

Residents quiz council on YMCA, southeast Report on infrastructure expected in April: Mayor Stern

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Last week's city council meeting, March 17, the first after a six-week "spring break," attracted an unexpectedly large turnout. This was noted despite the very high winds, cold temperatures and icy sidewalks even alongside city hall.

With a long business agenda of some 46 items, the meeting was opened by Mayor Michael Stern with a "St. Paddy's Day" greeting, but noting he wasn't wearing "anything green." Both councillors Antonio D'Amico and Matt Aronson were absent.

In his own opening comments, the mayor reported that he and Councillor Jonathan Chomski had met with city "maintenance people" and asked for "a complete assessment of the city's plans for improving the maintenance protocol for roads,

water mains and sewers." That meant what was done when and where.

Looking forward in that respect, he explained that "while everything can't be done at the same time, we want to make sure it's done in a timely manner."

The amount of work required "will be expensive because [previously], no [other council] wanted to borrow," meaning that "we now have water mains 80 to 120 years old." The amount of work now required is budgeted at some \$15 million a year for the next three years," as previously predicted.

Questions on YMCA pool, southeast

Moving on to the question period, resident Lüsi Kirmoyan asked who had prepared the schedule for Westmount residents to be able to use the YMCA pool? The city *continued on p.8*

Flannery retires from Chez Nick, after 37 years



Andrew Flannery, seen here on March 18, has retired after 37 years' employment at Chez Nick's restaurant on Greene Ave. See p. 17 for story.

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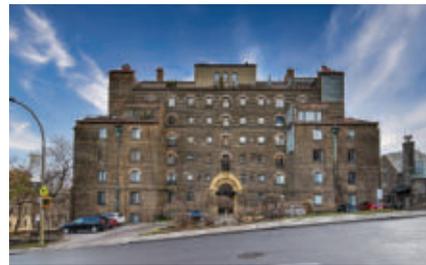


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Helmet broken but cyclist not injured in fall to avoid car door

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A cyclist fell in front of 4570 St. Catherine March 18 while trying to avoid hitting the door of parked car, Public Security officials said.

The incident had been spotted at 10:18 am and officers seated the man in the back seat of their patrol car but he stated he just wanted to go to work. The cyclist's helmet was broken, but serves as an "an example of how important it is for cyclists to wear one," said Kimberley Colquhoun, assistant Public Security director.

Emergency workers called when snow falls from roof of 376 Victoria

Melting snow fell from the roof of the building at 376 Victoria across from the Metro grocery store south of Sherbrooke March 13 at 12:10 pm, according to Public Security officials. Firefighters used an extension ladder to check out the roof after arrival at 12:33 pm. The sidewalk was blocked off on Victoria using danger tape at 12:40 pm.

Horses, police on the beat



As seen on de Maisonneuve at Wood Ave. on March 18, a spring-like day.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



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Police Report

Police detain suspect after alleged disturbance on Sherbrooke

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Officers from the Montreal police as well as Westmount Public Security converged outside a business at the corner of Sherbrooke St. and Claremont Ave. during the late morning of March 20 to detain a male suspect following a disturbance.

According to Station 12 community relations spokesperson Cst. Mike Yigit, a Westmount public safety officer (PSO) called the police after the suspect, who appeared to be in his 30s, caused a disturbance.

“A public security officer was on the street giving out tickets and the gentleman that was [later] arrested walked by and asked him for a cigarette,” said Yigit.

When the PSO replied that he hadn’t any, according to Yigit, the suspect took a bottle he was holding and smashed it on the ground.

After the PSO reported the incident to the dispatcher at Public Security and an attempt was made to approach the suspect again, he ran off and took refuge inside a Sherbrooke St. building, according to Cst. Yigit, adding that the police were called in at that point.

The suspect was later released and no



A male suspect was arrested during the late morning of March 20, but later released without being charged following a disturbance on Sherbrooke near Claremont reported by Westmount Public Security. Given that no charges have been laid, or will be, or will be proven in court, the *Independent* has chosen to obscure the face of the arrested man.

charges were filed after the PSO declined to submit a complaint, said Cst. Emmanuel Provencher, also a Station 12 community relations official.

Authorities: Indoor parking not necessarily safe

Police at Station 12 are warning car

owners not to be lulled into a false sense of security just because they park at an indoor garage.

This follows a pair of car break-ins last week in the garage at an apartment building at the corner of Sherbrooke St. and Atwater Ave., likely just outside of Westmount. *continued on p.5*



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Hockey Player of the Month for February**Stella West's bravery, composure benefit her goaltending**

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The "Westmount Wings are proud to recognize Stella West as our Player of the Month for February," said Westmount sports coordinator Alyssa Sherrard, president of the Westmount Minor Hockey Association, in presenting the M15 (under age 15) player to the *Independent*.

Not only is the nomination based on West's development as a player, but it is also the story of the growth of girls' hockey, she explains.

Her hockey "journey is a special one, and in many ways, it reflects the growth of girls' hockey here in Westmount," Sherrard says. "She first stepped onto the ice at just eight years old, playing in the M9 mixed category because at the time there simply weren't all-girls teams available locally.

"In those early years, she was learning and developing the fundamentals of the game, developing her hockey sense, and laying the foundation for an incredible journey that would unfold."

When enough girls had registered to form the Westmount Wings' first competitive M11 all-girls team, the team had a major challenge: "We didn't have a goaltender. Stella volunteered to try the position for a game and did an incredible job in the net. She showed natural instincts for the position: bravery, and composure well beyond her experience. She embraced the challenge without hesitation. It was a true calling."



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT SPORTS AND RECREATION.

West is described at that time as "pouring her energy into learning the position and improving her confidence and technique, and it paid off." In 2024, she earned a spot with the Lac St. Louis Warriors, an AA level regional team.

This season, she returned to the Wings at the M15A level, bringing her valuable

experience, confidence and a calm presence in net with her, Sherrard said. "Throughout the month of February, she delivered outstanding performances, making crucial saves at key moments and giving her team the confidence they needed in tight situations. Time and time again, she rose to the occasion, helping lead the

Wings through a successful stretch of the season."

Sherrard explained that West has become "a standout goaltender helping lead the Wings at the M15 level, her journey is inspiring for the next generation of young girls who are now discovering the sport. She is truly deserving of being recognized as 'Player of the Month.'"

Ready for the unexpected

Head coach Alexandre Leblanc agrees. "The goaltender position is one of the most demanding roles in hockey.

