

City forges ahead with SE project, freezes St. Catherine properties

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council February 3 imposed a freeze on strategic properties in the city's southeast development project. The newly "frozen" lots are located west of Atwater on the south side of St. Catherine, across from Alexis Nihon Plaza.

The purpose of the freeze, as explained in the enabling By-law 1650 and accompanying resolution, is to serve as a "strategic tool" for urban re-development. This is to support social diversity through the integration of affordable housing and to develop public space, re-define the built environment at the entrance to Westmount via St. Catherine St. and create a land reserve or achieve any purpose set out in the city's Special Planning Program (SPP) for the city's southeast sector.

At the January 13 city council meeting,

Sohrab Alavi, the developer of 4000 Atwater (the current Resilience/former Miso/McDonald's site), had been asking the council about its timeline (see p. 19).

Moved by Councillor Gurveen Chadha at the February 3 meeting, the resolution was approved to include legal fees and expenses of \$20,695.50 for professional services from Bélanger Sauvé.

Not unanimous

While the council vote initially appeared headed for unanimity, District 1 Councillor Antonio D'Amico slowly raised in hand in opposition.

"I was surprised by the resolution," he later told the *Independent*. "It was my understanding that [this] power given to the city was an exceptional one, and that the optimal use be for an area, not for specific continued on p. 18

Lent has begun



Ensemble Bellechose director of music Haodong Ma, foreground left, and tenor Pierre Thibaudeau, to the immediate right, make introductory comments prior to a special Lenten concert given at St. Matthias' Anglican Church on the evening of February 21. See p. 3 for story. PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY.

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Work on Lorraine/Claremont, de Maisonneuve delayed

City completed about 70% of its 2025 capital projects for around \$26 million

BY JENNIFER BALL

The city is now able to disclose more information about which of its capital projects were and were not completed last year. When the *Independent* asked three months ago (see December 9, 2025, p. 4), this information was not yet available, as explained at the time by Julie Mandeville, the city's director general (chief unelected employee).

Mandeville can now say that of the 65 planned projects for 2025, the rate of completion was between 69 percent and 71 percent, which translates to \$25 million to \$27 million in spending.

Mandeville cautioned that the information she provided to the *Independent* on February 17 is unaudited: "These figures are very preliminary; our year-end audit is not completed yet and numbers may be differ- continued on p. 17

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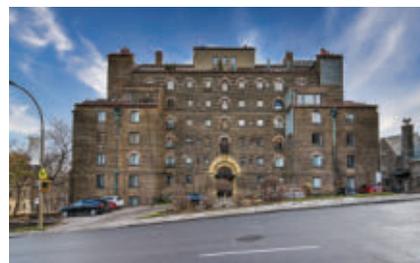
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Lent begins at St. Matthias' with Renaissance music

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The beginning of the Christian liturgical season of Lent was observed musically at St. Matthias' Anglican Church on the evening of February 21 with a concert by the Ensemble Bellechose featuring Renaissance music appropriate for a spiritual journey from darkness into light.

Since 2010 when it was founded, the Ensemble Bellechose chamber choir has

given two to three concerts every year, often with instrumentalists. The choir is led by director of music Haodong Ma. Among the singers are several Westmounters: Henry Olders and Oliver Coomes, both of whom sing bass, as well as Charmian Harvey and Mylène Francescon (alto) and Jessica Burpee (soprano).

According to program notes for the evening, Haodong's selections (which included works by Thomas Tallis, Claudio

Monteverdi, William Byrd and Heinrich Schütz) "not only had a personal significance for him but also suggests a path towards hope in today's troubled world."

Trained in music and voice in China and well as in Hungary, he is currently pursuing a doctorate in choral conducting at McGill University, where he is the chief conductor of the McGill University Chorus.

The ensemble's next concert, will be presented at 7:30 pm on Saturday, May 2, also at St. Matthias' Anglican Church.

See photo on p. 1.

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Westmount A-dog-tions, p. 17

Social Notes: Toy tea, p. 21



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Public security responds to home, man refuses hospitalization

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Public safety officers were called to a house on Stayner February 20 at 4:40 am for a man who had fallen and was unable to get up.

Responders found him seated on the floor bleeding from a deep cut over the

right eye, officials said. He had bruising on the hands and wrists as well. It was also reported that he had fallen two days earlier.

Urgences Santé subsequently attended, took charge and wanted to take the man to hospital but he refused. He was described as age 62.

We've got both kinds of snow – white and black



As seen on Victoria Ave. February 20.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



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Police Report

**A Valentine's Day miracle!
'Stolen' pick-up truck recovered**

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The owner of a mid-size pickup truck who thought it had been stolen from a parking spot on Dorchester Blvd. in Westmount probably breathed a sigh of relief after it was recovered a short distance away on Valentine's Day.

The owner reported to police at Station 12 on Stanton St. that his Toyota Tacoma

was missing around 6 pm on February 14. "It happens more often than a lot of people think," said Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit.

He said a significant number of car owners file stolen vehicle reports, only to discover later on that they had absent-mindedly forgotten where they parked in the first place.

Running delivery van stolen, recovered

A pizza delivery driver was recently fortunate enough to be able to recover his vehicle after it was stolen when he left it idling at the curb on an upper Westmount street on an especially cold day.

Describing the theft on Upper Belmont Ave. as more probably the spontaneous act of a "joyrider," Cst. Yigit said the driver had gone inside a dwelling to complete his delivery "and when he came out his car was no longer there."

Fortunately, the car was later found abandoned on Queen Mary Rd. in Montreal's Côte des Neiges/Snowdon neighbourhood.

According to Yigit, *continued on p. 22*

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Challenges: postal & transit strikes, street work

Centre Greene overcomes 2025's obstacles while cutting its expenses

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

In spite of significant challenges that employees and management at Centre Greene had to face last year, the Greene Ave. community centre was able to achieve savings on its operating expenses without compromising programs and services.

"The last few years in the world have been unpredictable," Michele Beacom, who chairs the Centre Greene board of directors, said during their annual general meeting on February 5. Still, Centre Greene "has weathered the storm well despite uncertainty," she added.

While noting that Centre Greene just celebrated its 35th anniversary, executive-director Heather Hodges confirmed in her annual report that last year was "one of the most impactful."

The year 2025 "asked a lot of us," she continued, with the first significant challenge coming early on and affecting the centre's budget planning.

A postal strike disrupted communication as well as donations during Centre Greene's most important time of year for receiving gifts, "making it harder to connect with our supporters and reach our fundraising goals," said Hodges.

Then, ongoing transit strikes made it difficult for many users of the centre's services and programs to actually get there.

