

# WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly Vol. 19 No. 8c

We are Westmount

August 19, 2025

## Municipal election news

In

coverage to come:

● Shawn Moss (District 5)

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## Summer means sun & swimming...and demolition & detours



Meheli Ghayour and Rona Mir were enjoying a walk through Westmount Park August 15 on their way to the pool at the Westmount recreation centre. Ghayour is a lecturer at LaSalle College and Mir is a digital marketing specialist. Meanwhile, Sherbrooke St. in Victoria village continued to boast a temporary road surface, raised drains and manholes and orange cones. Drivers also had to parse this complex group of detour signs, plus: ... once they turned left onto Grosvenor, the next detour sign directed them west along the back alley behind the SAQ and to a partially blocked, one-way south Victoria Ave. Right back to where they started! See p. 15 and p. 17 for more detour coverage.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.

**Homeowner's son catches serial burglar!** See p. 3

### Heat from lights set off system

## Cause of Victoria Hall sprinkler mishap now known

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.

When the *Independent* reported the story on July 8 (p. 14), the cause for the fire sprinklers' activation was not yet known.

On August 12, Mugisha Rutishisha, director of the Communication depart-

ment at the city, provided details on the results of the investigation.

"The information gathered leads us to believe that the heat generated by stage lights at Victoria Hall unfortunately activated the automatic fire extinguishing system..."

"Following this incident, the city has since upgraded the lighting to safer, more energy-efficient LEDs and continues to ensure that the venue remains safe and welcoming for all events."

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REFERRED FOR A REASON

# Singer/songwriter enchants park summer concert-goers



Montreal singer/songwriter Kelly Elizabeth, left, seen here on July 27 by the lagoon in Westmount Park, was accompanied by Tristan Sisti-Aubé on bass (in back row) and Brianha McTigue with back-up vocals. Not seen in photo is drummer Seyjii Schultz. Right, concert-goers were joined at one point by some of the more courageous and musically-inclined ducklings that make their home during the summer in the Westmount Park lagoon.

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Fans of the Westmount Public Library’s Summer Concerts series gave an enthusiastic welcome on the afternoon of July 27 to Montreal-based singer/songwriter Kelly Elizabeth.

She performed a few of her own compositions, as well as other crowd favourites,

including an old and well-known standby by the legendary Joni Mitchell, while accompanied by some musical friends.

Relaxing in lawn chairs or on blankets set up around the Westmount Park lagoon, the crowd – a mix of young and old – was joined at one point by some of the more courageous and musically-inclined ducklings that make their home during the

summer in the lagoon.

Kelly Elizabeth completed a new phase of her career in music in 2023 when she released her new EP, *Half Moon*.

Besides herself, the band also includes back-up singer Briahna McTigue, bass player Tristan Sisti-Aubé and Seyjii Schultz on drums.

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## Police Report

# Homeowner's son subdues, detains burglary-spree suspect until police arrive

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Police at Station 12 on Stanton St. announced late last week the arrest of a suspect believed to be responsible for a long string of burglary incidents at Westmount homes 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 other streets in Westmount.

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.

A Station 12 community relations officer said at the time that the suspect was usually spotted between two and four in the morning. He described him as a thin, white, middle-aged male wearing a hoodie and surgical mask across his face.

Some of the burglaries attributed to the

suspect included two incidents near Sherbrooke St. and Metcalfe Ave. around 3:30 am on June 2.

He 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 was believed to have also been the work of the same individual.

In an interview with the *Independent* late last week, Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Emmanuel Provencher described the *modus operandi* of the arrested suspect in similar terms.

"He was going through the backyards of houses, looking for unlocked doors, windows," he said. "He was going inside the houses, picking up stuff rapidly and getting out quick." According to Provencher, he never took more than he could easily carry.

The turning point came on the night of August 13 when the suspect broke into a house on Grosvenor Ave. where, according to Provencher, the suspect and the son of the dwelling's owner came face to face.

An altercation ensued, during which the suspect was subdued, after which the police arrived and made an arrest.

Citing an account of the confrontation provided by a witness, Provencher said the suspect, while attempting to escape, rushed at the owner's son who was standing in the way of the exit, but was subdued in the end.

The man arrested was described by Cst. Provencher as a white male in his 50s, possibly of east-European origin, with short dark hair. He was wearing a hoodie and a surgical mask over his mouth, presumably to conceal his identity.

As of late last week, he was being interviewed by Montreal police investigators while still in detention. He faces break-and-enter and burglary charges related to up to a dozen events.

The police believe that before being caught, the suspect was spotted by a witness between midnight and 2 am on August 9 prowling through the yard of a home on Delavigne Rd. in Westmount.

"He opened a door, he tried to get in but it didn't work, the alarm went off and maybe scared him off," said Provencher. He was also seen lurking on the same date close to two homes on Anwoth Rd., without being able to get in.

## Different operators at work on summit

However, while all these incidents are believed to be the work of the man the police arrested, there was at least one attempted household burglary in Westmount around the same time involving different suspects.

On August 13 around 1 am, the owner of a home located on Surrey Gardens on the summit was awakened by his dog's barking.

When he looked outside, he saw that a motion detector had switched spotlights on in the yard. Security cameras also revealed that a ladder had been placed beneath a window, but that two suspects fled after the lights came on.

Provencher, who viewed the security camera images, said the suspects appeared to be a young male and female.

He said a neighbour on Surrey Gardens also reported a broken basement window, the result of an apparent break-in attempt, but that the perpetrators failed to get in because the window opening was too small and the alarm had gone off at that point.

## Four suspects tracked down

# Public Security's overnight patrols pay off: director

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Four masked and hooded people initially spotted by private security agents at 1 am August 12 at Rosemount and Sherbrooke were tracked down by Westmount Public Security and turned over to police, Public Security officials said. The four had been looking suspiciously into parked cars.

Two of the suspects were initially spotted by the officers, followed by the others. All were questioned by police and identified, though no charges were laid.

The four were "obviously up to no good,"

said Public Security director Greg McBain.

He said the incident "obviously shows the importance of overnight patrols while people are sleeping. Public Security knows who belongs in the neighbourhood," he explained.

## Bus and 2 cars collide at Grosvenor and The Blvd.

An accident involving an STM bus and two cars at Grosvenor and The Boulevard August 12 ended up with the towing of the bus as well as one car, an electric BMW, Public Security officials said. The three

drivers stayed on the scene for police. No injuries were reported.

## Fallen tree top affects backyard properties

The top of a tree fell on electric wires August 12 bringing emergency crews to the properties involving neighbouring backyards on Upper Belmont and Upper Lansdowne, according to Public Security. A private arborist attended to do the cutting. The tree was described as "rotten." The incident was initially reported around 3:45 pm, forcing electricity to be shut off.



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Seeks election in District 5 (Victoria village south of Sherbrooke)

James Murphy calls for ‘a new generation of leaders’

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A new city council candidate for District 5 calls on electors in the area of Victoria village to choose him in a challenge to “build a future we’re proud of together.”

James Murphy, 38, announced his candidacy last week, saying that “like many of you, my wife and I chose this neighbourhood to raise our young children, now aged 2 and 5, because of the beautiful parks, walkability and access to local services. We love it here and feel incredibly fortunate to call this community home.”

Murphy, explained that “Westmount is a wonderful place to live (but) like many other cities, we face big challenges. We need to renew our infrastructure, making it safer, more reliable and resilient to extreme weather. To maintain a vibrant community, we need to build new homes to attract young families and allow seniors to age in their community.”

This requires a new generation of leaders “to step forward and listen to every voice,” he said. “After many conversations with friends, family and neighbours, I am prepared to answer that call.”

As an IT management consultant, he

James Murphy on August 18 on Victoria Ave.  
PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

said, he has learned the importance of listening. This to fully understand a problem, and then working collaboratively to solve it. “As your representative, I am committed to listening and collaborating with residents, the Westmount administration

[unelected employees] and fellow council members.”

Among the platform items that he lists are supporting small businesses, streamlining the permit process, minimizing construction disruptions, creatively adding green space to our urban spaces, maintaining excellent recreation services, improving pedestrian safety and exploring the possibility of a new community pool.

**Why Murphy?**

For the past four years, he said he has led the Greater Montreal chapter of Citizens’ Climate Lobby, training and mobilizing volunteers to be effective climate advocates. “We meet three or four times a year, usually at the Greene Centre.”

Murphy said his campaign starts with listening. “In the coming weeks, I want to hear from you about the future you want for Westmount.”

He grew up in Ottawa and completed a BSc at Trent University in Ontario. “I am currently a manager at Levio, a Quebec-based business and technology consulting firm. I have previously worked as an independent contractor. I also worked at Deloitte for several years.”