"It requires resilience, focus and the ability to perform under pressure. A team depends on their goalie to be ready for the unexpected, to make the save when it matters most. Stella West embraces that responsibility every time she steps onto the ice. She shows up prepared, focused and ready to give her best at every practice and every game, knowing how much her team relies on her."

Beyond her talent in net, he says, "she is known for her positive attitude, leadership, and strong work ethic. She is a supportive teammate who lifts others up and leads by example. Respected by her coaches and appreciated by everyone in the locker room, she brings dedication and determination to everything she does...She pushes herself to improve at practices and consistently demonstrates the qualities that make great athletes and great teammates."

Police report, cont'd from p. 4

According to incident reports filed at the Stanton St. station, two residents of the building parked their cars in the garage overnight from March 14-15. While one of the cars was broken into, the other was unlocked.

The perpetrator, who may have walked in through the main garage door, which may have been left open, stole a gym bag from the locked car after shattering one of the windows.

Although nothing was reported stolen from the unlocked car, it was evident the glove compartment had been searched.

While noting that many garage users are careful to close the garage door when they arrive or drive out, Cst. Yigit, said "not everybody is as vigilant," especially when using a shared facility.

Land Cruiser stolen

Besides car break-ins, Station 12 received a report regarding a vehicle that was stolen in Westmount last week.

On March 18, a Toyota Land Cruiser SUV was reported missing from a parking spot near the corner of de Maisonneuve Blvd. and Roslyn Ave.

There weren't any signs, such as broken glass on the ground, that the perpetrator had used force to enter the vehicle.

Although Land Cruisers do not appear on recent top-10 stolen car lists (the Toyota Highlander, Tundra and RAV4 do, however), SUVs in general "are very sought out" by professional car thieves, said Cst. Yigit.

Doc Martens stolen

A tenant at an apartment building on Kensington Ave. will probably be thinking twice the next time he's tempted to leave a pair of stylish Dr. Martens boots out on the fire escape.

"His boots got wet, so he left them outside to dry," said Cst. Yigit, regarding the theft reported to Station 12 on March 14. "When he went to get them in the morning they were gone," he added.

A sign of spring?

Icicles reaching from a car's mudguard down to the street – a situation that requires rapid swings in temperature. As seen on Prince Albert near York St. on March 19.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Guest column

Waste no time, Canada: Learn from others' economic policy successes

BY NICOLAS MATOSSIAN

About a year ago, *The New York Times* published an editorial article headlined: "Biden was a failure, Trump will be a disaster." We have lived the first part of this prediction and, unfortunately, are now experiencing the roll-out of the second part.

The world's widespread loss of trust in Trump and in his administration, together with the collapse of the USA's judicial and democratic guardrails, will deliver to the USA the most profound and costliest defeat that it will likely ever endure.

Trump tore up trade agreements negoti-

ated and signed by himself, ruptured long-term alliances, and then imposed punitive tariffs on more than 120 countries that he claimed were "taking advantage" of the US, relentlessly portraying the most powerful nation in the world as a serial victim of economic assault and battery by a list of countries – some of which do not have the GDP of Palm Beach.

The absurdity of this pretense and the multiple threats to US allies' territorial sovereignty are evidently not an attempt to balance trade and repair commercial inequities but a blatant declaration of economic warfare whose sole intent is to dam-

age and subjugate other economies.

This is not "America First" but "everybody else last." It is Trump's molded and patented deal-making "formula" applied to friend or foe, and never settled for less than a "I win...You lose" situation.

Trump's personal measure of success appears to be the extent of damage he can inflict upon others while reaping personal benefits. The misery wreaked on his own or any other people is fully justifiable as long as it improves his own balance sheet.

USA a pariah under Trump

To the rest of the world, Trump's US has become a rich and powerful pariah with whom you "have to" deal, but with whom you would rather not, and with all agreements or contracts concluded out of necessity or fear, but never out of mutual preference or respect.

Today, the negative economic consequences of unilaterally enforced tariffs may appear to be significant to the countries tariffed, but they are short term and will soon pale by comparison to the cost of isolation, distrust and enmity that will forever stick to the coattails of a country that has openly abdicated its responsibilities to the world.

Economic science indicates that the overall system will respond to shocks by making adjustments as necessary to gravitate towards a new equilibrium, an equilibrium largely guided by the principle of demand-and-supply reconfiguration, and by a re-calibrated investment market less and less reliant on the US and able to deal with global uncertainties as they surface.

MAGA is malleable

Whatever "Make America Great Again" (MAGA) means, it implies some past "greatness" in the USA's history, a greatness that has never been defined but can be perpetually re-modelled to justify any of the current administration's mercurial whims.

For one person, MAGA might invoke Trump's first term. For another, January 6. Or the presidency of Ronald Reagan? Eisenhower and the Marshall plan? The antebellum period, the Gold Rush, Woodstock, Jim Crow, etc. etc. It is the sword of Damocles hanging over friend and foe and as predictable as a roulette wheel.

By the same token, "America First" has become the oxymoron to MAGA: America, better known as the USA, became first by leading and not by trampling: "United we stand...." best depicts the US after World War II, through to the fall of the Soviet Union, when Pax Americana united the world under an economic umbrella that

brought many countries to a world market of growth and prosperity, with its greatest beneficiary being the USA, which rose to become the democratic beacon and economic leader of the world....

"Divided we fall" is what we are experiencing now as century-old alliances are fractured, decades of commercial agreements dissolved, and all loyalties and friendships dead or on ice. As trust and confidence are lost, the USA will wake up to realize it has suffered the fate of Humpty Dumpty, who "fell off a great wall and all the King's horses and all the King's men could not put Humpty Dumpty together again."

The US's loss of trust and credibility, its abandonment of civil commercial procedures, the demolition of the democratic guardrails, the corruption of the justice system, gags and threats to the media, and aggressive imperialistic actions have sent to all the clear message that you can be tomorrow's breakfast.

Strange new bedfellows

The resulting "rupture" and uncertainty make for strange new bed partners, as those who perceive to have a common enemy will unite, and we notice numerous countries, previously uninvolved, joining up taking steps to do damage control and avoid reliance on the US.

Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney has done an excellent job to quietly assert Canada's economic and political sovereignty and, one by one, has deflected or settled the worst threats, thereby reducing the potential of a catastrophic outcome.

What happens tomorrow? Nobody knows, except for one thing: Canada's government is woefully equipped to handle a sustained frontal attack on its economy, or on its sovereign wealth and territory, its political structure and national identity.