Finally, from June through October last year, extensive construction, road closures and water service disruptions made Centre Greene extremely difficult to access, added Hodges, forcing many visitors to make detours just to reach the centre.

'We are on the other side of those challenges'

"These challenges came one after another and they were largely beyond our control.

"But I say this to you with certainty: We are on the other side of those challenges



Current and former Centre Greene board members are seen here with, from left under banner, Westmount city councillor Kathleen Kez (all in blue), board chair Michele Beacom (white jacket) and executive-director Heather Hodges (patterned top) February 5 during the annual general meeting.

now and the Greene Centre has come through them successfully."

Despite everything, Centre Greene "remained full" the whole time, according to Hodges. "Programs continued. People kept coming. And the demand for what we offer never slowed. It has somehow increased and continues to. That tells us something important."

In his report on finances for the fiscal year ending last August 31, Gerard Fellerath, the Centre Greene board's longtime treasurer, said all accounts were paid up to that date, while they continue to maintain contingency reserve funds equal to about half a year of operating expenses.

"Again this past year, there was no need

to dip into these reserves," he said, adding that prudent management actually resulted in a reduction of approximately four percent in operating expenses, "even during these inflationary times, with no reduction in programming."

Nonetheless, Fellerath confirmed what Hodges said about the impact of the Greene Ave. street construction. "There were impacts on programming and building usage, with a consequent impact on program and rental revenues," he said.

Impacts were also felt in the form of changes to government subsidies and reductions in support received from foundations, resulting in lower revenues.

The 2026 AGM was also marked by the departure of three board members: Peter Markovitz (who had been on the Centre Greene board since the beginning more than three decades ago); Gisele Murphy (known for her can-do approach to improving the building); and Christine Harkness (who always found beautiful bowls for the Empty Bowls table at the annual Treats and Treasures event).

There are three new board members: Robert Kriebel, Elysia Bryan-Baynes and Margot Nossal. Besides Beacom and Fellerath, the other board members are Suzanne Owen, Stephanie Malley, Jonathan Cheung, Harethuza Costa, Karine Limage, Nicola Pelly and Willem Westenberg.



Centre Greene's longtime treasurer Gerard Fellerath, right back, reads from his report on the centre's 2025 financial situation during the annual general meeting on February 5.

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GUEST COLUMN

Proposed Quebec constitution, limitation on public organizations' ability to challenge laws not good for Quebecers' rights

Editor's note: *This email was received by the Independent February 17. We are treating it like a press release and publishing almost all of it, as is, including its bilingual aspect. It may differ slightly from exactly what was said in person at the presentation by Sylvia Martin-Laforge, TALQ's director general, on February 17. The headline above and the subheads below were chosen by me. – DP.*

*

Below is TALQ's presentation to the National Assembly Committees on Institutions on Bill 1 which will be presented on Tuesday February 17, at 6:15 pm. Due to this late schedule, we wanted to share our comments with our media contacts in advance, knowing that there will be an interest in our position even with the late hour of our presentation. Please note the remarks will be presented bilingually. Please consult our website to view our brief. [...] Thank you.

Oral Presentation on Bill 1

[...] M. Bachand, M. le ministre, mesdames et messieurs les députés : Je suis accompagné par Me Marion Sandilands et il nous fait plaisir de pouvoir être devant vous aujourd'hui pour vous présenter quelques remarques en complémentarité à notre mémoire.

Cela aurait pu constituer une occasion historique de rassembler et de renforcer le Québec. Or, cette occasion a été manquée et, si ce projet de loi est adopté tel quel, le Québec en sortira affaibli. Il est possible de saisir ce qui aurait pu être en rappelant certaines déclarations marquantes – bien entendu remplacées dans leur contexte historique.

Inspiring quotations from prominent Québécois

Permettez-moi de citer quelques figures marquantes du Québec qui ont exprimé les valeurs et les aspirations que nous aimerions voir inscrites dans une constitution québécoise, mais qui, hélas, sont totalement absentes de la présente proposition.

Considérons, par exemple :

« 'Québécois', pour moi, signifie d'abord que nous acceptons d'emblée et sommes prêts à défendre... l'égalité devant la loi et les institutions de tous les citoyens du Québec... »

« 'Québécois' est un nom qui, pour

nous, unit tous ceux qui sont nés au Québec ou y vivent et il relie leurs diversités linguistiques, ethniques, culturelles, religieuses, géographiques et autres. C'est la marque d'appartenance à un peuple et à une terre et l'usage du mot Québécois ou "Québécois", deux mots équivalents, n'est d'aucune façon la propriété exclusive d'un seul groupe, encore moins d'un seul parti. »

Ou ces observations :

« ...la communauté anglophone est une richesse pour le Québec, une richesse à laquelle nous tenons. »

« ...nous voulons continuer à bâtir une société au sein de laquelle tous les citoyens sont des Québécois à part entière, qu'ils soient originaires de La Sarre ou de Dakar. »

Et, enfin, ceci :

« Le Québec est bien placé pour apprécier la diversité culturelle. Son identité est un heureux mélange de latinité, de francité et d'américanité... enrichi par des personnes de tous les pays qui font partie de notre patrimoine collectif. »

These unambiguous statements were made by, respectively:

René Lévesque, Pauline Marois and Lucien Bouchard.

What they shared, apart from a fierce pride in Quebec and a desire for its self-determination, was a recognition of the importance of diversity and the tolerance of others.

We find this spirit remarkably absent in Bill 1 – a proposed fundamental law of Quebec that chokes on notions of openness, generosity and tolerance; that, whether by inclusion or exclusion, defines the society it seeks to engineer as more of a monolith, where diversity is a detriment and a threat to one culture and one language.

Nous sommes attristés, mais nullement surpris. Ce projet de loi extrêmement préoccupant constitue l'aboutissement de l'agenda législatif désormais bien connu et profondément clivant du gouvernement actuel, que l'on retrouve notamment dans les projets de loi 21, 96, 40 et 84, ainsi que dans d'autres textes – des piliers législatifs sur lesquels repose la constitution proposée. Au cœur de cet agenda, et des lois qui en découlent, se trouve l'idée selon laquelle la seule manière de défendre et de promouvoir la langue et la culture françaises consiste à imposer des mesures qui portent atteinte aux droits de celles et ceux qui ne sont pas des francophones historiques.

Pitfalls, goals of a constitution

No constitution should erode responsible government, curtail judicial review, nor consolidate executive power to avoid accountability.

A constitution should serve the people, not the government.

Mais avec le projet de loi 1, nous sommes en présence d'une « constitution » qui nie la réalité des liens du Québec avec le reste du Canada, tout comme la place légitime de ses minorités au sein de la population.