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*'I am an advocate for change'*

# Paul Levine running for council in District 6

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Longtime Westmount resident Paul Levine, a forensic accountant, announced his bid August 10 for a seat on city council representing District 6. This is the district represented for the past eight years by councillor Mary Gallery, who is now running for mayor.

Levine, a neighbour of Councillor Jeff Shamie on de Casson who himself is seeking re-election in District 3, has been actively involved for many years in leadership roles including at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim.

"I am passionate about Westmount and wish to ensure that it continues to flourish and evolve," he explains. He has been living in District 3 for five years with his wife, Sharon, and has four children and six grandchildren.

He says he believes in "listening carefully" to residents' concerns and, if elected, "ensuring that I bring them forward in ensuring fiscal responsibility and in man-

aging the city responsibly and efficiently."

## Attention to detail

Describing himself as "a team player" and "a strong advocate for change," Levine says he is "never afraid to speak up and to defend a position when necessary. Those who know me will vouch for my financial acumen, my communication skills, and my strong attention to detail."

He lists other not-for-profit institutions in which he has assumed the positions of president, vice president, treasurer and secretary. These include the Shaar, Solomon Schechter Academy, the Bronfman Jewish Education Center, the Bronfman Israel Experience Center, the Jerusalem Foundation and the Jewish Community Foundation.

He said that on his return from being out of town recently, he intends to submit his nomination papers and to declare his candidacy. Daphne Tsadilas-Shamie, councillor Shamie's wife, "has accepted to be my official agent."

*Issues: Social housing or not? Height*

# Court rules against developer in suit over proposed 'Tower 6' at Children's former site

BY JENNIFER BALL

The judgment of the Superior Court of Quebec in HRM Projet Children Inc. v. City of Montreal et al. resulted in the court dismissing the developer's two legal cases.

The verdict was rendered by Judge Robert Leckey on July 23 for "500-17-116136-212" and "500-17-119800-228" in the Superior Court of Quebec. HRM Projet Children Inc. was the plaintiff and the city of Montreal the defendant.

## History

Philip Kerub and High Rise Montreal (HRM) bought the former Montreal Children's Hospital's building and grounds in 2017. In the same year, the city council of the city of Montreal re-zoned the downtown site, located just east of Westmount, to allow for a multi-component project, including six towers of varying heights.

Tower 6 was planned as a 20-storey building. Portions of two other buildings on the campus, 1111 Atwater and the former nurses' pavilion, are in Westmount.

Originally, the Tower 6 project was to

comprise 174 social housing units, but the city and the developer were never able to agree on the terms and conditions for their construction.

Despite the advice of the Office de consultation publique de Montréal (OCPM), the city of Montreal went ahead in 2019 with the adoption of a by-law limiting the number of storeys in Tower 6 to four from the previous 20.

## Court case

The case that Kerub filed required the court to assess, "Is the developer HRM Projet Children justified in claiming that the city of Montreal violated its rights under a bilateral contractual relationship?..."

"Is it correct to argue that the city exercised its regulatory power illegitimately and illegally by changing the zoning of the former Montreal Children's Hospital site a second time?"

Gonzalo Nunez is a public relations officer with the media relations division of the city of Montreal. Regarding the court case, Nunez told the *Independent* in May

# Spirulina doesn't waste time



Just last week (p. 10), we ran an August 5 photo of Spirulina's small side parking lot. As seen the morning of August 15, it was already a work site. The Victoria Ave. restaurant received permission to build a terrace here at the July 7 city council meeting.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

sponded saying, "Unfortunately, due to the legal ongoing matter, I cannot comment on this situation as per legal counsels' advice..."

"As soon as the appeal process is complete – should there be one – I'll be in a position to comment."

## Editor's note

# Letters to the editor policy for end of election period

In keeping with our practice during the previous four municipal election campaigns, letters to the editor published in our last issue (October 28) before the November 2 election that mention a candidate *will be shown* to that candidate for possible rebuttal in the same issue. There will be no second "right of reply" to this possible reply. – DP

2023, "The court number is 500-17-116136-212" (see September 19, 2023, SL-10).

Nunez gave the *Independent* a new statement on August 4: "The court dismissed the developer's two legal appeals, declared valid the 2019 regulatory amendment aimed at reducing the authorized height of the potential building to be constructed on location no. 6 of the site, and dismissed the owner's claim for financial compensation..."

"Furthermore, an appeal of this judgment is still possible, as the appeal period has not yet expired."

The exact wording of the conclusion of the ruling in the Superior Court of Quebec 2025 reads, "... The court:

[92] REJECTS the amended application for a declaratory judgment and appeal for judicial review in case 500-17-116136-212;

[93] DISMISSES the application for damages in case 500-17-119800-228;

[94] ALL with costs."

The judgement is in French and was translated using DeepL translator.

On August 5, the *Independent* reached out to Kerub to solicit his opinion. He re-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR – GENERAL MAIL

CAN SOMEONE PLEASE MAKE 911 CARE ABOUT SEX IN A PARK?

I was walking through Queen Elizabeth Park on August 11 at around 6:45 pm when I noticed a sketchy couple near one of the picnic tables in the middle of the open field. Early middle-aged, poorly dressed, and the guy had his shirt off. The female stood and then bent over the table. He got behind her and pressed himself to her rear. I stopped a distance away and looked at them. They looked like they were about to have sex right there in the park.

The guy noticed me and made some unhappy gestures towards me. The woman sat down on the bench.

I called Westmount Security. They said that this was indecent behaviour and to call 911. I called 911 and described what was going on to the dispatcher. The dispatcher repeatedly asked whether they were engaging in sex right at that very moment. I told her that they stopped when they saw me looking, but that they were trouble and that kids play in that park. We went around in this verbal circle a few times. It was almost as if I were arguing with a defence attorney. I finally told her that if she didn't think it was worth having a squad car just drive by to check things out, that was her problem.

At home, I still had a dissatisfied feeling. I called Station 12 directly. The officer who answered was sympathetic and implied that the dispatcher was wrong. I asked if he could send a car to check. It was almost 7 pm by that point and he said the

station was closing but to call 911 again. I thanked him and dropped my efforts at this point.

Perhaps our mayor or whichever councillor is in charge of liaison with the police can have a word with them. This is not okay.

ALEX SIMONELIS, SHERBROOKE ST.

PROTECT US FROM TRAFFIC, WAZE



Outremont has put these signs on Mount Royal Ave. Why can't we do that on Westmount Ave.? It has become a thoroughfare. Trucks and vans and cars and motorcycles all day long, many sent by Waze. We learned from Waze that they will not send traffic on a road that says "local traffic only." It seems like a simple solution that I and others have proposed to the city. It has fallen on deaf ears.

DAN LE ROSSIGNOL, WESTMOUNT AVE.

CLLR. ROUX: PLEASE RUN AGAIN

I, too, would echo the sentiments of a recent letter (June 24, p. 7) in the *Independent* thanking Elisabeth Roux for being the representative of our district [2, the area around Murray Park] on Westmount city council. As she grew up in Westmount and has continued to live here all her life, she has a real understanding of our city.

I found her to be open to listening to and hearing her constituents' concerns, she had read and sought to understand the numerous dossiers the councillors had been given and the issues facing the council, she attended local meetings, she brought our concerns forward to the council, and reported back. While one understands she could not often prevail, she could be counted on to express the views of many.

I sincerely hope she will consider running again.

Bravo, Elisabeth, and thank you!

GAIL JARISLOWSKY, MURRAY AVE.

HAS WESTMOUNT BECOME GATED IN SPIRIT? WILL IT BECOME SO IN FACT?

RE: July 8 article (p. 5): 'Window cleaners' ticketed \$158 each for door-to-door soliciting"

Upon meeting a new person, when they find out I live in Westmount, I often have to do some "damage control," in the sense of addressing their implicit or even spoken pre-conceptions about Westmount and its citizens: that we are elitist, insular and/or untouched by money concerns, for example. I usually mount a broad defence and also point out that neighbours I chat with regularly live in subsidized housing a block away, and that within a few hundred meters of where I live there are publicly-funded seniors' homes and Batshaw, where some formerly unhoused men live.\*

Then, I read the above-named article.

So it seems that a couple of enterprising 20-year-olds had the temerity to go door to door in Westmount (*Westmount!*) to ask if residents would like to make use of their window-cleaning services. For this crime, two different residents called Public Security (and one of these residents took a photo of the malefactors) whereupon "patrollers began searching" for men "fitting the description" until they were "eventually spotted," and "police were called" so they could each be ticketed \$158. Most seriously, they were found to be "not living in Westmount."\*\* Absent details of the "crime," one would assume brave citizens and officers tracked down two dangerous and violent offenders.