For most nations or individuals, Canada is perceived as massively wealthy, safeguarded by a functioning ethical democratic system, safe for business opportunities and offering a high quality of life.

For predatory nations or corporations, Canada appears weak, vulnerable and fragmented. For one, there is the balkanization of our nation, giving contradicting powers to 10 principalities (provinces), and then the oversized and obstructive role of minorities representing ethnic, language, legal or any other alleged "right."

Be sure there are many nations in the world today that have identified the cracks in the wall and are working to widen them, fomenting division and facilitating the pilfering of that visible low hanging fruit or the easy *continued on p. 7*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HERITAGE PROTECTION WITHOUT PROPORTIONALITY IS OBSTRUCTION

My husband and I moved to Westmount in 1999, purchasing our first home here. We have since moved twice – always within Westmount – and have acquired additional real estate investments in the city along the way. As a longtime resident and property owner, and as a real estate broker, I have encountered the city's Urban Planning department first hand – and have heard no shortage of similar stories from colleagues and clients along the way.

We recently applied to replace the rear windows of a Category II property. The existing windows are white aluminum – an uninspired 1970s retrofit with no heritage merit. Our proposal: black Pella windows matching the front of the house and the immediate neighbours. Straightforward, coherent, visually consistent.

The PAC [Planning Advisory Committee] disagreed. They objected to the black colour, citing a different house four doors away – while ignoring that every other window on our own property is black. They required us to abandon twin double-hung windows in favour of a 1912 original configuration, despite the rear of the house

having been substantially altered decades ago.

They rejected frosted glass for a rear bathroom and butler's staircase, insisting on "textured" glass to match the original design.

This is the rear of a Category II home. The city's own guidelines acknowledge that rear and secondary facades warrant more flexibility. That guidance was not applied here.

When I pushed back and copied our elected officials on the correspondence – as is entirely their right to be kept informed – the municipal machinery kicked into gear almost immediately. The email chain, which already involved three staff members (one too many for a window application...), suddenly expanded to five, including the director general!

I support heritage preservation. I have built my professional life around properties whose value is inseparable from Westmount's character. But protection without proportionality is not stewardship – it is obstruction. The PAC exists to exercise judgment, not to mechanically enforce rules without context. If judgment is not being applied, then the process needs to be examined – and soon.

MARY CALABRESE, SHERBROOKE ST.

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Guest column, cont'd from p. 6

conquest of our nation, including perhaps from within.

More than 50 years ago, the Arab OPEC nations put an embargo on oil export to the US and its allies for supporting Israel in the Yom Kippur War. This shortage lasted five months, quadrupled gas prices and put the economy in a tailspin.

It so happens that, at the outbreak, I was summoned by the federal government to elaborate a gas rationing allocation model for Canada. It took 30 days to complete but its main components were almost immediately implemented, namely: the federal control of all supply, domestic or imported, and the control and the re-allocation for domestic use only, in priority, to essential government functions, defense, civil security, communications, medical assistance, energy, transportation, food and water security, and so on.

Thanks to the cooperation of the private sector and to the government's overseeing of the entire supply and allocation of gasoline, the program was a success, preventing any disruption of essential services or price gouging, and minimizing shortages.

Strong federal government needed

And why was it a success? Because the inventory control was in the hands of one entity. The federal government was there to guarantee an equitable distribution favouring the continuous functioning of the country for the safety and benefit of all.

OPEC is a co-op of nations that controls its common supply for the overall benefit of its members, rations it for its benefit, in this case political, to control price stability and maximize the long-term value of their common inventory of reserves. The embargo was a departure from norms but obviously a means to an end that Arab members availed themselves of legitimately, and there was always the knowledge that OPEC had tremendous power over supply and could use that power accordingly.

The lesson that Canada seems to have learned is that it was able to act in a timely manner and diminish the impact of the embargo, and would be able to do the same in a similar future situation. *Oh, sooo wrong.....*

What was so important was to realize that a single NGO institution, OPEC, could curtail the supply of oil to the world, without any inside defection and deaf to the cries of the world's wealthiest nations affected by the embargo.

In today's transactional and treacherous economic wars, nothing surpasses a government's legal power to intervene on the supply side for the protection of the wealth of the people. The first rule of wealth man-

agement is the protection of capital and consequently the supervising of the national inventory of resources to ensure its proper allocation. Domestic use is the top priority, acquisition or stockpiling for national or economic security is the second one, then comes the allocation of supply to qualified or preferred buyers, and so on.

Government intervention in the supply process may never be needed for parties respecting the conventional norms of trade, however it must remain a deterrent to deviant and discriminatory practices. By the same token, rationing and quotas imposed on any national resource can be invoked at any time for national economic or security reasons. and the government retaining the right to stockpile and not sell: the economy keeps running, everybody keeps their jobs, and wealth is retained in the national inventory.

We haven't learned from OPEC

The US has attacked Canadian steel and aluminum production with unjustified predatory tariffs, yet it is buying oil, gas, potash, uranium etc. often at discounted prices!! Canada has pathetically failed to learn anything from the OPEC lesson of export quotas and rationing, which applies to all member countries, and in our case would apply to all resources and could make each one subject to allocation and rationing.

Stop blaming Trump. His MAGA and America First agenda are clear, his imperial aspirations explicit and his *modus operandi* well demonstrated. Blame our own government with the tit-for-tat item-by-item negotiations with our Balkanized royalties seeking separate indulgences. How embarrassing. With its attempts to have our national line-up of Caspar Milquetoasts appeal for decency and respect, all of this being indicative that, yes, we are that low-hanging fruit protected by a paper tiger.

These resources are our heritage and the wealth of our children and grandchildren, they don't belong to any government, individual or enterprise. The proper management of this wealth is the responsibility of our entrusted elected officials who unfortunately have forever chosen to use the wealth of our resources to finance their political agenda and are only too eager to dump or mismanage our non-renewable resources to fill deficits created for their benefit.

The OPEC model that brought disparate countries together was expected to be short lived, yet more than 50 years later, it remains one of the most successful market-control mechanisms, consistently presenting a united front to repel the assaults of the world's largest oil companies, all to the benefit of its members.

The availability of legal recourse by our government to impose a rationing/allocation model on any resource for reasons of economic security would provide the equivalent of an electric fence to ensure any neighbour remains a good neighbour.

When Trump increased his first tariffs, the People's Republic of China put a moratorium on the sale of certain critical minerals, saying it was prioritizing its production "for domestic purposes." This sent the US in a tailspin to negotiate tariffs down.... China did not stop mining and refining, it just kept the minerals in its inventory, and then increased prices....get the message.