Elle tourne le dos à l'importance de soumettre la législation à l'examen judiciaire, de même qu'à la valeur des droits fondamentaux individuels face aux droits collectifs de la majorité.

Concerning minorities, let me speak of our own. Bill 1 makes no mention of Quebec's English-speaking community's citizens, only a brief, tangential reference to its "institutions" – before going on to undermine some of the very institutions it promises to protect or value.

Where does the bill say the English-speaking community is being dealt with unfairly? The answer lies in these details.

The Autonomy Act would forbid school boards, universities, municipalities, professional orders, hospitals and more than 120 organizations from challenging government laws in court using public funds, as they now are able to do.

Les institutions les plus importantes associées à la communauté d'expression anglaise du Québec sont ses commissions scolaires, ses hôpitaux ainsi que ses universités et cégeps, dont la quasi-totalité dessert également, dans une large mesure, la population francophone.

En ce qui concerne les commissions scolaires, cette mesure serait contraire à l'article 23 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés, lequel reconnaît aux commissions scolaires un rôle et des fonctions de nature constitutionnelle. En les privant de la possibilité de contester devant les tribunaux des lois jugées inconstitutionnelles, on mine les droits à l'éducation des minorités garantis par la Constitution canadienne.

Il s'agit là d'une démarche dissuasive visant à décourager des organismes indépendants – dont certains constituent des institutions clés de la communauté d'expression anglaise du Québec – de défendre les droits des Québécoises et des Québécois devant les tribunaux.

Issue: 'Directives' against things 'prejudicial' to Quebec

The bill would also permit the government to issue wide-ranging "directives" against independent bodies in response to any federal initiative the provincial government decides would cause "prejudice" to Quebec.

Important institutions linked to the English-speaking community of Quebec would be caught in this net, too.

This bill also contains what amounts to a made-in-Quebec "notwithstanding clause" that declares a government can designate any legislation as crucial to the Quebec nation, making it exempt from judicial oversight. One can imagine just how many laws would be so designated to avoid judicial review.

Nous sommes encouragés de constater l'ampleur de l'opposition aux propositions du projet de loi 1, qu'elle provienne du Barreau du Québec, de représentants autochtones, d'organisations de défense des droits de la personne ou de nombreux autres acteurs, issus de milieux divers et appartenant aux deux principales communautés linguistiques.

Nous exhortons l'ensemble des partis représentés à l'Assemblée nationale à être à l'écoute des préoccupations exprimées par la population et à faire preuve du courage nécessaire pour adopter une vision du Québec plus large, plus généreuse et plus inclusive, dans laquelle chacune et chacun peut contribuer pleinement, avec la conviction profonde d'être reconnu comme citoyenne ou citoyen à part entière et bienvenu. Une vision qui s'inscrit dans la fière tradition québécoise.

For the people, please

A proper constitution must be by the people, for the people. Bill 1 is more by the government, for the government.

If it chooses to pursue a constitutional project, the government should launch a much broader process, including an independent legal review.

Il serait également souhaitable de se rappeler les objectifs et aspirations élevés que les grands leaders québécois évoqués plus haut ont défendus au fil des ans : promouvoir la tolérance, la diversité et la générosité, tout en respectant les principes les plus fondamentaux d'une démocratie participative moderne, dans laquelle les citoyennes, les citoyens et les organisations sont libres de contester l'action gouvernemen-

tale sans crainte de sanctions ou de représailles.

If the government aspires to craft a constitution enjoying widespread support, seeking input from a wider slice of Quebecers is essential.

Nous saluerions un changement de cap.

*

According to its website, Talking. Advocating. Living in Quebec. (TALQ): “exists to amplify the voices of Quebec’s English-speaking community and inspire action through dialogue, because change begins when we talk, listen, and show up together.” It was formerly the Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TIME TO TEST TANKS ON WESTMOUNT’S ROADS?

If you enjoy using Côte St. Antoine Rd., particularly between Argyle and Roslyn avenues, better get there soon as it will soon be impassable; now you will [only] suffer a mere broken rim, spring or shock.

It is a virtual tank-testing ground.

The new mayor of Montreal is showing genuine concern by onsite visits and prioritizing repairs.

It is time Westmount city council and mayor took a page out of her book.

ROBERT COWLING, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

AU REVOIR, SAQ WESTMOUNT CLIENTS



The SAQ on Sherbrooke St. near Victoria Ave. February 20.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the customers of the SAQ Westmount.

It was with a heavy heart that I left my duties as a wine consultant at this branch on February 21. Major changes to my schedule already in April will have sealed my desire to join my fiancée in the Eastern Townships.

When I look back over the last 10 years, one of the first things that comes to mind is how much you have made my work most enjoyable, and I can only be grateful for that. Many, many of you will be missed by me; life will have blessed me to meet you. Having arrived here, tears well up and words fail me.

By March, I will know my final destination and I will share it with my former colleagues who will be happy to inform you. Looking forward to meeting in Sher-

brooke, Magog or Stanstead.

With all my gratitude.

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Alexis Nihon seeks tenant to take Roasters' spot – Three restaurants to open in food court soon



The sign of the now-closed Roasters restaurant, as seen from Atwater Ave. February 16.

BY JENNIFER BALL

While three restaurants are set to open in the Alexis Nihon shopping centre's food court – called “bonap” – the Roasters restaurant at street level near Atwater closed at the end of 2025.

The shopping mall is located at 1500 Atwater Ave. It is mostly in Westmount between Atwater Ave., and Wood Ave., with the border between Westmount and Shaughnessy village in Montreal demarcating the mall's easterly border.

The company that owns Alexis Nihon is Cominar REIT. It owns and manages office, commercial and residential buildings, mainly in Quebec.

Mariline Galarneau, senior manager, leasing & retail at Cominar, stated on February 11, “We are in active discussions for a new concept or tenant [for the former Roaster's unit, which was a sports bar and restaurant]. We will keep you updated!”

Galarneau also explained, “Three new restaurants will join the bonap food court on the mezzanine level [namely:]

- Emilia: opening scheduled for late March, early April,
- Manchu Wok: opening planned for late March, early April,
- Roll'V: opening scheduled for mid-March.”

The *Independent* reported on the launch of bonap in its December 2, 2025 issue on p. 10.

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Residents have five time slots to choose from City renews agreement to access YMCA's indoor pool



The Westmount Y on February 20.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

BY JENNIFER BALL

At its February meeting, the city council renewed reserved and free swim times at the Westmount Y for Westmount residents through an agreement between the city and the YMCAs of Québec.

The Westmount Y is located at 4585 Sherbrooke and the building is owned and operated by the YMCAs of Québec. The "Westmount Y" is not an independent entity but a part of the YMCAs of Québec.