Please. Two young men were trying to find work and offered potentially useful services. Not "playing video games" or "hanging around smoking pot" as the criticisms of young men often go. Why these two residents were so threatened or offended is a mystery to me, but may fit in with the what I *thought* was the unfair misconception of Westmounters mentioned above.

You don't want your windows cleaned? Perfectly understandable. Say "no." Two men you don't know ring your doorbell? Don't answer. That's fine. If your first impulse is "Call the authorities!!" something has definitely gone wrong within our little society.

I have to wonder if the result would have been the same if the two young men ringing the bell had been wearing [private school] blazers and explaining they were offering their services for fund-raising purposes.\*\*\*

This "not one of us" attitude is shown in the exorbitant fines, going into the hundreds of dollars, for people walking "non-Westmount" dogs at the summit. I have been walking my various (thankfully Westmount-legal) dogs for decades and have not found over-crowding by "interlopers" or their dogs even prior to this ridiculous keep-off-my-lawn measure.

Are we one excitable city council meeting away from becoming a gated community?

Is this kind of lack of empathy, of outrage and fear-of-the-other (xenophobia by its true name) endemic to Westmount and its residents? It puts me in mind of a decision the TD bank on Greene Ave. made this winter to lock its doors at closing time. When I asked about this, I got the run-around for a while but was finally told that the manager had received a complaint that a homeless man had been seeking shelter in the lobby after hours one night, when he was unlucky enough to be spotted by a bank customer. That was it. Doors locked.

I have been making late-night deposits at that bank for decades. When there was a homeless person there, almost always in the winter, sheltering from the literally killing cold, they never spoke to me, much less made any threatening gestures or even asked for money. The closing-off of this potentially life-saving sanctuary is an offence to any person with a drop of empathy. (Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, people wanting to enter after hours are directed to the Claremont branch, just past Westmount city limits. Let *them* deal with the "homicidal" vagrants, perhaps?\*\*\*\*) I wonder if the bank manager or the complaining customer would have had even a twinge of remorse

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR – GENERAL MAIL

if a homeless person had been found frozen to death outside the locked door of the bank. (People have been found frozen to death in Montreal in the past.)

So that's it. Am I the only one?

Are we giving any thought, as individuals or as a community as to who we are, and to who we want to be in this respect? Does focussing on "us" as a community mean demonizing and ejecting or punishing anyone we conceive of as "them"? We see where such thoughts and impulses lead in countries throughout the world, most recently and most markedly with actions taken by our neighbours to the south.

Thoughts?

BRIAN WRENCH, ST. CATHERINE ST.

**Editor's notes:** \*Myriam Paquet, *conseillère en communication* for the CIUSSS de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal, told the *Independent* August 7 that the Batshaw building at 4515 St. Catherine contains offices, not housing. It is, however, next to the Belvedere Residence at 4505 St. Catherine, which does house low-income independent residents (see June 6, 2023, p. 1 for more on this separate institution).

\*\*Our news coverage may be partly to blame for this *impression*. Reporters are taught to get as much detail as possible. In the context of police and Public Security reporting, we are rarely given the name of suspects or accused people, but we are often given their municipality of residence (or where they don't live). By including such information, we are just trying to add as much colour as possible to the story, not imply that residence elsewhere is an issue. In the particular context of law enforcement coverage, these details might prove significant, for instance if someone has come from far away for a certain kind of crime – be it graffiti or house burglary.

\*\*\*It is funny you should write this! In high school, long before the founding of the *Independent*, clad in a private school blazer, I was stopped from distributing unsolicited (private sector) marketing material by Public Security. Sadly (for me), this story is very old.

\*\*\*\*The ATM of the TD at Claremont and Sherbrooke, which is in Westmount, is also closed at night (see February 6, 2024, p. 20). – DP.

### USE 1994 BUDGET TO TRIM 2025 ONE

Numbers, charts, property taxes, spending, *oops* ... too much spending ... and now out of money!

I have been reading the various letters and columns about Westmount's financial challenges with great interest. Yup! Seems to me there's been a failure by our council

and administration to control expenses, growing budgets, growing salaries and hiring excesses. Thank goodness we are a small city or ... I don't want to even think about it!

So, in the spirit of helping, I have the following suggestions for future council(s) and the city's ballooning administration:

1) Compare the city's budget from 1994 (when we bought our house and when all the services residents required were provided, were affordable and were managed with prudence) and compare it to 2025's yucky budget (which includes big loans to pay for stuff). If it's not in the 1994 budget, cut it. For example, the budget item that today splits \$500,000 a year to *some* homeowners to replace their water entries. Let's be clear: it is not any municipality's responsibility to reimburse a homeowner for plumbing maintenance, or for a bat house they bought, or for Bixi subscriptions – none of which will be found in the 1994 budget;

2) Mandate a salary and hiring freeze (other cities are doing this, with, in some cases, hundreds of jobs being unfilled) and also cut jobs to get us back to a sustainable (read: affordable) number of city employees. Maybe take a look at that solid and effective 1994 budget for inspiration;

3) Repair and maintain Westmount's infrastructure (not just re-build). For example, take a meander along Chesterfield Ave. that was "completely re-done" something like 20 years ago. On that walk, you will see [cracked asphalt and concrete, some of which is repaired with asphalt].

I think the director general needs to send out a memo to all departments immediately, stating: fix what is broken and then maintain it after the repairs are done, so our big projects last more than 20 years. And I don't mean piling in that crap asphalt the city uses. I'm talking: chip with chisels, clean with blowing and vacuuming, use cement glue and cement, and waterproof the darn repairs.

Things lasted more than 20 years before. I know because I've lived in Westmount for about 60 years.

THOMAS LAPIERRE, CHESTERFIELD AVE.

### MORE LIGHT STORIES, PLEASE

Well done on the story about the firefighters rescuing Eva's kite (August 12, p. 1)! Thank you. It brought back memories of Charlie Brown's kite stuck in many trees. (I am a *Peanuts* fan.) Happy endings are always best!

We need more light stories in the news today, so thank you, David. More human-interest stories would be welcome.

Look after each other. It's very warm.

BEVERLEY HUTCHISON, KITCHENER AVE.

### NO MORE PANDERING TO ANTI-CANADIAN, ANTI-DEMOCRATIC, ANTI-SEMITIC CROWDS

We are writing to applaud Rachel Yane's letter to Mayor Christina Smith published in the *Westmount Independent* of August 12, "Pro-Palestinian 'demonstrations echo extremist groups, disrupt peace of neighbourhood'" (p. 7).

Every point Ms. Yane makes carries the weight of truth and lessons that should have been learned from history. We strongly and proudly stand with Rachel Yane. Enough pandering to and enabling these horrifyingly anti-Canadian, anti-democratic and anti-Semitic crowds that threaten and intimidate us outside our homes.

I wonder if Mayor Smith will respond to Ms. Yane's letter with anything other than anodyne and meaningless bureaucrat-ese.

She did not respond at all to a letter we sent her in December 2024, which read, in part: "We – seniors, Canadian citizens, and Westmount residents – have both been threatened with arrest for standing in silent witness to those hate-spewing demonstrations on Wood Ave."

We wholeheartedly stand in complete solidarity with every point made by Rachel Yane in her powerful and extremely timely letter. The gravity of our situation is staring us in the face. This is not the time for fence-sitting and cowardly deference to nuance and so-called "gray areas."

NATALIE SEGALL & JOHN KOZAKIEWICZ,  
CLARKE AVE.

### WE NEED CONCRETE ACTION ON NON-STOP PRO-PALESTINIAN PROTESTS

The two brilliant and insightful letters (one by Rachel Yane and one by Jeremy Altman – August 12, p. 7) on the corrosive and debilitating effects of the non-stop pro-Palestinian protests being carried out in our city brings to mind my first encounter, in 2017, with both the phenomenon itself and the reluctance of constituted authority to deal with it.

Having graduated from McGill twice (BCom 62 and BCL/LLB 80), I joined with a few others in April 2017 to meet with McGill leaders to urge that steps be taken to protect Jewish students' right to hassle-free studies by cracking down on abusive anti-Jewish/Israel activities of pro-Palestinians who had wrested control of McGill's student government and ewspaper.

Unfortunately, only lip service was paid to our concerns, both then and over the years that followed right up to and beyond October 7/23 – not unlike the lip service now being paid to the concerns of which

Ms Yane and Mr Altman wrote.

Can your paper follow up with the mayor and urge concrete action to protect our residents from the abuse to which they are being subjected?