The availability to invoke the "Rationing rationale" on any resource or commodity is a massive deterrent to any economic predator and the kind of good fence that makes for cautious neighbours.

Lastly, when trust evaporates and contractual civilities and legalities are replaced by larcenous aspirations that threaten economic or national security, it is time to stop "feeding the hand that bites you": with its likely departure from NATO and its repeated allusions to colonizing Canada and other territories, with its brazen takeover of other countries and their wealth by waging undeclared wars, a Trump-led US of A can no longer be regarded as an ally, or even a neutral neighbour.

It is appropriate to fence off our "supply" vegetable garden but foolish and negligent to leave the "demand" rose garden unprotected. Are we so desperately naive and foolish as to spend billions on US armaments such as fighter jets when we know that the seller retains the software codes to these aircraft? Are we so desperately needy and naive as to enter into an air-defense system that would be US made and jointly managed?

It is no longer improbable that such a purchase, if consumed, could end up as an act of treason, particularly in light of the current availability of substitute aircraft, or systems of equal quality, from France, Britain, Sweden, Australia, Germany etc...

There is a lot to be said about a manda-

tory "Buy Canadian" policy for many services and supplies, and better even to make our own. Necessity breeds initiatives and in the long run these make the country less dependent, safer, stabler and more efficient.

The trust of a handshake is long gone and will not likely be restored in a generation. Can we afford to delay putting in defense mechanisms that allow for an open and genuine relationship with honest traders but repels the predators?

I like the idea of a sturdy fence that gives a good hydro kick to whoever attempts to trespass and pocket that low-hanging fruit.

Waste no time, Canada.

Nicolas Matossian is a former Westmount city councillor. He has a PhD (Econ) from McGill University and an MBA from Harvard, and has been an economic advisor to the governments of Canada, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and BC, in addition to managing engineering and construction companies.

Previously, from the same columnist

"Canada needs a national resource plan, now" March 18, 2025, p. 9

"Canada's problem isn't trade or tariffs – It's leadership and policy" May 13, 2025, p. 8

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After city's analysis of services Council approves \$110,000-plus in community grants

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council at its meeting March 17 approved a total of \$110,200 in supporting grants to six community organizations that provide services to the community not offered by the city. This compares to \$98,000 provided last year to the same not-for-profits, as listed in parentheses.

Requests for the yearly grants are typically analyzed and recommended by the city's Library and Community Events department.

Man falls at Greene and de Maisonneuve

A man in his 80s was reported to have been transported to the Royal Victoria Hospital March 17 after falling at Greene and de Maisonneuve.

Public Security officers who responded at 10:15 an initially found the man bleeding from the back of the head and administered first aid.

While initially concerned about reports of the man's slightly blurry vision, they were told this related to a previous incident. - LS

Community organizations such as Contactivity that receive other benefits than grant money (such as the use of city facilities)

are "weighted" differently when it comes to the disbursement of grant funds. Moved on the recommendation of Council-

or Shawn Moss for 2026 and carried unanimously without comment were:

- Atwater Library and Computer Centre: to help with its operating costs, \$40,000 (\$37,500);
- The Greene Avenue Community Centre (Centre Greene): \$18,000 (\$13,500);
- Contactivity Centre, which now uses some of the city's facilities at Victoria Hall and the Westmount recreation centre (WRC) received \$40,000 (35,000);
- The Visual Arts Centre \$2,000 (\$6,000);
- The Westmount Battery \$2,000 (\$2,000);
- The Westmount Historical Association \$4,200 (\$2,500).



Lüsi Kirmoyan leads off question period at the council meeting March 17, asking about hours for Westmount residents at the Westmount YMCA pool.

Council cont'd from p. 1

rents certain time slots for its residents, who don't have to be members to use the facility then.

When she was told it was the administration (Westmount's term for its senior unelected employees), she persisted with the question even as a public safety officer approached to stand beside her. "Please sit down," the mayor said. "You're wasting our time, and I've told you multiple times."

Finally, city sports and recreation director Dave Lapointe - present at the meeting as substitute director-general - spoke up, saying he was the one who had made the decision on the times. Nevertheless, the questioner walked up to the council table with papers in hand, followed by a public safety officer.

Other questions included the timing of anticipated work on other streets, which would be listed on the city's website.

Another came from Alec Chamlian, a regular council attendee, in pursuing his ongoing interest in the city's southeast development project. He said he understood that some "parties" were moving forward in that project on possible development plans for the area (see also "City imposes freeze on development," February 24, p. 1).

Meeting paused

Once the business agenda continued, the meeting's proceedings were paused halfway through when council members adjourned to the adjacent committee room for some five minutes without explanation before returning to the council chamber to continue with the unusually long agenda. It was understood that the item they discussed involved a legal issue.

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Large group protests against Iranian regime



Starting just east of Westmount in Cabot Square on March 21, a group estimated by the *Independent* to comprise at least 1,000 anti-Iranian regime protestors headed east. Chants and posters asked for the return of the shah, to free up internet access, for Trump to MIGA (“Make Iran great again”) and to free women. One sign read: “for 47 years Iran has been a prison for women.” Loudspeakers echoed the chants for many blocks. There was a sea of Iranian flags but also flags of Israel, Canada, Quebec and the USA. Also in view was the Iranian flag with the lion. It is from the late Qajar and Pahlavi (shah) eras and is associated with the Iranian opposition. The Iranian government has strictly banned it from public use.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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Greene rail bridge stays in the news

Repairs done to early-warning system?



As previously reported, a northbound truck hit the newish I-beam barrier protecting rail bridge over Greene Ave. below Dorchester on February 23.

On March 10, the *Independent* noticed a worker at the early-warning system located just south of this point. It is designed to alert over-height trucks of the upcoming low height with a lighted panel or screen.

The *Independent* reached out the same day to the Canadian Pacific Kansas City railway (CPKC) to ask whether the early-warning system had been working on February 23 and whether it was in service in mid-March.

Spokesman Terry Cunha replied March 19, saying "I want to share that motorists are responsible for obeying rules on roadways and the signage installed by road authorities. The railroad bridge over Greene Ave. is marked with low-clearance signs and protected with an anti-collision beam. The bridge is inspected after such incidents." He did not answer whether the warning system had been working or not.

He also did not answer questions about whether rail traffic has been stopped by the recent strike (as had been the standard practice before the installation of the I-beam barrier) and whether the average number of strikes had gone down since September 2024 when the new system (early warning and barrier) had been completed.