The expenditure of \$57,035, all taxes included, provides six hours of swimming time per week for a period of 50 weeks dur-

ing the year 2026.

Mayor Michael Stern said, at the February council meeting, "We do advertise this and it's a service that a lot of people do use. [I'm happy] we are able to offer that service [of reserved swimming] to our residents."

The following hours are offered to residents:

- Tuesday - 6:30 to 7:30 am (lap swim),
- Tuesday - 12:45 to 1:45 pm (Aqua-arthritis 65 years+),
- Friday - 10:25 to 11:25 am (family swim),
- Saturday - 2:00 to 3:30 pm (family swim),
- Sunday - 8:30 to 10 am (family swim).

Who's responsible for mailbox access after snowstorms?

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

During last week's freeze-thaw-freeze cycle, access to some of Canada Post's red mail boxes placed just off and slightly above the well-cleared public sidewalk were found to be surrounded by raised, icy build-ups of snow and ice.

As a result, the *Independent* asked city councillor and Public Works commissioner Jeff Shamie who exactly is responsible for providing safe access to these boxes: the city's Public Works or Canada Post?

Shamie explained that "while Public Works is responsible for clearing snow from municipal sidewalks, the city does not have an agreement with Canada Post to maintain or clear access to its mailboxes. Canada Post retains contractors to service and maintain its mailboxes and the surrounding areas, particularly in light of health and safety considerations for their employees.

"Canada Post," Shamie continued, "is responsible for ensuring that its mailboxes remain accessible. When postal employees encounter a mailbox that is inaccessible, they are expected to report the situation to their immediate supervisor so that appropriate follow-up can be arranged."

Neighbourly postie

Interestingly, however, one helpful passing postie doing door-to-door deliveries had an immediate solution recently when the *Independent's* reporter attempted in

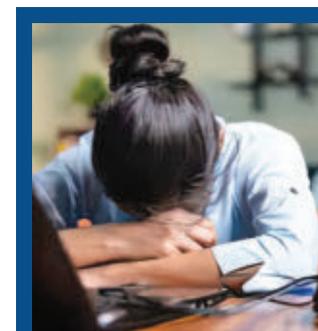


Snow and ice are not the only threats out there for mailboxes. This box on Victoria Ave. near York St. has sustained a strong blow to its lower/ballast section, as seen February 20.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

vain to reach far over the icy area to mail a letter: "Here, give it to me," the postie said. "It's slippery. I'll put it my truck!"

Officially, Canada Post states on its website: "For concerns related specifically to mailbox accessibility or maintenance, we invite you to contact Canada Post directly using the following link: www.canadapost-postescanada.ca/cpc/en/support.page#panel2-3"



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RE/MAX ACTION INC AGENCY – WESTMOUNT

Hockey player for January

Canelo Amalfitano sets strong leadership example for teammates

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

As a member of the Westmount Wings since 2019, Westmount Sports and Recreation's hockey player of the month for January Canelo Amalfitano has practically lived at the Westmount arena, says sports coordinator Kai Duenez, president of the Westmount Minor Hockey League.

"This season, he has helped lead a strong M13A [under 13] team currently competing for the division lead in the Eastern Hockey League in which Westmount plays," he says. "He not only works just as hard in practice as in games, setting a strong example for his teammates."

He describes Amalfitano as versatile on the ice, "playing skillfully both on forward and defence this season. But more important than his work on the ice has been the leadership skills he has developed and demonstrated. He has always put the team before himself and has shown the desire to do what's best to help the team win."

The Westmount Minor Hockey Association is "hoping he can continue to lead the team as the Wings enter the play-offs in March and compete for the title of Eastern Hockey League Champions."

Work ethic

Coach Dominic Plante adds that regarding Amalfitano's work ethic, attitude and versatility, "he plays as hard on forward as on defence with an aim of doing what is best for the team. He is a leader and an important member of our team."

We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am.

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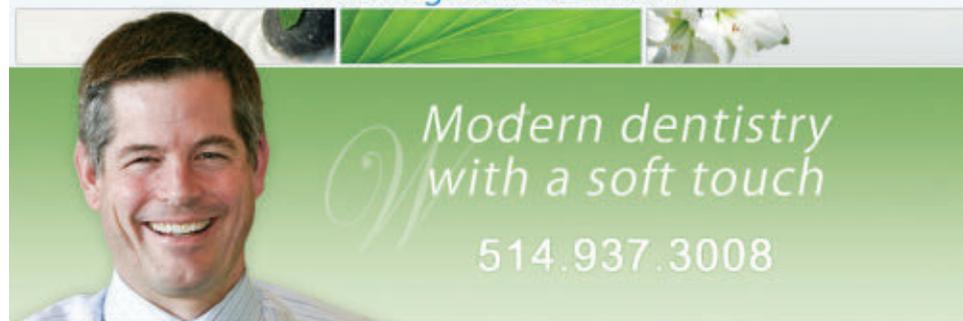
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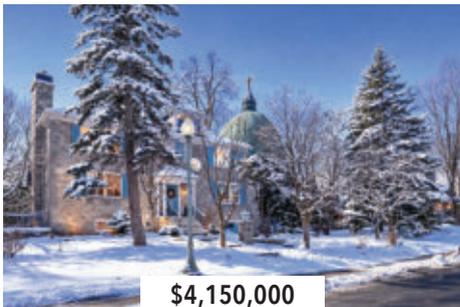
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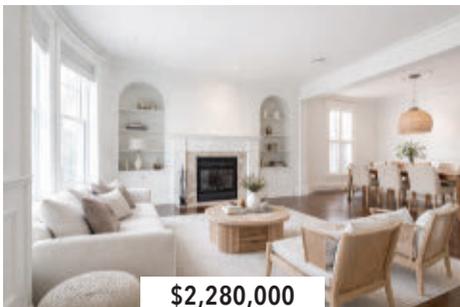
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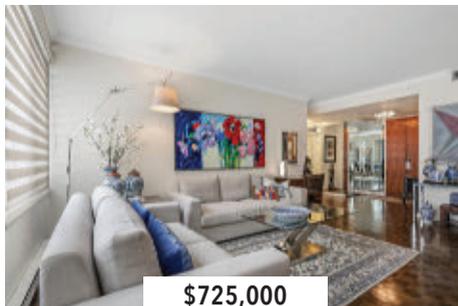
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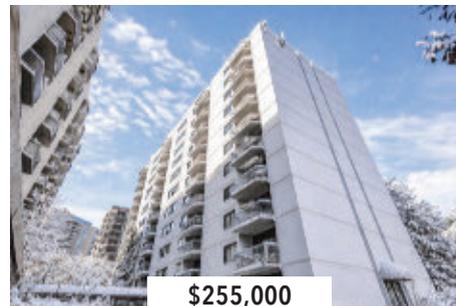
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MLS 28707205