NATHAN BOIDMAN, DE MAISONNEUVE  
BLVD

**Editor's reply:** We are "happy" to cover news regarding this issue and views on it, but I caution everyone that, in my opinion, the municipal government of Westmount is not the right lobbying target because its ability to influence events in this case is very, very, very limited. In my view, it does not have the budget, personnel, training, equipment or legal authority to deal with most of the issues raised by unruly protests. Even its ability to influence the agglomeration of Montreal police (directly by talking to its senior employees or indirectly by talking to the mayor of Montreal) can be close to nil. Let me be clear: I did not invent the agglomeration of Montreal and I do not endorse how it "works" (thank Jean Charest for that!), nor do I endorse unruly protests! For my own view of the solution to them within our currently existing government structure, please see my editorial "We need a federal protest law" (October 22, 2024. p. 6). – DP.

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Was ‘difficult to predict’

# Council ups cost to re-do the Fordens to \$4M for unseen work

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

With the reconstruction of Forden Ave. and Forden Crescent well under way, an additional amount of close to \$200,000 (\$192,693) was awarded at the council meeting July 7, bringing the total amount of the project to \$4,046,556.

Now that the work has started, the additional amount – being called “contingency” – is required for repairs to underground infrastructure “for which it is difficult to predict in advance,” the resolution explains. This increases the original contract awarded to Eurovia Quebec on May 5 (see

story May 13, p. 13).

After two public consultation meetings, details of the final plan had been featured on the city’s Engage.org website.

The “preferred plan” for the avenue was to retain its traditional two-way traffic direction linking Westmount Ave. and Montrose as a main fire route from the fire station on Stanton St. to the city’s upper levels.

As such, the current project is described as sticking as closely as possible to the existing situation “while maintaining new standards from Transport Quebec” such as widened sidewalks.

Initial controversial plan put to rest

# New Claremont project approved for re-paving, repair at \$4m

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A contract to repair Claremont, north from Lorraine to the city limits at NDG Ave., was awarded at the city council meeting July 7 to Cojalac. At a total cost of some \$4 million (\$3,935,553), this replaces what had originally been projected as a “major re-configuration” of Claremont.

The initial version of the project had been cancelled at a special meeting April 10 after many months of criticism by residents of the neighbourhood decrying what would have been the removal of some 50 parking spots on the busy street as well as almost double the cost (see story May 6, p. 1).

The approved cost of “the Claremont re-surfacing project,” also includes work on the diagonal hypotenuse at the top of the street, Councillor Conrad Peart told the *Independent*.

This is the “shortcut” in front of Maria-

nopolis that connects NDG Ave. to Westmount Ave. It was the subject last year of a pilot closure project to study the effect of eliminating it, which led to much resident criticism (see November 19, 2024, p. 17).

As well, access vaults to Hydro Westmount installations are to be upgraded.

## Financing to come from loan

According to the recently approved council resolution: financing of the revised project would come from a loan of \$18,238,400 for various road, water and sewer projects as part of the 2025 capital works budget.

Given the impact on costs that the initial design would have entailed, the new “alternate ways” were undertaken to address the condition of the street that has been under work related to the six-storey residential project at 500 Claremont, corner of Windsor (see story March 25, p. 1).

# Contract to re-build Roslyn steps brings total over \$3M



Work has begun! With some destruction. The steps from The Boulevard to Upper Roslyn on August 15.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Among contracts approved by city council July 7 was the restoration and reconstruction of the Roslyn steps from The Boulevard to the Roslyn lookout at a cost of almost \$3 million (\$2,983,235). These are the concrete steps rising north from

The Boulevard at the top of Roslyn Ave. that lead to the Roslyn lookout and Upper Roslyn.

The recent contract to Saho Construction follows a related engineering one for the project that had included surveys, engineering and geotechnical studies and the development of concepts and was awarded September 9 for \$143,144 to FNX INNOV Inc. bringing the project total to \$3,159,379.

The repair of these steps has been discussed for several years after the cliff through which the staircase rises was re-landscaped with low shrubs.

The condition of the steps had been deteriorating quickly through April and May as chronicled by the *Independent* in several photos (see May 7, p. 6, May 21, p. 5 and June 4, p. 9).

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# Residents, staff celebrate library's special award for 125th

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Residents, library staff and special invitees ate scones and cupcakes July 16 at an afternoon tea to celebrate the award presented to the Westmount Public Library June 28 in Philadelphia for its 125th anniversary campaign last year.

It was only library in Canada – and one of only eight across North America – to win what was described as a prestigious annual public relations award from the American Library Association (see July 8, p. 1).

## 'Excellent relationships'

"As librarians, we recognize public service above all else and the communities we serve," said interim library director Lauren MacLean in opening the reception. "That's really what the award is all about – excellence in public relations and the relationships with our community."

She thanked Mayor Christina Smith, Councillor Elisabeth Roux, as library commissioner, and the rest of city council as well as the many library volunteers for their contribution leading to the award. The mayor then presented door prizes consisting of library memorabilia followed by the afternoon tea.



Left, Lawrence Kryzanowski and Louise Carpentier, past president of the Westmount Historical Association. Right, among those attending were Mia Wang, 5, with her mother Julia Zhang.



Along with the recognition, the library received a cheque for US\$10,000.

The library's 125th anniversary commit-

tee comprised Councillor Roux, Marie-Christine Dufour, Kathleen Roger and Helaine Kliger as well as librarians Lora

Baiocco, Wendy Wayling and Daniel Daniel Miguez de Luca (see also photo December 5, p. 1).

## Celebrating 20 years of paddling for cancer patient care



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# No asbestos found in city’s clay tennis courts, but surfaces too dry for some players

By JENNIFER BALL

While some tennis players contend that Westmount’s four clay tennis courts are too dry, at least they do not contain asbestos, according to a city spokesman.

Several Montreal boroughs and Quebec municipalities have closed their clay tennis courts as a precautionary measure after an analysis found above-standard asbestos concentrations in the products used to maintain the courts.

The city of St. Sauveur found samples taken from clay produced by the American company Har-Tru had an asbestos concentration of at least one percent – 10 times the concentration allowed by Quebec standards.

The municipalities that temporarily closed their clay courts include Repentigny, Prévost, Rosemère and the Montreal boroughs of Outremont, St. Léonard and LaSalle.

Mugisha Rutishisha, director of the Westmount’s Communications department, said August 13: “The city does not use Har-Tru clay products for the maintenance of clay tennis courts. In addition, tests conducted this week revealed that the city’s clay courts do not contain traces of asbestos.”

On another note, when the clay tennis

courts re-opened in Westmount Park in 2023 after a revamped irrigation system was installed in 2022, significant enhancements to the courts were predicted by the city’s tennis court maintenance company, yet several player sources contend the courts are still too dry.

A spokesperson for the city’s maintenance company told the *Independent* on June 7, 2022 that the 2021 irrigation work had led to significant enhancements to the courts.

Pat Fragole of Jopat Inc. said, “Operators can now better irrigate the courts on a pre-programmed basis. The courts are going to be wet more often and in a much more uniform way. It will be programmed at night so when you come in the morning, the courts will not be dry. Even if the maintenance team do only 80 percent of what they are supposed to do, you are going to see a big difference” (see May 31, 2022, p. 1 and June 14, 2022, p. 12).

But according to several anonymous sources – including one who plays five days a week – the courts are still too dry.

Clay courts require regular watering to compact the surface and maintain proper moisture levels. Brushing is not essential for maintaining the court’s integrity, but it

is crucial for preventing loose top dressing from causing instability for players. Court rolling is a necessary step in maintaining a clay court.

When the *Independent* visited the courts on August 4 and 5, the baselines and service lines were obscured by dry clay.

Regarding the courts’ condition, Rutishisha said: “The clay tennis courts are watered daily by an automatic system at 10:30 pm and 2 am. Manual watering also takes place at 8:30 am and 4 pm. The employees in charge of manual watering usually wait until players have finished their game before proceeding. The clay tennis courts are also rolled twice a day.”

## New permanent stop, street signs reinstated at de Casson-Wood, plus a tree

By JENNIFER BALL

In late 2024, a car accident happened that took out the stop sign, the street sign and a tree in a triangular traffic island where de Casson and Wood Ave. intersect.

After that, a temporary stop sign that measured three feet from the ground was in place to instruct drivers to stop (see March 25, p. 14). A new street sign and a new, standard stop sign were installed by a city Public Works team on March 20, but – by the week of May 26 – those stop and street signs had disappeared, and a temporary stop sign was back (June 17, p. 4).

During the week of July 7, a new street sign, a new, standard stop sign, and an American elm tree were installed by a city Public Works team.

► The new, permanent (?) stop sign on July 11 – plus an elm.



Four clay tennis courts are located in Westmount Park behind Lansdowne Ave. near de Maison-neuve. This August 5 photo of court three shows an obscured baseline.