Re-iterated questions sent March 19 were not returned by press time March 23. - WI.

◀Above left, a photograph taken at around 11 am on February 23 on Greene between Dorchester and St. Antoine just after the truck at right struck the new-ish barrier protecting the rail bridge. Left, a worker at the early-warning system south of the bridge on March 10.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.

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The power of pop-up brings Leibner back to Greene



Art

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Gallerist Mark Leibner has returned to Westmount.

He recently premiered a pop-up at 1346 Greene. For 10 years, his Galerie D'Este (at 1329 Greene) was a go-to destination for art lovers. Collectors then followed him to his gallery on St. Laurent, which closed after COVID.

"Today, I show online and at pop-up shows," he said recently.

His new show – *Canadian Masters and Contemporary Artists Pop-Up* – will be open until the end of March.

Do pass by. The blue-chip exhibit is fabulous. Mark shows internationally

famous artists such as Quebec icons Jean-Paul Lemieux, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Marcel Barbeau and Jean-Paul Jérôme. Their work is in museum collections. He places their works next to contemporary stars such as Daniel Barkley and Véronique La Perrière.

Mark offers something for everyone. Jérôme's colourful pieces sit beside Riopelle's black-and-white gestural works created for Galerie Lelong in Paris. MOMA in New York has an edition of the George Zimbel photograph exhibited. Daniel Barkley's Renaissance-inspired figures echo classical themes. Prints by Ludmila Armata suggest serenity in inky tones.

Stop by. Stay for a while. But hurry. It closes soon.

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Mark Leibner in front of works by Jean-Paul Riopelle.

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Art

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Anything Roman is in my DNA. Roman ruins were studied by my grandfather Sir Cyril Fox, director of the National Museum of Wales. In particular, he researched Hadrian's Wall, built by the Romans in northern England around 122 AD.

So, dear reader, bear with me while I tell you about one of the world's greatest influencers: the Romans.

In addition to all their other impactful accomplishments, they left another notable legacy: their art – specifically sculpture. An important private collection of ancient Roman marbles, the Torlonia Collection, just opened at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA).

Recently exhibited at the Louvre, in Canada it will only be shown at Montreal's MMFA. *The Torlonia Collection: Masterpieces of Roman Sculpture* is “an invitation to an aesthetic and archaeological discovery



Stéphane Aquin.

Roman statues travel to Montreal

of ancient wonders,” noted **Stéphane Aquin**, Rosy Foundation director MMFA.

Dating from the 5th century BC to the early 4th century AD, the ancient marbles tell a tale. Carved bas-reliefs show deities and mythological figures, part of that era's belief system. Carefully crafted statues and busts portray personas. Labels explain how the works mirror their time.

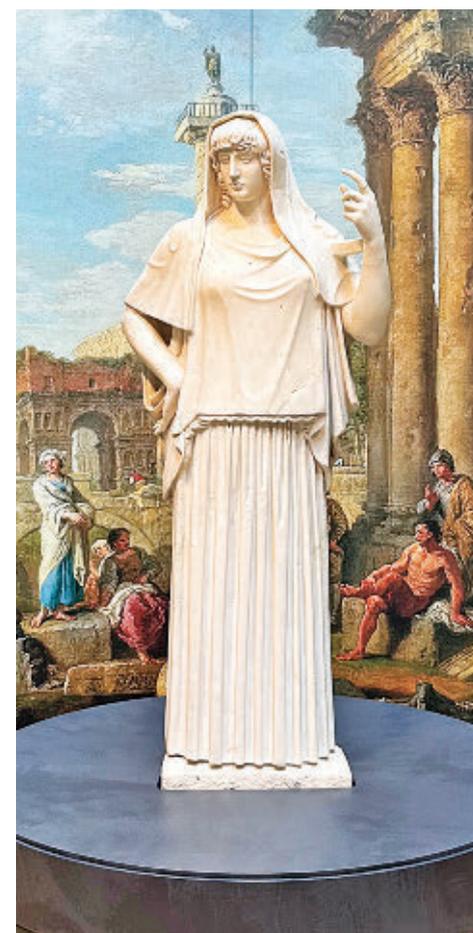
With the exception of a few grey-marble statues, the marble is white. However, the alabaster pieces were once brightly painted and traces of the original colours still remain. Stories are buried in time. The splendour remains.

Roman rulers' gaze still communicate strength. Leading figures, while recognizable, were idealized. Personas shape-shifted into symbols. The graceful harmony of Greek sculptural heritage was transformed into an imperial narrative signalling mastery and power. Background “settings” in some rooms suggest how the sculptures might have been displayed. In another gallery area, plain black walls starkly highlight a “population of statues.”

Curiously, I saw links with today. These ideal Roman portraits reminded me of social media's Photoshopped perfection. Today's self-promotional images flood social media. In Roman times, curated rulers' visibility travelled via another network: Roman roads.

Via the medium of sculpture, Roman marketing muscle spread the message: the supremacy of the empire. Instead of triggering trivia, turn off your phone. Revel in Roman grandeur and glory. Fame that might have slipped into a footnote were it not for the patronage of the Torlonia family: princes and bankers with a vision.

Present at the media launch were co-editors of the Torlonia Collection illustrat-



One of the most iconic works in the Torlonia Collection, the goddess known as the Hestia Giustiniani, the sole complete Roman replica known today of an original Greek bronze sculpture.

ed catalogue; **Mary-Dailey Desmarais**, the MMFA's chief curator; and **Laura Vigo**, curator Asian arts and archaeology and curator of the Montreal presentation of the Torlonia Collection.

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WUT? *Weird urban trash*



As seen on Sherbrooke near Mt. Stephen on March 19. A case for a musical instrument?