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MLS 22155230



40 Ch. Belvedere, Westmount
\$6,950,000 - PRICE IMPROVEMENT
MLS 26753243

12 Av. Forden, Westmount
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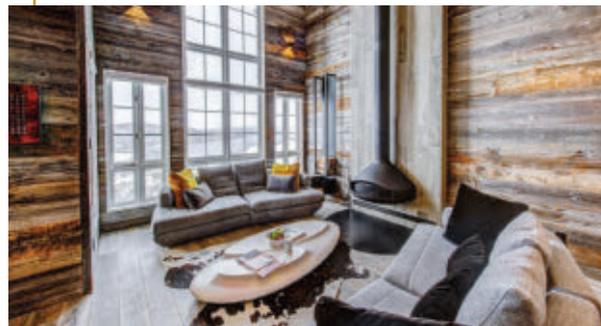


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MLS 25221904

164 Ch. des Sous-Bois, Apt. 4, Mont-Tremblant
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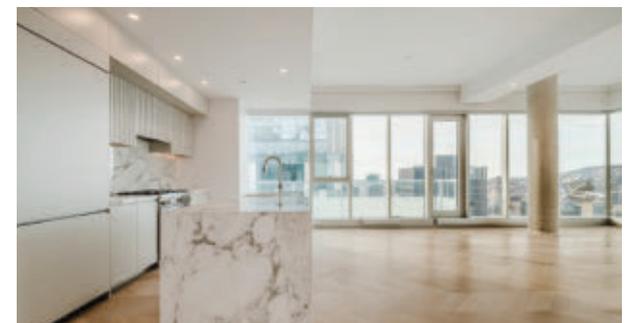


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Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

January sales: Low priced houses going fast

November was +7.6 percent, both with an equally low volume (seven in November, six in December).

Condos selling

As reported last month, most of the attention in the fourth quarter of 2025 involved condominiums, which logged 19 sales in a price range from \$375,000 to \$2,925,000, with an average mark-up over (2023) valuation of 1.7 percent.

The average of the 19 condo sales was \$1,259,600, two thirds of the average price for January's home sales.

On the other hand, January's condos numbered only one, so it would seem the interest has shifted sharply back to the one- and two-family homes, but we must wait for February and March sales to compare.

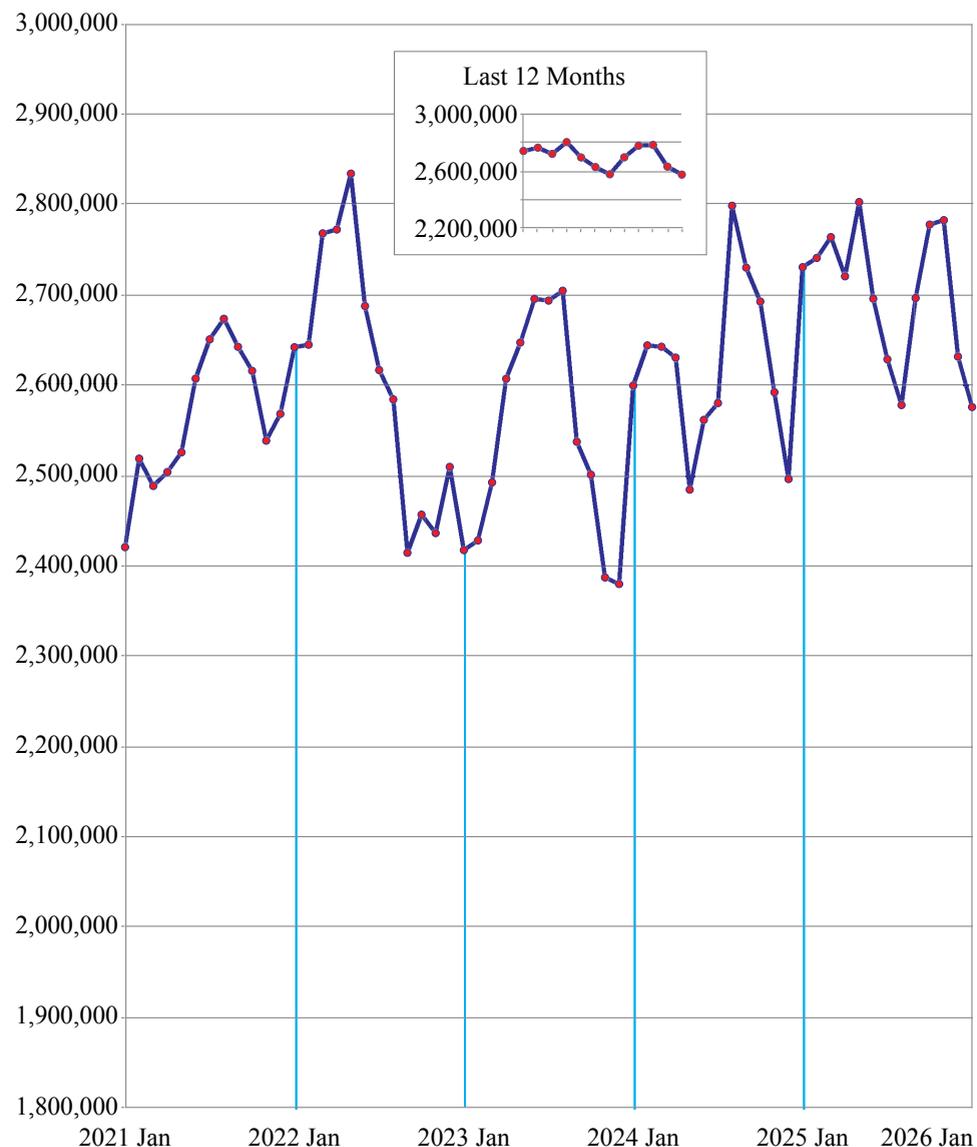
Adjacent

Two houses and a duplex sold in adjacent-Westmount areas in January, one just to the north of city limits on Victoria Ave., one to the west on Grey Ave. and one to the east, on Parkside Place near where The Boulevard meets Côte des Neiges Rd. The first two had double-digit markdowns from the 2026 valuations, the third slightly lower than the city assessment.

In 2025, the area just north of Westmount (to Queen Mary Rd.) had 24 sales averaging \$1,453,441; on the west side (from Northcliffe Ave. eastward) posted 21 sales averaging \$1,694,714; the Square Mile featured seven sales averaging \$1,525,714, and the Trafalgar-Daulac area between Côte des Neiges Rd./Mount Royal Park and the eastern city limits included nine sales averaging \$2,556,111, the best price: valuation average (among adjacent-Westmount areas) at 35.62 percent.