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One of the Batshaw buildings on Weredale Park road, as seen August 14.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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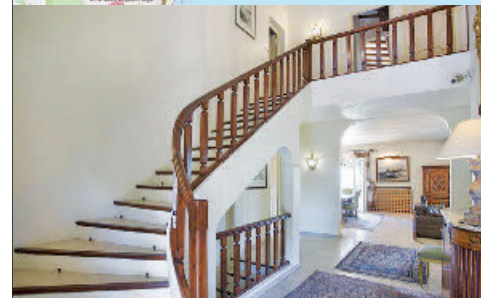
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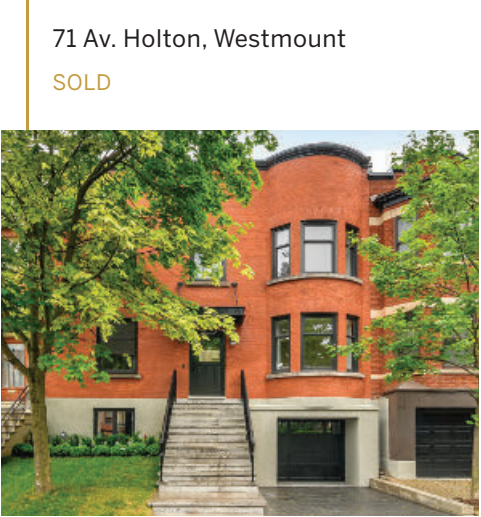
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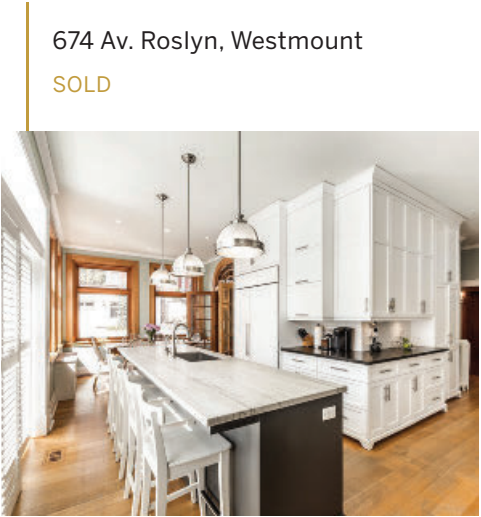
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# Little guys in need of families: Yuri, Paisley and Reid



## Westmount A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

These cuties from Gerdy's Rescue and Adoptions are looking forward to forever homes.

Yuri the Russian toy terrier is quite striking and full of personality. Paisley and Reid are the quintessential Chihuahuas, ready to cuddle and play with all.

Yuri is eleven years old, neutered and microchipped. He is a great companion and is on soft food as there has been tooth

loss. He is pee-pad trained and enjoys resting in his crate during his quiet time.

On to the Chihuahuas: Paisley is a four-year-old female, while Reid is a five-year-old male, and – yes! – they are a bonded pair of delightful social butterflies. They are very healthy and treat motivated.

Reid is neutered and Paisley will be spayed before adoption. Paisley and Reid are doing well on consistency for their pee-pad training, which their foster family is very proud to mention.

If you would like more information on them, please refer to the Gerdy's Rescues & Adoption website at [www.gerdysrescue.org](http://www.gerdysrescue.org), and find out more at their profile pages. You can then scroll to the link to their respective adoption form at [gerdys-rescue.org/gerdys-adoption-form/](http://gerdys-rescue.org/gerdys-adoption-form/) and fill out all your personal details and discuss your family's interest.

As a further step, you can review details with the rescue's adoption coordinators,



## 9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Loulou is most beautiful and regal, a stunning long-haired tan-and-black tabby with huge emerald-tone eyes.

Please do not resist and drop by the Montreal SPCA to visit Loulou at the cat-tery. She is affectionate and playful, a sweet companion to family members.

Loulou is a very healthy six-year-old, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. If you refer to the Montreal SPCA website at [www.sPCA.com](http://www.sPCA.com), you can then connect to her adoption profile through her identification number, 45416835, and make your plans to visit her. The shelter is open to receive you every day, Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, as well as Saturday and Sunday from 11 am

and receive updates and fantastic photographs. Cute as can be, great tiny companions.

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne

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Your neighbour, Lysanne

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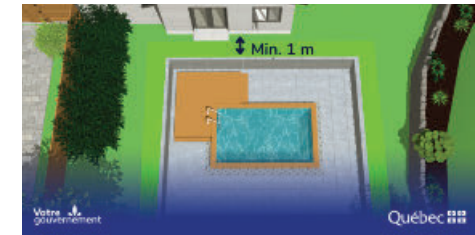
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NEWS

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MEETING

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### Sécurité des piscines résidentielles

Dès le **30 septembre 2025**, toutes les piscines résidentielles devront être conformes au règlement provincial. Veuillez vérifier les exigences et faire les ajustements requis. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)



### 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](http://westmount.org)

### À chacun son terrain de jeux

La Ville souhaite rappeler que les chiens sont interdits dans les aires de jeux pour enfants et aux terrains sportifs. Pour des raisons de sécurité et de confort, ses lieux sont réservés aux usagers. Merci de respecter la signalisation en vigueur. [westmount.org/actualites](http://westmount.org/actualites)

### Nouveaux aménagements pour la sécurité routière autour des écoles

La Ville de Westmount déploie de nouveaux aménagements près des écoles, tels le marquage au sol, les bollards et les jardinières, pour réduire la vitesse et les comportements dangereux, selon les recommandations du CCT. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

### Different Parks, Different Play

The City would like to remind residents that, for safety and comfort reasons, dogs are not allowed in playgrounds and on sports fields. Please respect the signage in place. [westmount.org/news](http://westmount.org/news)

### New Road Improvements to Enhance Safety Around Schools Zones

The City of Westmount is introducing new road improvements near schools, such as road markings, bollards, and planters, to reduce speeding and dangerous driving, based on TAC recommendations. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

**Sports et loisirs : inscription aux activités de l'automne**  
Participez à une foule d'activités sportives et récréatives cet automne ! Les inscriptions sont ouvertes pour les résidents et débiteront le 26 août pour les non-résidents. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

**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](http://westmount.org/travaux)

**Sports and Recreation: Registration for fall activities**  
Take part in a wide range of sports and recreational activities this fall! Registration is now open for residents and will begin on August 26 for non-residents. [westmount.org](http://westmount.org)

**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](http://westmount.org/works)

## BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

**Projection documentaire en plein air : Deep Rising (2023)**  
**27 août, 20 h**, parc Westmount. En anglais. Soyez des nôtres pour une projection du documentaire *Deep Rising* sous les étoiles. En collaboration avec Funambules Médias et le Conseil des arts de Montréal en tournée. N'oubliez pas votre chaise ou votre couverture ! [westmount.org/evenements](http://westmount.org/evenements)

**Parlons opéra ! — Don Giovanni**  
**14 septembre, 14 h**, Victoria Hall. Parlons opéra ! vous invite à une initiation conviviale à Don Giovanni de Mozart, animé par Pierre Vachon avec chanteurs et pianiste. Découvrez les enjeux, la musique et les extraits de cette oeuvre où séduction et tragédie s'entremêlent. [westmount.org/evenements](http://westmount.org/evenements)

## LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

**Outdoor Documentary Screening: Deep Rising (2023)**  
**August 27, 8 p.m.**, Westmount Park. Join us for a screening of the documentary film *Deep Rising* under the stars. In collaboration with Funambules Médias and the Conseil des arts de Montréal en tournée. Don't forget to bring your chair or blanket! [westmount.org/events](http://westmount.org/events)

**Let's Talk Opera!—Don Giovanni**  
**September 14, 2 p.m.**, Victoria Hall. Let's Talk Opera! offers an engaging introduction to Don Giovanni by Mozart, a work where seduction, dark humour, and tragedy collide. Hosted by Pierre Vachon, the event explores the story, music, and voices with live performances by opera artists. [westmount.org/events](http://westmount.org/events)

**Vernissage : exposition de l'artiste Catherine Benny**  
**28 août, 18 h**, galerie du Victoria Hall. Venez découvrir l'exposition *Célébration* par l'artiste Catherine Benny. Aucune inscription requise. [westmount.org/evenements](http://westmount.org/evenements)

**StoryWalk® (marche littéraire) du CLÉTD — On y va ! = Haw êkwa !**  
Offert tout l'été au parc Westmount, le parcours StoryWalk® invite les personnes de tous âges à lire en se promenant dans le parc. Suivez l'histoire Allons-y ! = Haw êkwa !, écrite et illustrée par Julie Flett. Cette activité est offerte dans le cadre du Club de lecture d'été TD. [westlib.org](http://westlib.org)



**TDSRC StoryWalk®—Let's go! = Haw êkwa!**  
Available all summer in Westmount Park, the StoryWalk® invites people of all ages to read while walking through the park. Follow the story Let's Go! = Haw êkwa!, written and illustrated by Julie Flett. This activity is presented as part of the TD Summer Reading Club. [westlib.org](http://westlib.org)



**Le 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. Venez participer à des activités variées, amusantes et adaptées à tous les niveaux. [westlib.org](http://westlib.org)

**Vernissage: Catherine Benny Exhibition**  
**August 28, 6 p.m.**, Gallery at Victoria Hall. Discover *Celebration* by the artist Catherine Benny. No registration required. [westmount.org/events](http://westmount.org/events)

**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. Join us for fun, hands-on activities suitable for all skill levels. [westlib.org](http://westlib.org)

## Rotary report

# YES employment and entrepreneurship address employability challenges facing Quebec's English-speaking community

BY JENNIFER BALL

Quebec English-speakers have higher unemployment and lower income than their French-speaking counterparts, and the charity YES Employment and Entrepreneurship (YES) – which has helped 70,000 of them throughout its 30 years of operation – is focussing on providing the tools that will help them find employment or start a successful business.

The Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT) is a non-profit multi-stakeholder initiative focused on addressing employability challenges facing Quebec's English-speaking community. Its August 5 news release reads, "... The employment [gap] facing English-speaking [Quebeckers is] a four-percentage point higher unemployment rate, \$5,200 less in median

income, and nearly double the poverty rate as compared to Quebec's [French-speakers]."

Its website reads, "English speakers have an unemployment rate of 10.9 percent in Quebec. This is higher than the unemployment rate of French speakers in the province at 6.9 percent."

YES's director of communications and stakeholder engagement is Kathy Slotsve, who spoke to the Rotary Club of Westmount on August 6 about the group's focus, which is a trinity: employment, entrepreneurship and artists.

"The primary services that we offer are one-on-one coaching and counseling..."

"We have business coaches, artist coaches and employment counselors that work with clients, and we also offer skills building workshops."

## Partners, volunteers

In addition to having in-house staff, they rely on their network of partners and volunteers from a variety of industries to deliver services, act as mentors and provide strategic direction.

Slotsve said, "At YES, we know that one size does not fit all. That's why we take the time to listen to our community, ensuring that we are delivering precisely what is needed and offering the types of career support that are required..."

"We take special steps to ensure that our programs are not just one-time services. We make sure to include impactful tools and ongoing actions, giving you access to personalized resources."

YES leadership focuses heavily on helping Quebec's youth. After all, their original mandate was, "to help keep young English-speaking talent in Quebec."

Slotsve alerted Rotarians to a troubling trend. "Canada's youth (15-24) unemployment rate is double the general unemployment rate, at 14.2 percent (+3 percent year over year). This is the highest it's been since the mid-90s, outside of the pandemic. Unemployment for returning students (15-24) was 17.4 percent, the highest unemployment rate for the month of June since 2009 (excluding the pandemic) ...

"In a competitive labour market, employers are less likely to hire folks without experience (i.e., youth). They are often the last ones hired, and the first ones fired. Factors leading to less employment opportunities for youth include inflation, youth population growth, tariffs, global economic uncertainty, and AI."

On the topic of AI, it is screening applications across many companies who have listings on Indeed, Glassdoor and other job posting sites, so it is important to know the slender list of key words it is seeking from



Kathy Slotsve, director of communications and stakeholder engagement at YES Employment and Entrepreneurship, at its office at 666 Sherbrooke on August 14.

your CV for it to be pulled out for consideration. YES, it seems, knows these magic words.

Finally, if you are in Catch-22 of needing a job to gain experience but unable to find one because you have no experience, YES said, "Employers value effort, attitude, and reliability..."

"Highlight volunteer work (sports, school, community). Mention extracurriculars (clubs, side projects, activities) and emphasize your dependability and motivation, showing that you're a team player with a strong work ethic."

*Jennifer Ball, the reporter who authored the story, is a member of the Rotary Club of Westmount.*

## One sign and then ...



At Sherbrooke and Clarke, there is a detour to Côte St. Antoine due a temporary no-left-turn at Sherbrooke and Argyle. The detour takes you up to Montrose but the *Independent* did not see a detour back down to Côte St. Antoine.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR – SOUTHEAST PLAN

## BRING BACK SOUTHEAST'S LOOK, CHARACTER

The editorial that David Price wrote in the July 8 edition of the *Westmount Independent* (p. 6) was SPOT ON!! Excellent and extremely well written!!

Taller (higher-density) buildings are going to completely ruin the area. It blows my mind why and how the current city council does not see that. Yes, we all know that more density equals more tax revenues for the city but even with that formula, there will always be a shortfall. Once those monstrosities are built, there will be no going back. It's that simple!

Westmount has to have a more residential look. Look at the success of many established and known towns in New England, such as Wellesley or Weston in Massachusetts, and Darien or Westport in Connecticut (specifically in their so-called commercial or "downtown" zones). No high rises with densely built buildings.

I'm very pro-development (generally speaking) in big cities or dense urban cores. That's what I do for my living and occupation, but David Price's suggestion on bringing back the look of the 1960s Westmount in the southeast sector will give Westmount the look and character it deserves, and will always allow it to state why Westmount is Westmount. It needs to be noticeably different from downtown Montreal and the net result of how the Cabot Square area with the surrounding towers reflects that conclusion.

I second David's excellent last point on this subject. The current mayor and council is going to be out in approximately 120 days from now. They shouldn't be the final arbiters of this very important and impactful decision. November referendum PLEASE!!

ANTONY KOVIC, CLARKE AVE.

## DON'T FALL INTO THE URBANISM TRAP

*This text formed the basis of the writer's comments at the July 7 city council meeting*  
Councillors and Madam Mayor,

I have a comment and a question about the Dorchester Blvd. section of the southeast revitalization project.

In the 1960s, 40 houses were demolished on the north side of Dorchester following urbanist recommendations. It resulted in the destruction of a residential boulevard and the emptiness filled by a parking lot owned by the city. There are different ways to destroy a neighbourhood: demolition or building of inappropriate buildings that destroy the original vocation and patrimonial heritage of a sector.

This is exactly what will happen if the

construction of five- to 12-storey buildings occurs. THERE ARE NO REASONS FOR THIS.

The 480 units/hectare [criterion of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal/agglomeration of Montreal] is not mandatory; it is a recommendation. We are still living the poor results of the 1960s recommendations ....

The restoration of the north side of Dorchester is not only a task but an OBLIGATION to correct the immeasurable mistake of the 1960s. It requires the restoration of a residential boulevard by the construction of similar residences from the south side. Therefore, three-storey buildings can only be the norm. It has to mirror the south side like nothing happened 60 years ago.

Why??

There are multiple reasons:

1. the construction of seven- to 12-storey buildings will not reduce the homelessness seen in Cabot Square and around Plaza Alexis Nihon. The proof is the status quo of the area after the building of the Children's complex, despite a promise that the attraction of that [occupant] clientele would improve the situation.
2. Homelessness is a complex issue that will not be solved by the construction of 12-storey buildings on Dorchester. However, it is not seen in truly residential sections of Westmount. The reason is that you have ownership and true neighbours that watch over [an area].
3. The so-called high density with apartments of 500 sq. ft. to even 1,500 sq. ft. will attract a mobile or nomadic clientele such as students or early career individuals. They will not have any ownership or *appartenance* to the Greene sector. It is for sure not the type of clientele that will go shopping in fancy boutiques or galleries of Greene Ave. Those towers will become a "Walmart towers" that will not support our communities, but only bring money to the investors and the city by its municipal taxes. Greene will be at higher risk of becoming a ghost avenue like what Walmart did to many small cities' downtown centres. Those Walmart towers are not the type of building that will attract and retain families that we are looking for to restore a safe and pleasant sector.

It's easy to fall in the trap of "urbanism." It takes courage to listen to the people who live in the area and to correct the mistakes of the past. Imagine entering Westmount by René Lévesque into Dorchester and seeing a harmonious boulevard of residences...that would be the envy of any city!! On the flip side, imagine entering the

same boulevard and seeing 12-storey buildings across from patrimonial residences. It would be a mockery and a derision. It takes courage to do the right thing.

My question: What prevents you from creating a project that is in harmony with the south side of Dorchester Blvd.? A project that will attract families, create safety and be a source of pride?

BRIGITTE BARRETTE, DORCHESTER BLVD.

## COUNCIL SET TO RAM THROUGH UNPROFESSIONAL PLAN

Has the planning process for the southeast re-development gone off the rails?

"The primary indicator as to whether or not the public engagement process is healthy is whether or not people are coming to city hall to protest how that engagement is undertaken or used." This is from Larry Beasley, a prominent Canadian urban planner hired five years ago by Westmount for the launch of Imagine Westmount 2040. It describes the current turmoil with precision. At the contentious August 4 council meeting, two councillors even debated their conflicting views on the housing-density regulation [of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal/agglomeration of Montreal] underpinning the entire southeast plan.