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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2026.03.24 • Vol. 7/06



NOUVELLES

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NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL
MEETING

Tuesday, April 14



Travaux d'infrastructures 2026

De mai à novembre, la Ville de Westmount effectuera des travaux pouvant affecter certaines propriétés. Veuillez informer la Ville de toute installation souterraine (entrée ou trottoir chauffant, irrigation, etc.).

westmount.org/travaux2026

Punaises de lit à la Bibliothèque

La Bibliothèque rouvrira officiellement au public dès que les experts auront validé la conformité des lieux, ce qui devrait avoir lieu dans la **première partie du mois d'avril**. La Ville remercie les citoyens pour leur patience pendant les mesures visant à assurer un environnement sain et accueillant. westlib.org

Le printemps à Westmount

Le printemps est arrivé! Profitez-en pour consulter les rappels sur les collectes, l'entretien des rues, les souffleuses à feuilles, les chiens au Bois Summit, les activités, et plus encore.

westmount.org/printemps

Tenue de registre :

règlement d'emprunt 1655

La Ville tiendra un registre les **24 et 25 mars**, de **9 h à 19 h**, à l'hôtel de ville, pour un règlement autorisant des dépenses et un emprunt de 10 415 000 \$ pour des travaux de voirie et d'Hydro Westmount sur la rue Sherbrooke.

westmount.org/actualites

Horaire de Pâques 2026

Les bureaux administratifs de la Ville, ainsi que Victoria Hall, seront fermés du vendredi 3 avril au lundi 6 avril, inclusivement.

westmount.org/evenements



Bed Bugs at the Library

The Library will officially reopen to the public once experts have confirmed that the premises meet standards, expected **in early April**. The City thanks residents for their patience while measures are taken to ensure a safe and welcoming environment. westlib.org

Spring in Westmount

Spring has officially arrived! Take this opportunity to look at the reminders on collections, street maintenance, leaf blowers, dogs in Summit Woods, activities, and more.

westmount.org/spring

Infrastructure Work 2026

From May to November, the City of Westmount will carry out work that may affect certain properties; please report any underground installations (heated driveways or sidewalks, irrigation systems, etc.).

westmount.org/2026works

Register Notice:

Borrowing by-law 1655

The City will hold a register on **March 24 and 25**, from **9 a.m. to 7 p.m.** at City Hall, for a by-law authorizing \$10,415,000 in spending and borrowing for roadwork and Hydro Westmount projects on Sherbrooke Street.

westmount.org/news

Easter Schedule 2026

The City's administrative offices, as well as Victoria Hall, will be closed from Friday, April 3 to Monday, April 6, inclusive. westmount.org/events

BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

5 à 7 à la Galerie

1 avril, 17 h, Galerie du Victoria Hall. Vous êtes invités à un 5 à 7 en compagnie des artistes Anaïs Létourneau-Berzi et Bernie Goulem, pour célébrer l'exposition *Corps signifiants*.

westmount.org/evenements

Concerts d'été

Jusqu'au 6 avril, les musiciens sont invités à soumettre leur candidature afin de participer à la série de concerts d'été qui se déroulent dans le parc Westmount les dimanches des mois de juillet et août. westmount.org/concertsdele

Artisans Westmount

Jusqu'au 7 avril, les artisans sont invités à soumettre leur candidature pour participer à l'édition 2026 d'Artisans Westmount. L'événement aura lieu au Victoria Hall les 14 et 15 novembre. westmount.org/artisans

La Galerie du Victoria Hall : appel de dossiers

Jusqu'au 15 avril, les artistes de Westmount sont invités à soumettre leur candidature pour la prochaine saison d'exposition de la Galerie. westmount.org/galerie



Collecte de Sang Héma-Québec

8 avril, 13 h 30, Victoria Hall. Donnez du sang et aidez à sauver des vies! Prenez rendez-vous avant de vous présenter à la collecte.

westmount.org/evenements

WestmountLittéraire

15 avril, 19 h, Salle Westmount. Rencontrez des auteurs d'ici lors d'une soirée littéraire mêlant lectures et discussions, avec Jennifer DeLeskie, Mikhail Iossel, Curtis McRae et Alice Zorn.

westlib.org

Club de films documentaires

29 avril, 19 h, Salle Westmount. Projection de courts documentaires anti-guerre, dont *Neighbours* (1956) et *Knights of Orlando* (2007), suivie d'une discussion avec la bibliothécaire Katherine Kasirer. westlib.org

LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

5 à 7 at the Gallery

April 1, 5 p.m., Gallery at Victoria Hall. Join us for an evening reception with artists Anaïs Létourneau-Berzi and Bernie Goulem to celebrate the exhibition *Meaningful Bodies*.

westmount.org/events

Summer Concerts

Until April 6, musicians are invited to submit their applications to participate in the Summer Concerts held in Westmount Park on Sundays in July and August.

westmount.org/summerconcerts

Artisans Westmount

Until April 7, artisans are invited to submit their applications to participate in the 2026 edition of Artisans Westmount. The event will take place at Victoria Hall on November 14 and 15.

westmount.org/artisans

The Gallery at Victoria Hall: Call for submissions

Until April 15, artists from Westmount are invited to submit their applications for the upcoming exhibition season at the Gallery at Victoria Hall. westmount.org/gallery

Héma-Québec Blood Drive

April 8, 1:30 p.m., Victoria Hall. Give blood and help save lives! Please make an appointment before attending the donation.

westmount.org/events

WestmountLit

April 15, 7 p.m., Westmount Room. Meet local authors for an evening of readings and discussions with Jennifer DeLeskie, Mikhail Iossel, Curtis McRae, and Alice Zorn.

westlib.org

Documentary Film Club

April 29, 7 p.m., Westmount Room. Screening of short anti-war documentaries, including *Neighbours* (1956) and *Knights of Orlando* (2007), followed by a discussion with librarian Katherine Kasirer. westlib.org



Famous patrons included Harvey Keitel

Chez Nick's Andrew Flannery retires after 37 years

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Having spent the past 37 years mostly behind the scenes at Chez Nick's, Andrew Flannery was a little reluctant to come out of the shadows and sit for an interview last week on the occasion of his retirement.

A jack-of-all-trades at Nick's since 1989 when he was hired by Rob Callard, Flannery, by his own telling, did almost everything at the beloved Greene Ave. eatery.

This involved opening up in the early morning hours, preparing for the breakfast and lunchtime crowds, occasional sandwich-making, taking phone orders, and working the cash register.

"Rob is the fundamental reason I've been here for 37 years," he said about Callard, who's been the restaurant's owner since 1995, although a transfer of ownership is under way (see "Previous owner Callard 'knows the right recipe': new owner Kyriakopoulos," August 27, 2024, p. 17).

Story starts at Royal Montreal

Flannery first met Callard at the Royal Montreal Golf Club where he had applied for a summer job and Callard was an assistant manager.

From there, Callard, who'd been working at Chez Nick's since the early 1980s, decided to take Flannery on at the Greene Ave. landmark. "I started working here when I was 19 years old, and the rest is history," said Flannery.

After nearly four decades overseeing much of the daily activity at Nick's, Flannery compares the ambience in the place to the atmosphere in the friendly neighbourhood bar portrayed in the 1980s TV situation comedy *Cheers*.