As the new year begins, there is a notable drop in the number of Westmount homes asking \$2 million or less: the lowest price for a Westmount single-family house is now \$1,549,000, and there are 45 listings at less than \$3 million. The number asking

Average adjusted price for 'typical' Westmount house, by month, January 2021 to January 2026, based on accepted offer dates



between \$3 and \$5 million jumped from 31 in December to 37 this month, and those asking more than \$5 million are up from 32 to 34, reaching up to \$21,800,000 for a top-of-the-mountain mansion.

So far this year only two houses have been rented by local agents, ranging from \$3,400 to \$7,500 per month. Last year agents posted 35 house rentals, ranging from \$3,500 to \$25,000 per month.

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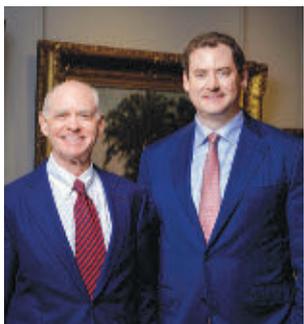
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NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL
MEETING

Tuesday, March 17



Taxes foncières 2026

En 2026, il sera désormais possible de régler le compte de taxes en trois versements sans intérêt. La date limite pour le premier versement est le 9 mars 2026. westmount.org/taxes



Property Taxes 2026

In 2026, property taxes may now be paid in three interest-free instalments. The deadline for the first instalment is March 9, 2026. westmount.org/taxes

La communauté de Westmount répond généreusement à l'appel !

Grâce aux résidents, plus de 40 trousseaux d'aide supplémentaires seront distribués aux personnes en situation d'itinérance lors des patrouilles. Merci à tous ceux qui ont contribué à la réussite de cette initiative ! westmount.org/actualites

Restez branché sur votre Ville !

La Ville communique sur plusieurs plateformes, vous permettant ainsi de choisir vos préférées pour rester connecté : inscrivez-vous aux notifications du Portail citoyen, abonnez-vous à l'infolettre ou suivez-nous sur les réseaux sociaux. westmount.org/restezbranche

Westmount's community responds generously!

Thanks to the generosity of Westmount residents, more than 40 additional care kits will be distributed to individuals experiencing homelessness during Public Safety patrols. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of this initiative! westmount.org/news

Stay informed, your way!

The City communicates across several platforms, allowing you to pick your favorites to stay connected: opt-in to notifications via Citizen Portal, subscribe to the newsletter or follow us on social media. westmount.org/tunein

Ateliers écoresponsables

Le mois dernier, près de 500 élèves de Westmount ont participé à des ateliers interactifs sur le tri des matières résiduelles, organisés par la Division de l'environnement de la Ville. westmount.org/actualites

Dépôts illégaux : éviter une amende !

La Ville rappelle aux résidents qu'il est strictement interdit de se débarrasser de tout résidu privé dans les poubelles publiques ou sur les espaces publics sous peine d'amende. westmount.org/actualites

Eco-friendly Workshops

Last month, nearly 500 Westmount students took part in interactive workshops on waste sorting, organized by the City's Environment Division. westmount.org/news

Illegal Dumping: Avoid a fine!

The City reminds residents that it is strictly prohibited to dispose of any private waste in public garbage cans or on public spaces under penalty of fines. westmount.org/news

BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

La Galerie du Victoria Hall : appel de dossiers 2026

Du 15 février au 15 avril, les artistes de Westmount sont invités à soumettre leur candidature pour la prochaine saison d'expositions ! Cet appel s'adresse aux artistes émergents, semi-professionnels ou établis résidant à Westmount. Les artistes sélectionnés se verront proposer une exposition solo ou de groupe à la Galerie pour la saison se tenant de septembre 2026 à août 2027. westmount.org/evenements



Ateliers d'écriture créative avec Louise Cauchon

Les mardis, 18 h, Bibliothèque. Participez aux ateliers du 17 mars au 7 avril et explorez l'écriture dans un cadre stimulant et convivial, inspirés par l'idée qu'un texte en appelle un autre. westlib.org

Concours littéraire créatif McEntyre

Jusqu'au 22 mars, Bibliothèque de Westmount. Participez au Concours littéraire créatif McEntyre 2026 autour du thème *Se trouver !* Que ce soit par une histoire, un poème ou un essai, exprimez votre vision de l'identité et de la communauté. Le concours s'adresse aux élèves du primaire et du secondaire qui fréquentent une école de Westmount, y résident ou sont abonnés à la Bibliothèque publique de Westmount. westlib.org

LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Gallery at Victoria Hall: Call for proposals 2026

From February 15 to April 15, Westmount artists are invited to submit their proposals for the next exhibition season! This call for proposals is open to emerging, semi-professional or established artists residing in Westmount. Selected artists will be offered a solo or group exhibition at the Gallery for the season beginning September 2026 to August 2027. westmount.org/events

Spring Break at the Library!

From March 2 to 13, find the 12 hidden images in the children's section and receive a prize.

March 4, 2 p.m., Westmount Room. Join us for family movie day and watch *Zootopia 2*. westlib.org

Irish Pub Quiz Night

March 12, 7 p.m., Victoria Hall. Celebrate St. Patrick's Day by testing your knowledge of Ireland at a fun and friendly pub quiz, whether you come with a team (max. 6) or on your own! Tickets: \$5 (one drink included). Prizes to be won and cash bar. westmount.org/events

Creative Writing Workshops with Louise Cauchon

Tuesdays at 6 p.m., Library. Join the workshops from March 17 to April 7 and explore writing in a friendly, inspiring environment, guided by the idea that one text leads to another. westlib.org

McEntyre Creative Writing Competition

Until March 22, Westmount Library. Join the 2026 McEntyre Creative Writing Contest on the theme *Finding Yourself!* Through a story, poem, or essay, explore identity and community in your own words. The contest is open to elementary and high school students who attend school in Westmount, live in Westmount, or are members of the Westmount Public Library. westlib.org





9 Lives

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On the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, you can refer to his information page from his identification number, A2000310149. Maple is available for visits at the kennel, where the adoption counselors will be telling you more about him and discussing your interest in adoption.

In planning your visit, please note that the SPCA is open every day, from Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, then Saturday

- The sources of funding (taxation, grants, contributions, etc.).

Late last year, Mandeville explained that the PTI represents an overall envelope and adjustments to the work schedule can occur for a variety of reasons, “for example, the absence of bids, bids coming in significantly higher than estimates, shifting priorities due to emergencies or capacity constraints. These factors can influence which projects advance within the approved envelope.”



and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm. It is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4.