To date, Westmount residents have little or no idea of the implications of the proposed re-development. They have repeatedly pointed out that the council has provided no cohesive vision or measurable objectives, nor are there basic estimates of the expected costs to the city and potential revenue benefits. This plan does not meet a professional standard for quality.

At the final presentation, a Westmount developer, one of the country's biggest, stated that the proposed St. Catherine St. concept is wrong, not viable and needed to be re-thought for it to "work economically." He predicted that, without zoning for high[er] towers along St. Catherine, nothing would ever get built as the first seven floors have "zero" views and low economic value.

Furthermore, a prominent architect and Westmount resident who has led major urban redevelopment projects described the current proposal as a "leap of faith" with "no design vision" and lacking credibility. He specified the "need for a design master plan."

Many professionals have deemed the proposed design to be fatally flawed. Council dismisses these warnings.

Most troubling, after years of inaction, is the view held by the mayor and council. It is positively Trumpian. "Only I can fix it!" they insist, otherwise St. Catherine will remain a slum. This is offensive. It implies that the new leadership, arriving in Nov-

ember, will not have the competence or courage to undertake an immediate reassessment of the project to ensure it meets the needs and aspirations of the community while economically viable.

Council intends to ram the zoning through on September 8. Given what everyone knows, or worse, doesn't know, are Westmount residents content to gamble everything on the current council's incoherent and divisive southeast design?

DENIS BIRO,

5000 DE MAISONNEUVE, NDG

## PROGRESS ISN'T UNDEMOCRATIC – LET'S MOVE FROM GRIDLOCK TO VISION

Despite years of talk, former city councils have failed to take meaningful action on the southeast sector. Now, we finally have leadership willing to address the issue seriously. As with any major decision, there will be dissent – but elected officials have a responsibility to do what's best for our city, not just cater to the loudest voices.

*On democracy and populism*

A recent editorial in this paper (July 8, p. 6) called for a referendum on the southeast plan, and described the process as undemocratic and unpopular. "This council's policies do not seem popular... the mood is negative." While some residents may indeed be dissatisfied, it is presumptive to suggest the project lacks majority support. More importantly, governance should not be dictated solely by popular sentiment. Responsible leadership means making informed, long-term decisions – even when they are politically difficult. This includes addressing the housing crisis and promoting environmental sustainability.

Far from being rushed or secretive, the planning process has been open and transparent. Citizens have had several opportunities to participate through consultations, workshops, surveys and public meetings. This is democracy in action – not its absence. A referendum would be costly,



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR – SOUTHEAST PLAN

divisive and time-consuming. Council was elected democratically, as was the provincial government that empowered cities to make zoning changes. To now question the legitimacy of that process is disingenuous.

*Density, development and regional responsibility*

The agglomeration council's master urban plan outlines clear density targets that must be met. To fulfill these, Westmount has no choice but to permit taller buildings in appropriate areas. Continued resistance may contribute to a perception that Westmount is only prioritizing local interests and ignoring broader regional responsibilities.

That said, while I support higher density, I'm skeptical of developers who argue that a project is only feasible at certain minimum heights. Feasibility is determined by the relationship between land value and the amount of buildable square footage. Lower density doesn't make a project inherently unfeasible – it simply reduces the land's market value, which may be less appealing to current landowners.

*Balancing preservation with progress*

Zoning changes alone won't stimulate significant private investment in this area.

As a former builder and contractor, I can attest to the frustratingly complex and often arbitrary permit process in Westmount. Developers are likely hesitant to engage with a city where council and the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) sometimes impose contradictory or unrealistic requirements. I've personally faced resistance from a former mayor who categorically opposes modern design, even when a project has PAC's unanimous approval. Our city must update its outdated building by-laws and adopt a more open-minded approach to contemporary architecture. Preservation of our built heritage is essential, but it need not come at the cost of architectural innovation.

*A vision inspired by Milton-Park*

The St. Catherine corridor is already high-density and mixed use, so it makes sense to continue development in that same urban framework. In contrast, the Dorchester area is residential and should remain so – but not without sensible densification. Much of the land in this area is city owned, offering an opportunity to pursue a community-oriented project. Why not consider non-profit housing co-ops, governed by residents and held in a perpetual public trust?

The Milton-Park (McGill ghetto) area serves as an inspiring model. Fifty years ago, community activists and Heritage Montreal intervened to prevent further private development in this neighbourhood, resulting in the largest cooperative housing complex in North America. Westmount has the civic spirit and engaged population to create a similarly visionary project.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Westmount to shape its future in a way that prioritizes community over profit. Drawing inspiration from successful models like Milton-Park, we can create a legacy that supports long-term affordability and strengthens a sense of belonging for generations to come.

RICHARD DUFOUR, ANWOTH RD.

### SOUTHEAST PLAN WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO VIBRANCY, LIVABILITY

As a long-time resident of Westmount, I wanted to express my support for the proposed revitalization plans being discussed in the community. I believe these improvements will contribute meaningfully to the vibrancy and livability of our neighborhood while preserving the unique character that makes Westmount so special.

Positive changes that enhance infrastructure and the overall environment should be encouraged, especially when they are the result of thoughtful planning and consultation. I'm hopeful this initiative will gain momentum and benefit residents across all generations.

Thank you for your time and for keeping the community informed.

SOPHIE DESMARAIS, WESTMOUNT SQUARE

### SOUTHEAST PLAN WILL IMPROVE, WHILE KEEPING WESTMOUNT UNIQUE

As a long-time resident of Westmount, I sincerely hope the city embraces the revitalization plans [for the southeast] being discussed in the community. I believe these improvements will contribute meaningful gentrification, vibrancy and livability to a part of the neighbourhood that so urgently needs it.

Make no mistake: I strongly believe in preserving the unique character that makes Westmount special and it's my sincere hope as a taxpayer that the city will expedite a plan that will do just that.

Thank you for your time and for keeping the community informed.

HARRY GRIVAKIS, ROSEMOUNT AVE.

### CLEAN UP THE SLUM / MESS ASAP

As a resident of Westmount since 1979 and having been an owner and developer

of several properties, I am deeply concerned about the confusion that seems to be reigning over the intended project for that corner.

From my own experience, I remember having to grapple with the powers-that-be at Westmount to convince them to allow me to tear down a two-storey structure and then erect one of six storeys on a 15,000-square-foot lot. The taxes on the existing property were about \$12,500 a year and there was a lot of resistance to the project.

Fast forward, after meetings and consultations, I finally got approval and, to put things into perspective, today the city is collecting close to \$500,000 a year in taxes.

It's time the squabbling stopped. The city should join the 21st century. Allowing the projects proposed would only substantially increase the tax revenues for the city of Westmount and maybe, just maybe, we would be blessed with little or no tax increases over the years.

I am positive the architects can create plans that would be attractive and much better than the slum that exists there now. It's time to let them proceed ASAP to clean up the mess that exists.

DAVID SCHATIA, GREENE AVE.



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City Views

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Westmount boasts many manicured lawns with mounds of meticulously positioned annuals as well as loyal perennials.

Also quickly springing up are “pollinator paths” – strips of flora for pollinators. UK artist Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg, noting that pollinators see colours differently than us, has designed gardens just for them. You can download one according to your own gardening needs, while also taking soil and exposure into consideration (pollinator-pathways.com). Plantings suggested support endangered insects. Providing a habitat for pollinators is an initiative seen in urban endeavours around the world.

Locally, St. Léon de Westmount has done just that. In front of the school building is a meandering strip: a curving “corridor” of grasses and wildflowers left to thrive naturally. The mini-meadow self-seeds, and – importantly – attracts flying insects including bees.

And bees benefit at the Westmount Public Library’s “bee garden,” where bee balm/bergamot wave happily in the wind beside black-eyed Susans and coneflower – both buzzing with, yes, busy bees. (A hive sits behind this beautiful buffet and its honey is sold by the library each year.)

The idea of planting specifically for bugs and insects (the pollinators) means that not only are the endangered supported, but the pollinators themselves “design” gardens organically, spreading pollen as they go.

In an increasingly fragile environment, another idea tackling climate challenges is the “pocket garden.” Developed by Japa-

# Westmount home to portions of pollinator pathways

nese botanist Akira Miyawaki, it has become a global sensation used in over 3,000 projects around the world.

His premise jump-starts a diverse forest ecosystem based on multilayered groupings of species that complement each other. Their spacing echoes a natural forest system with canopy and undergrowth. Species are chosen that would grow naturally in the chosen area. Everything is planted tightly together, resulting in plants reaching higher faster.

