Westmount the future it deserves.

A proud resident and worker.

AVERY PALEVSKY, UPPER ROSLYN AVE.

ESSENTIAL TO REVITALIZE ST. CATHERINE ST.

As a young professional who has lived in Westmount all my life, I am thrilled to see bold urban planning initiatives like the PPU moving forward. Revitalizing St. Catherine St. is essential. The vacant properties and underutilized spaces currently send the wrong message about our city's future.

High-density housing near transit and services is exactly what Westmount needs. It will help reduce congestion, strengthen our local businesses and create a more dynamic, welcoming community. I am proud to call home a city that is ready to embrace smart, sustainable growth.

Please do not let this opportunity slip away.

JAKE MARGLES, SUNNYSIDE AVE.

DENSITY PART OF SOLUTION

As parents raising two young children who have lived in Westmount for over 30 years, we feel strongly that the proposed Special Planning Program (PPU) is essential for the future of our community. The current state of St. Catherine St. doesn't reflect the vibrant, family-friendly city we want to live in. Too many lots sit empty, inviting vandalism and creating an unsafe environment, especially at night. Greene

Ave., de Maisonneuve and other adjacent streets have been severely affected by the demise of the lower flats.

Density is not the problem. In fact, it's part of the solution.

We need more housing near transit and services so that families like ours can thrive without being dependent on cars. Building upwards will preserve our parks and green spaces while breathing new life into this part of town.

We urge you to move forward with the PPU. Westmount needs this revitalization now – not in another decade. Let's create a community where families, businesses, and residents of all ages can flourish. Westmount should remain the best borough in Montreal.

JEREMY LAUFER, ROSEMOUNT AVE.

SOUTHEAST PPU WILL ALLOW RESIDENTS TO STAY IN WESTMOUNT

I'm a mother of four and have been a resident of Westmount since 2018. My husband has been a resident since 1985 and spent his childhood on the same street where we are currently raising our family.

I am writing to share my strong support for the PPU and the much-needed revitalization of St. Catherine St. from its current depressing state. The empty buildings and unused spaces don't reflect the vibrant, welcoming community we know Westmount can be.

This much-needed development will allow residents like me to remain in Westmount as my family's needs change over time. With more people in the area, we are giving local businesses the chance to thrive in one of the best neighbourhoods in Canada. Without this development, they will continue to close, and new exciting businesses that can truly enhance our community will continue to avoid Westmount, as it is currently too limiting.

In summary, please help us to instate positive change in our community for gen-

erations to come. Especially considering how much we all sacrifice to be able to live in Westmount.

TARA PEKELES, LANSDOWNE AVE.

DENSITY NEAR TRANSIT ESSENTIAL

As someone who has lived in Westmount for over 20 years, went to school here, was raised here, and is now raising my own family in this community, I strongly support the PPU and the urgent need to revitalize St. Catherine St.

Density near public transit and downtown Montreal is not just a good idea, it's essential. Across Canada, federal, provincial, and municipal governments are pushing for more housing and higher-density development to address the housing crisis. I don't understand why this is seen as a problem in Westmount. We cannot keep resisting what is necessary.

Thoughtful high-density projects will strengthen our community, make our streets safer and more vibrant, and support local businesses. I urge council to move forward with this plan. Let's ensure Westmount remains a dynamic, inclusive city for generations to come.

SORAB ALAVI, MOUNT PLEASANT AVE.



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Canada Day in Westmount!



Mayor Christina Smith serves a piece of the city's Canada Day cake July 1 at the Westmount recreation centre.



Preparing to serve the Canada Day cake are, from left, city Sports and Recreation director Dave La-pointe, councillors Conrad Peart, Jeff Shamie and Mary Gallery with Mayor Smith and MP Anna Gainey, Councillor Kathleen Kez and Andrew Maislin of Sports and Recreation.



Andrew Maislin and Councillor Conrad Peart receive pieces of the city's Canada Day cake at the recreation centre to start distributing them to two long line-ups of people inside the building and on the pool deck.



Councillor Matt Aronson, left, and Councillor Conrad Peart serve pieces of the city's Canada Day cake.

PHOTOS: LAUREEN SWEENEY



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Sherbrooke/Victoria photos sought

We are seeking photos of the Sherbrooke & Victoria shopping area circa 1958-1965 for an article in the fall edition of the Westmount Historical Association newsletter. Photos of the intersection at the time, as well as specific landmarks, such as Steinberg's, Macy's Drugstore and Restaurant, Fry's Stationery/Confectionery, Pascal's Hardware and many others. If you have anything to lend, we would scan prints and return as soon as possible, and insert a source credit under the published photo.

Please contact Matthew Elder at **mattelder53@outlook.com** or **514-231-2017**.

Travel

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Part 4: Arrivederci Puglia! Arrivederci Apulia!

chairs.

The old port dates to the 1400s. The natural harbour makes a perfect *passeggiata* place to view life BMT (before mass tourism).

Driving on, I made a fabulous discovery: textiles, this time. Internationally-renown Tessitura Tre Campane (Tessituratrecampane.it) is the go-to source not only for many local luxury *masserie* but also architects and designers from around the world.