Maple is waiting. Please consider him as a member of your family and a great addition to the canine circle in our neighbourhood.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

Capital projects, cont'd from p. 1

ent. Only a few projects are earmarked for completion in 2026 and the two largest projects that were not done in 2025 were:

- “Re-construction on sewer line on Maisonneuve (between Claremont and Prince Albert) for \$2.5M, work with city of Montreal. It was cancelled by the city of Montreal as a result of substantial budget reductions for their 2026 projects.
- “Re-construction of Claremont (Sherbrooke to NDG) and Lorraine for \$6M. [...] the project could not proceed in 2025 due to other major roadwork projects in the surrounding area (Claremont between Lorraine and Notre-Dame-de-

Grâce, and Sherbrooke between Claremont and Grosvenor). The scope of the deferred 2026 Lorraine and Claremont (between Lorraine and Sherbrooke) project includes a sewer main reconstruction segment on Lorraine Ave., which could not be integrated with the 2025 projects, as those were limited to asphalt re-surfacing and did not involve sewer-related interventions.”

The Programme triennal d’immobilisations (PTI) is Westmount’s three-year capital expenditures plan. It lays out:

- The infrastructure projects the city intends to carry out,
- The estimated cost of each project,
- The timeline (spread over three fiscal years),

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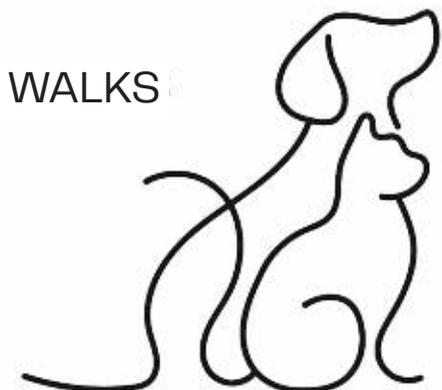
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email: awan.irshad@sympatico.ca



Looking east down St. Catherine St. from Wood Ave. towards Atwater on February 20. The buildings in the right foreground are not subject to the freeze. The ones in the right background, starting at the Bureau en Gros and running until Atwater, are.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

We are Westmount.

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SE project, cont'd from p. 1

lots. Also, the motion was not in line with my original vote on the SPP.”

This had been when he had voted against the project along with District 8 councillor Kathleen Kez and former District 2 councillor Elisabeth Roux (see story September 23, 2025, p. 1).

In urban planning, placing a “reserve” on a property typically means that a government authority has officially designated a piece of land to be set aside for specific public purposes, restricting or prohibiting private development on that land and acting as a legal restraint to ensure it serves the community such as parks, schools or infrastructure.

While such land is under “a reserve,” the owner cannot develop it in any way that conflicts with the designated public use.

Pleased with outcome

Among those attending the February council meeting was Westmount resident Alec Chamlian, who had run as an election candidate in District 8 against Kez. Cham-

lian told the council meeting that he was pleased with the position that Kez had long maintained that construction of tall buildings should not be allowed along the north of Dorchester, another part of the city’s SPP, but not the one targeted by this month’s legislation. The north side of Dorchester is largely, but not entirely, owned by the city via its Tupper parking lots.

Chamlian has been advocating for revitalization of the district and the impact it could have on the younger generation. “It’s all about making sure young people like me will be able to afford to live in Westmount,” noting that the city’s southeast sector has been “dormant” for the past half-century.

History of the project

Developing the southeast has been under discussion by three councils in different forms starting with former mayor Peter Trent. It was originally focused on residents of District 8 but eventually opened up to include all city residents with major public consultation sessions at Victoria Hall (see June 24, 2025, p. 26).

Alavi, developer of 4000 St. Catherine St., asks for timeline on southeast re-development

BY JENNIFER BALL

During the January 13 city council meeting, Westmounter Sohrab Alavi – who is the president of Atwater Real Estate Investments L.P., which purchased 4000 St. Catherine St., corner of Atwater Ave., in 2022 for \$6,500,000 – asked Mayor Michael Stern for a status and timeline update for the southeast revitalization.

Alavi's current tenant is Resilience Montreal but it is expected to move to its new premises at 780 Atwater when renovation there is complete. The St. Catherine building was previously used by the Miso restaurant and, before that, a McDonald's.

A zoning freeze was renewed in 2023 for the southeast in the zone where his building is located, hence Alavi's question to Mayor Stern.

New freeze enacted

About a month afterwards, council instituted a more specific freeze on just the St. Catherine St. lots, including 4000 St. Catherine (see p. 1).

"My partners and I have worked very closely with the city for the past four years to try to develop our site on the corner of St. Catherine and Atwater, and we remain fully committed to investing the time and resources needed to help revitalize that sector in collaboration with the city..."

"How committed is this new council and mayor to continue on this path and how much of a priority is it to get this going? There are developers such as myself who are now really willing to move ahead, and we need your support and full commitment to do so for the sake of Westmount and its citizens."

Mayor Stern said, "Part of our goal is to increase [stores] and housing [as this] helps us with revenue, which we need to improve the city infrastructure-wise. So, we're



4000 St. Catherine St., corner of Atwater Ave., where the day shelter Resilience Montreal currently operates. Photo taken on January 29.

very committed to that area [as it is] one of the few areas in the whole city where there is opportunity to grow."

Alavi pressed for a timeline, to which Mayor Stern replied, "We have to have a number of meetings which are scheduled over the next little while."

According to the Montreal business registry, Alavi is a developer and non-residential building operator. The *Independent* reached out to him by letter on January 23 to ask him what his plans are for the building and what impact the four-year development freeze has had. He did not respond in time for the *Independent's* print deadline.

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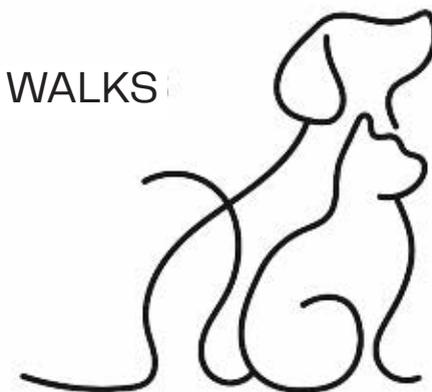
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Elizabeth Molson rides to fifth place at Royal Winter Fair



City Views

VERONICA REDGRAVE



▲Patrick Molson, Christine Kivenko, Elizabeth Molson and Candice Kivenko.

As a former rider (as well as participating in the Lake of Two Mountains Hunt, since you asked), I was interested in Elizabeth Molson's recent riding success.

The Westmounter placed fifth in the three-foot Children's Hunter Division at the 2025 Royal Winter Fair.