"It's kind of like that here. People who've been coming have been coming for years. All kinds of regular customers."

And the clientele has at times included some famous people.



Andrew Flannery, left, and Rob Callard in front of Nick's on Greene Ave.

Flannery recalled the time he was working behind the counter at the front when Ben Mulroney (who grew up in part in Westmount and was a regular at Nick's) got down on his knees by the cash register to propose marriage to Jessica Brownstein, another Westmount resident.

According to Flannery, Randy Quaid (who played Cousin Eddie in the series of National Lampoon *Vacation* films) was also known to pop in.

And Harvey Keitel, one of Hollywood director Martin Scorsese's consistent players, was also a customer. (Keitel's late mother-in-law was a member of Congregation Shaar Hashomayim.)

"One of my co-workers went up to him sitting at a table and nonchalantly asked, 'Say you look a lot like Harvey Keitel,'" Flannery said. "And he looked up and said, 'That's because I am Harvey Keitel.'"

Callard acknowledged he may be finding it difficult to replace an employee who was as dependable as Flannery all these years. "For sure, it's going to be a transition for us," he said. "Because we've been used to working with each other for more than 36 years."

See also photo on p. 1.

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Local firm buys Choice Homecare

Westmount-based Equinox Life Care expands to Ottawa

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

With an eye on establishing itself across Canada as the country enters a “super-aged” era, Westmount-based Equinox Life Care recently completed the opening phase of its anticipated expansion with the acquisition of a majority stake in Ontario-based Choice Homecare.

Currently one of Quebec’s leading providers of private home care assistance services, Equinox was founded in 1998 by Westmount resident Danielle Pollack, who is the company’s executive chair.

Choice Homecare’s core territory is in Ottawa. The acquisition is expected to increase Equinox’s size by around 50 percent, according to company CEO Jeremy Altman.

Although Equinox had previously acquired a homecare assistance provider in Quebec, Choice Homecare is its first acquisition outside the province. “This strategic alliance reinforces Equinox’s footprint in Canada as the company pursues its national growth plan,” Equinox said in a press release.

The company says the expansion comes at a critical time in the homecare sector. According to the findings of a January 2026



Equinox Life Care’s CEO Jeremy Altman is seen here on March 9 with a LifeCare Plus electronic unit for detecting, predicting and preventing health risks, which the company is distributing on its territory.

National Institute on Ageing report, Canada is now in a “super-aged” era, with seniors outnumbering children under 15.

Projections indicate that by 2030, one in four Canadians will be a senior – a shift that is outstripping the infrastructure for independent living. The strain is leading to a widening care gap, where 48 per cent of older adults requiring home-based sup-

port are currently unable to access it.

Seniors want to stay home

Equinox sees its strategic expansion as directly addressing a preference by 90 per cent of seniors who want to age at home, while alleviating a mounting pressure on the public healthcare system.

“For private home care in Montreal, we

are probably the top one – at least for the west part of the city,” Altman, who is also a Westmounter, said in an interview with the *Independent* at the company’s St. Catherine St. offices.

Although there are as many as a half-dozen large and smaller home care service providers in the Montreal region, many of them work closely in conjunction with the heavily-burdened public healthcare system.

Equinox, which has a workforce of more than 300 in-house nurses and caregivers, is one of the few dealing exclusively with a private clientele.

Altman was unequivocal about Equinox’s ambitions. “We want to be coast to coast,” he said, noting that as things are now, the company operates with a network of affiliated partners across Canada.

However, Altman said the company hoped to follow up the acquisition in Ottawa with others elsewhere in Canada, all the while maintaining Equinox’s established level of quality.

But he dismissed the possibility Equinox might develop a franchise model, as some have already done in home care services. “It’s not where we want to go,” said Altman.

Does Christmas ever end?



As seen on Prince Albert near Burton, left, and on Grosvenor above Westmount Ave. – on March 20!

Choinières, Felcarek started GFN in 2018

New ownership at ATMA Classique includes Westmounters

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

ATMA Classique, the most prominent of the remaining independent recorded classical music labels in Canada, has a trio of new owners with connections to Westmount.

Gabriel Felcarek and twin brothers Nicholas and Francis Choinière recently became ATMA Classique's new proprietors. Although they no longer live here, all three lived in Westmount at one point. (Felcarek was a candidate in the 2017 Westmount city council elections.)

The three entrepreneurs, who founded GFN Productions in 2018, have been presenting more than 100 large-scale symphonic concerts across Canada each year. Their acquisition of ATMA represents a further expansion of their interest in the Canadian classical music scene.

ATMA's scope

Started in 1994 by Johanne Goyette, ATMA Classique has a catalogue of 780 albums. Distributed in 25 countries, they

include dozens of new Canadian artists' recordings each year, renowned for their sound quality.

According to a press release announcing the deal, ATMA's parent company, Les Éditions Ad Litteram, as well as sister companies Studio Esplanade and Livetoune, will also come under the direction of the new owners.

In addition to bringing new energy to the label, they hope to continue ATMA Classique's mission, particularly the promotion of Quebec and Canadian artists on the international stage.

As part of the re-organization, Nicholas becomes ATMA Classique's general manager, Felcarek becomes president of Groupe Ad Litteram, and Francis will be artistic director. In the meantime, day-to-day operations remain under the management of the current team, according to the new owners.



▲ From left, Nicholas Choinière and Gabriel Felcarek, two of the three new owners of ATMA Classique, are seen here on March 9 in the doorway of their offices on Centre St. in Pointe St. Charles.

It's well-known in the recorded music industry that the classical segment accounts for just a small percentage of total sales (as low as 5 percent). However, classical fans are renowned for their loyalty and account for reliable and consistent classical music sales.

Apart from that, according to Felcarek, is classical's appeal to a worldwide market. "It's internationally distributed," he said.

According to Nicholas, ATMA signed an agreement a few months ago with Naxos Musical Group for worldwide distribution of ATMA's physical sales.

"We are working very hard on developing our online presence even more," he added. "We feel it will be up to us to generate content that's going to interest the public."

In Canada, we park hockey bags



Some places, they park bikes before entering a store. Here, we park our hockey bags. As seen outside the Lee dépanneur on Sherbrooke near Victoria on March 20.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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LYSANNE FOWLER

Tiny senior Milou for a home please



He is a small shih tzu-type, with such a lovely grey coat and soft dark eyes. Milou is presently at the Montreal SPCA kennel, and it would be best for him to be placed in the arms of family love as soon as possible.