## Local pocket forest

Advantages? Reducing local temperatures, improving air quality and removing carbon, as well as providing a natural refuge for birds. For the past few years, local garden designer Kal Sterling has worked on creating a pocket forest. Her much-admired corner of clover (Olivier and de Maisonneuve) offers an interplay between nature and cultivation.

Beside her creative planting compositions, she has composed a trees-shrubs-undergrowth combination that mimics that of a natural grove. Slender birch trees – three kinds – and a tulip tree (lovely yellow flower!) – are the aristocrats, rising above weeping mulberry, larch and hornbeam trees, a canopy sheltering spreading bushes.

It’s a tiny forest in an intimate space. The leafy bower is full of birds, butterflies and bees. Its natural feel complements her ordered aesthetic of shapes – elegant parallelograms of vertical grasses and low-lying moss. In addition, Japanese anemone, meadow-rue and yellow wax bells send colourful signals to passing pollinators.

Time to stop scrolling and notice the neighbourhood.



A Kal Sterling pocket forest.



The front lawn of St. Léon's.



The “bee garden” at the Westmount Public Library.



## Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

# UPBEAT event captures spirit of UP House



Barbara and Phil Silverberg.



Hans Koechling and Devon Reid.

Maison UP organized UPBEAT, a fun event themed “Courage. Creativity. Couture,” celebrating mental health awareness. The non-profit organization supports adults living with long-term mental conditions by empowering members through meaningful work and community.

Its mission is also to challenge and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness. The fashion show fundraiser brought together more than 60 volunteers. Models were professionals, UP House members and participants from a community-wide casting call, including Concordia University students.

Designers featured included WIDI’Z, Maison Marie Saint Pierre, Hip and Bone, Oscar Mendoza, Helmer, Couture to the Max, Michael D, Raphaël Viens, Anne-Marie Chagnon and students from Collège LaSalle.

The evening opened with a heartfelt speech by long-time UP House members **Grant Gellis** and **Christopher Pagliuca**, who shared how the ..... organization has trans-

*continued on p. 22*

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Sharleen Young and Katie Mac.



Larry Lusko, Bunny Burke, Barbara and Marvin Stutman.

*Social notes, cont'd from p. 21*

formed their lives. **Barbara Silverberg** and **Larry Kaplan** – founding members of UP House and tireless mental health advocates – were honoured for their 13 years of dedicated board service.

Show producer **Hans Koechling** directed the theatrical show working with **Devon Reid**, senior director Paradis Urbain. The presentation's magic mood was enhanced with lighting by **Erik Dionne**, sound design by **Christian Pronovost**, and poetic interludes by cellist **Zander Howard-Scott**.

The highlight of the show was the emotional presentation of Medals of Courage to UP House community members recognized for their personal journeys.

Noted in attendance were UP House board members **David Hoppenheim**, **Philip Silverberg**, **William Buchholt**, **Sandra Dias** and **Carole Cohen**, as well as newly appointed executive director **Lisa Bellevue**. Also seen in the packed audience were **Ann Birks**, **Linda Smith**, **Janet Goldstein**, **Bunny Burke** and **Larry Lusko**, **Amin**

# Curbside recycling now accepts all containers, packaging, printed matter

By JENNIFER BALL

On January 1, Éco Entreprises Québec (EEQ) was designated by the provincial government as the manager of the curbside recycling system in Quebec. So, what impact does this have for Westmounters as they decide what to toss into their blue bins?

In August 2022, the *Independent* report-

**Noorani, Yasmin Grothé, Barbara and Marvin Stutman, Katie Mac, Mirna Yamout, Susan Kolodny** (proud grandmother of designer **Max Alexander**), **Marilyn Takefman**, **Marlene Levinson** and **Mendy Ellen, Barbara Sabbath, Sheila and Arthur Greenspoon, Sylvia Quint, Barbara Singer, Patrick Tremblay, and Naomi Sharpe and Izak Rubin.**

ed that Regroupement des éco-quartiers was hanging evaluation door hangers on Westmount homes to explain what could go into blue bins (see August 23, 2022, p. 12).

Three years ago, **Patricia Racette** – then an environment technician and now director of the Environment division at the city – explained that, when recycling plastics, you need to review the labelling.

“When you have a plastic item, look for the triangle for three arrows, sometimes it can be underneath, and it has a number inside of it. If it is up to number five and number seven, it is recyclable; but if it is number six, it is not recyclable. Also, if there are letters and no numbers, it means that it is not recyclable,” **Racette** said at the time.

**Fanny Laurin**, head of internal com-

munications and public affairs at EEQ, provided a statement to the *Independent* on July 11 explaining how the recycling of plastics has evolved.

According to **Laurin**, whose statement was in French and translated by **DeepL** translator, citizens “No longer need to check the plastic number or research whether a material should go in the bin: all containers, packaging and printed matter are accepted in the recycling bin...”

“...Modernization aims to standardize practices across Quebec to recover more and better. This will help reduce the amount of material sent to landfill and better meet the demands of the recovered materials market.”



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MANAGEMENT

# Excellence in portfolio management

Portfolio management expertise and excellence, depth, professionalism and consistency — this is what has defined our business approach for over 35 years. It is central to how we manage portfolios, control risk, identify opportunities and build relationships.

At the Kent Group, we customize each client portfolio so that it is specifically tailored to meet your needs and expectations. Our personal approach, combined with our outstanding portfolio management, is why the Kent Group is the largest discretionary portfolio management group at RBC Dominion Securities across Canada, with over \$6 billion in assets under management.

**It's time.**

If you are seeking outstanding portfolio management and comprehensive wealth management, we would be pleased to discuss how we can put our experience to work for you.

**To meet with us, please call:**

**Jean-François Dion,**  
Senior Portfolio Manager,  
**or Sholom Tabak,**  
Senior Wealth Advisor,  
**at 514-878-4216**

**1 Place Ville Marie, Montreal**  
**kentwealth.com**

**RBC Dominion Securities Inc.**



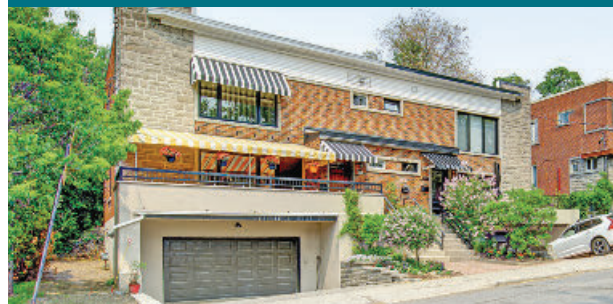
**Wealth Management**  
**Dominion Securities**

# J|P JILL PRÉVOST

## Jill's Homeowner Tip #82

Buyers fall in love at first light. Elegant + strategic outdoor lighting can add up to 20% to your home's value.

### CITY LIVING IN WESTMOUNT ADJ.



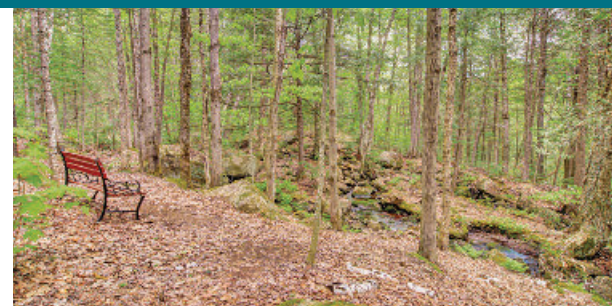
**5011 ROSLYN | \$1,349,000 | MLS 26112181** Lovingly maintained + improved since 1972, this sun-filled, semi-detached, 4+1 bedroom home features a ground-floor den, large eat-in kitchen, dual outdoor spaces, including a lovely covered front balcony, a/c, and most importantly, an integrated DOUBLE GARAGE!

### LAKESIDE LIVING IN HUDSON



**32 MAIN ST. | \$2,095,000 | MLS 26874760** One of the best waterfront properties in Hudson, these 2 lots combined have over 3.5 acres. Over 200' of shoreline on Lake of Two Mountains with a huge private beach and 1.5 acres of agricultural land. This is your opportunity to build your perfect piece of heaven, with or without your own farm! Watch the sunsets paint the sky red from your dock.

### COUNTRY LIVING IN SAINT-HIPPOLYTE



**365 CH. DU LAC-MORENCY | \$649,000 | MLS 20802411** Discover your haven in the woods! This beautiful, detached home will impress you with just over 1 acre of land, a stream bordering one side, and a moat encircling the property. Nature lovers will fall in love. With 4 bedrooms, 3 full bathrooms, wood-burning stove, and granite kitchen, this home checks a lot of boxes.

Thinking of making a move, but unsure where to start? Call me!  
**Let's write your next chapter TOGETHER...**



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