During the past summer, she competed in 12 horse shows in order to accumulate enough points to qualify for the fair.

During the winter, Elizabeth rides in Quebec and summers in Ottawa, training with Cheryl Lanctôt, Pépinière Stables in St. Lazare and Taylor Brooks, Fox & Oak Stables.

At the fair, the 15-year-old rode Rockefeller III; also 15 years of age .

The Grade 9 student at St. George's School was applauded by proud parents Christine and Patrick Molson, and her grandmother Candice Kivenko.



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Toy Tea marks 35 years of gathering toys for children at women's shelters



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

The 35th annual Toy Tea was a magnet for the festively stylish. Funds raised are used to purchase toys for 30 women's shelters. Holiday deliveries are made by Toy Team volunteers.

Among the many helpers was **Heidi Rackover**, who organized a team from Knight Pharmaceuticals to pack up the toys as per each shelter's needs.

Committee chair Toy Tea founder **Ginger Petty** was joined by committee members **Edward Miller, Sylvia Rourke, Laura Petty, Jessika Bertrand Fellner, Jessica Choueke, Mary Liistro Hebert, Annemarie Bertrand, Jill de Villafranca, Julie Mayne Minkoff and Daphne Shamie.**

It was held at the Mount Royal Club, the patrician building on Sherbrooke St. downtown housing a private social club.

The much-loved tea quickly sold out months in advance. Themed "Candy," the décor featured pretty pink balloons. Light from the club's turn-of-the-century stained glass windows added an ephemeral note to the holiday moment.

Styles were a masterclass in quiet luxury. No polyester here. Amidst tartans, cashmere and pearls, black also reigned.

Montreal's legendary broadcasting duo **Terry DiMonte and Ted Bird** introduced the school choirs, whose members sang



Ginger and Laura Petty with Santa.

holiday carols. Participating were Selwyn House School, LCC, The Study, Solomon Schechter, Saint-Clément Ouest and the EMSB.

Piper Major **Cameron Stevens** also cosplayed as Candy Man. Selfie-moment Santa was Canadian Grenadier Guards **Audley** *continued on p. 22*



Patricia Sikender, Fauzia Sikender and Sofia Moore.

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

Coley.

Ginger Petty is an honorary lieutenant-colonel with the Guards, two of whom greeted guests at the front door.

Guests noted included Belle Grivakis, Christine Kivenko Molson, Lisa Reitman, Sandra Cohen Rose, Sharon Rundle, Christina Miller, Susan Dabrowski, Andrea Usher Jones and Alfee Kaufmann.



Pipe Major Cameron Stevens.



After tea, it was down to the work of sorting. Front/middle row: Mary Hebert, Jill de Villafranca; Laura Petty, Liliana Di Stabile, Ginger Petty, Antonia Zannis and Heidi Rackover; back row: David Kostiuik and Alessandro Del Negro.

Police report cont'd from p. 4

the police often see surges in impulsive car thefts on days and nights when the temperature has plunged drastically.

“When it’s extremely cold, we see that happen quite often that people start their car, they go inside, and when they come out their car is no longer there,” he said, adding that the vehicle is typically found a few blocks away.

“Everybody is guilty of it,” he added. “They start their car and they wait inside because of the cold. Especially on mornings we see that.”

Shoplifting continues, this time by teens

In spite of efforts by police and business owners to boost store security, shoplifting continues to be a problem at some fashion boutiques along Sherbrooke St.

In one of the latest incidents reported to Station 12, members of a small group of teenagers were detained by the police on February 18 after merchandise was stolen from the Lululemon outlet at the corner of Prince Albert and Sherbrooke.

“This is something that we see quite often,” he said, noting that in other recent shoplifting incidents, groups of teens have gone into local fashion stores and walked

out with items they stashed in school bags or concealed beneath their clothing.

Because the detained suspects are minors, the police protocol requires that the parents be contacted and summoned to Station 12 to take custody.

Depending on the circumstances, according to Yigit, the police may recommend the intervention of officials from Quebec Youth Protection.

“If it’s a minor and it’s the first time and seems like it’s something that only happened once and the parents came down, we usually let it go,” he said.

“But a second time, we have no choice

but to submit a report to the Youth Protection. And then from there they decide what to do.”



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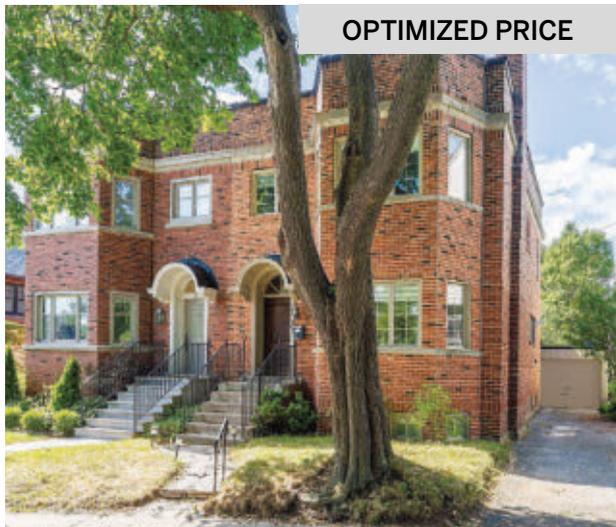
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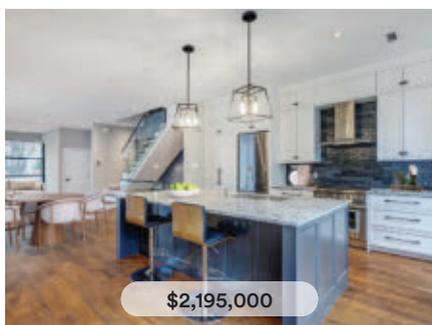
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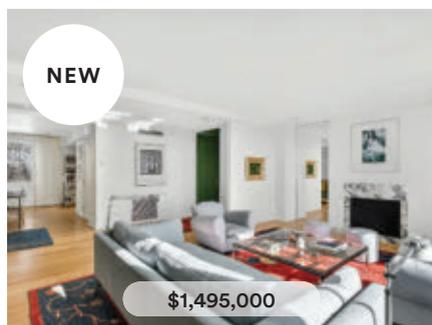
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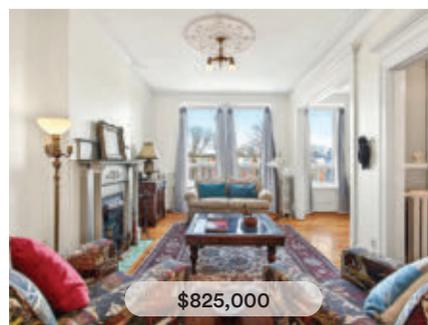
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