Founded in 1950, today brothers Massimo and Gabriele Liso manage a team whose artisanal craftsmanship is legendary, from processing natural yarns to weaving unique patterns, their renowned striped fabrics, jacquards and table linens.

Their father, Michele Liso, the firm's founder, made impeccably detailed drawings. They are archival sources still used by the in-house designers and weavers, a testament to his creativity.

Outdoor or indoor cushions with piping? They are seen in elegant homes and hotels around the world. Massimo told me: "When you touch a fabric, you have to love it." (And I did!)

Many Italian towns boast celebrity residents. In Tricase, the prime suspect is Ilyena Lydia Vasilievna Mironov, better known *continued on p. 26*



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The tranquil harbour of Tricase.



Rush hour in Puglia.



I departed from Naples. Here is a view of its medieval (12th century) Ovo Castle.

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Travel, cont'd from p. 25

as actress Helen Mirren, who owns the urban bar Farmacia Balboa with her husband, film director Taylor Hackford.
As I sit admiring my Tessitura pur-

chases (place mats, tablecloths, napkins and beach bags, since you ask), I watch the liquid light fade into dusk. Enjoying a *gelato*, I listen to church bells while Vespas whizz pass.
I now look at “culture” in a new way. Not

just gilt-framed or frescoed, it can be a way of life.
Here in Puglia, it is the culture of its craftspeople, their families, the food: A living chain of tradition. Centuries-old artisan artistry. *Artigiano straordinario*.



sicotte & co

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Real Estate Broker

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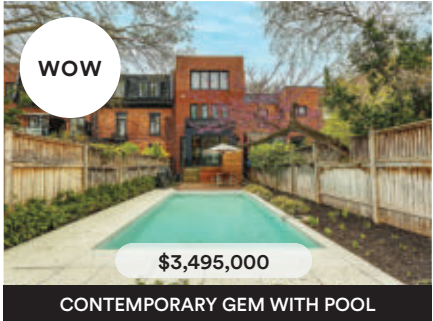
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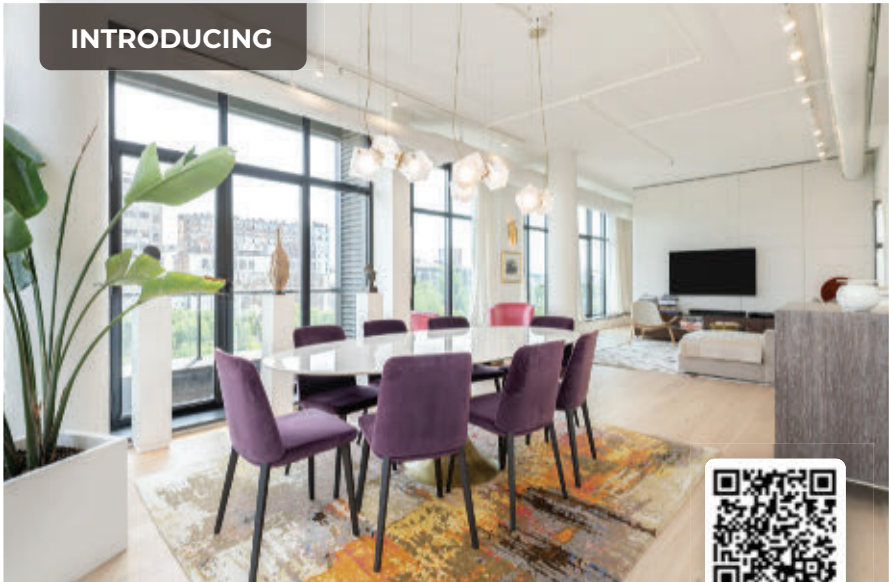
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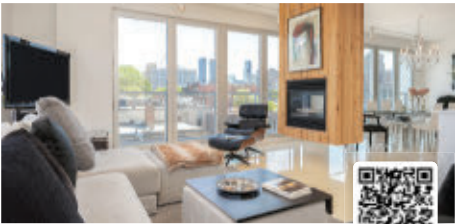
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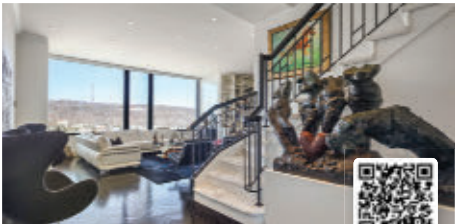
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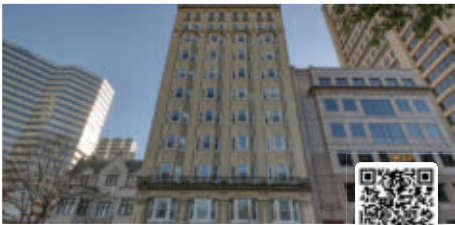
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1192-1198 DALCOURT

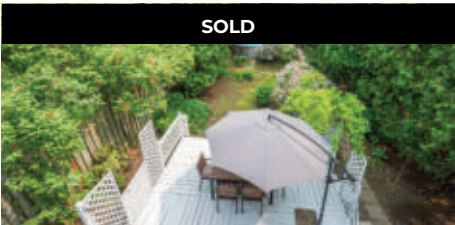
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