A very healthy 14-year-old, he is up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. Precious little ones do very well in quietly affectionate homes, and Milou will fall into the daily routine very easily.

Please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, search for his in-

formation page from his identification number, 43727048, then plan your trip to visit him for adoption.

The shelter is open every day, from Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, then Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm. It is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4.

Milou is a wonderful little fellow, bright and active, loving and attentive. This is your chance to be a family to Milou, a dear little fellow who needs you.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Affectionate Tom



Handsome as can be and a stunning blue shorthair with mesmerizing green eyes, Tom is a wonderful companion and a dear cuddler. As you can see, his disposition is affectionate and interested.

He is presently at the Montreal SPCA cattery, where you can plan a visit and a conversation with the adoption coordinators. Tom is a very healthy eight-year-old, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

You can refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, then refer to Tom's information page from his identification number, 2000382888, to find out more about his sweet personality and his playfulness with toys and treats.

Please make plans to come by the shelter as it is open every day, from Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, then Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm. The SPCA is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4. The adoption coordinators will be pleased to discuss your interest and present Tom

to you for a visit. Do not hesitate, consider adopting Tom, for the sharing of unconditional love.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



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‘Dancing With the Shaars’ crowns winner, raises money to combat anti-Semitism



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

The Dancing With the Shaars fundraiser dazzled with entertainment and, of course, dancing! Community members and professional dancers competed for the coveted Mirrorball Trophy.

Westmount resident **Andrea Aisen** was the winner. Other competitors were mother-daughter team **Paige Bultz** and **Lauren Wise**, **Etty Bienstock**, **Robert Leopold** and **Perry Shak**.

Allyson Kassie and **Steven Karachinsky** were co-emcees. Guests were welcomed by **Rabbi Adam**.

Israeli Concordia student **Michael Eshayek**, co-founder of the StartUp Nation, the only Israel club on campus, gave an impactful speech and presented a compilation video showing anti-Semitism on campus.

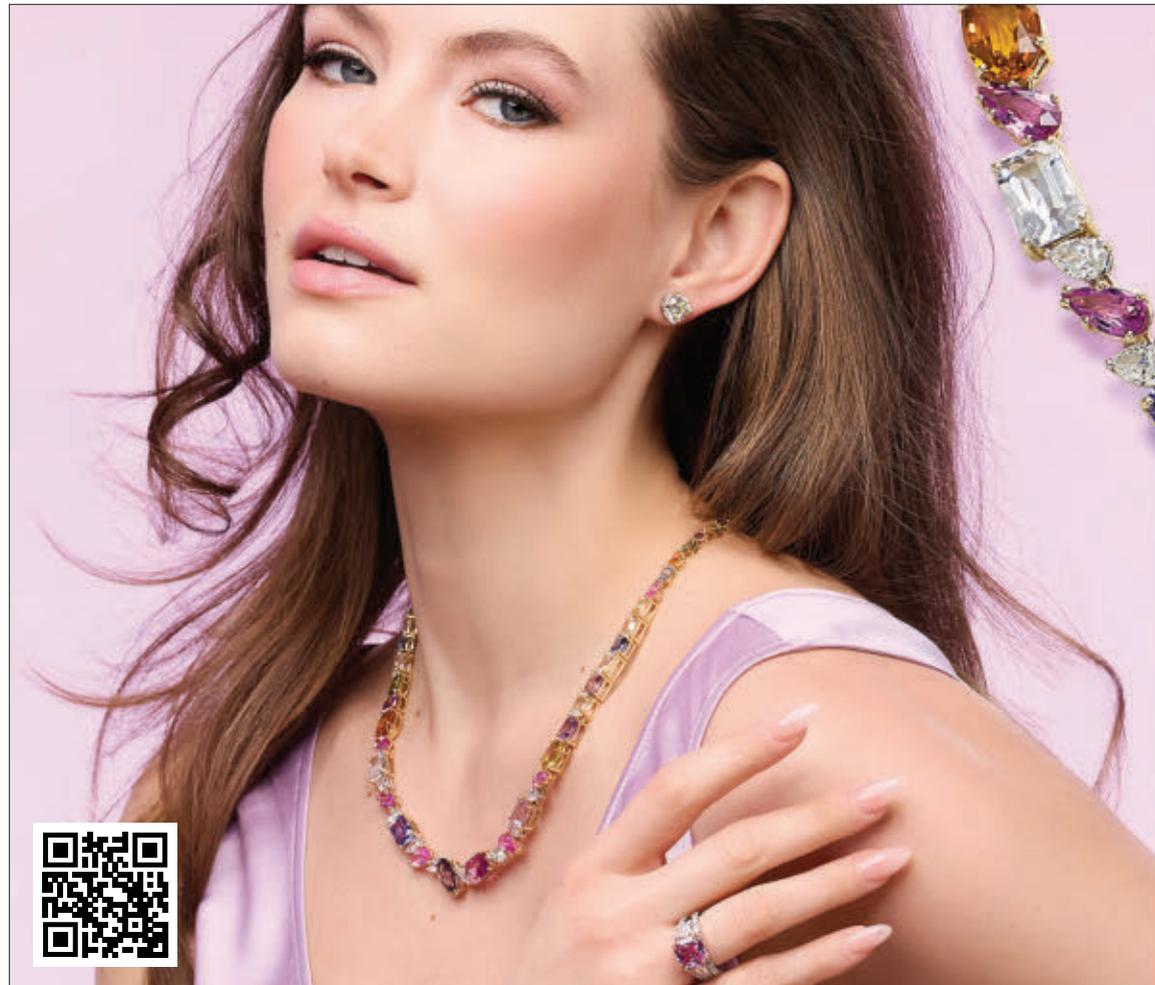
A portion of the event’s proceeds will go toward combating anti-Semitism at universities. *continued on p. 22*



Andy and Andrea Aisen.



Paul and Sharon Levine.



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Selena Paperman, Lisa Singer Miller and Lindsay Hollinger.



Carrie Mazoff, Heather Sokoloff and Rabba Abby Scheier.

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

Noted in the packed room were Ilana Galperin and Perry Shak, Andrea and Andy Aisen, Anna-Sue Greenberg, Lynn Kassie and Issie Weisglass, Heather and Joseph Paperman, Lindsay Hollinger, Sharon and Westmount city councillor Paul Levine, Joy and Jeff Bultz, Selena Paperman, Lisa Singer Miller and Heather Adelson.

Please send your upcoming event information to veronica@redgravepr.com for the Indie Spring Social Calendar.

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. Email us at: david@westmountindependent.com

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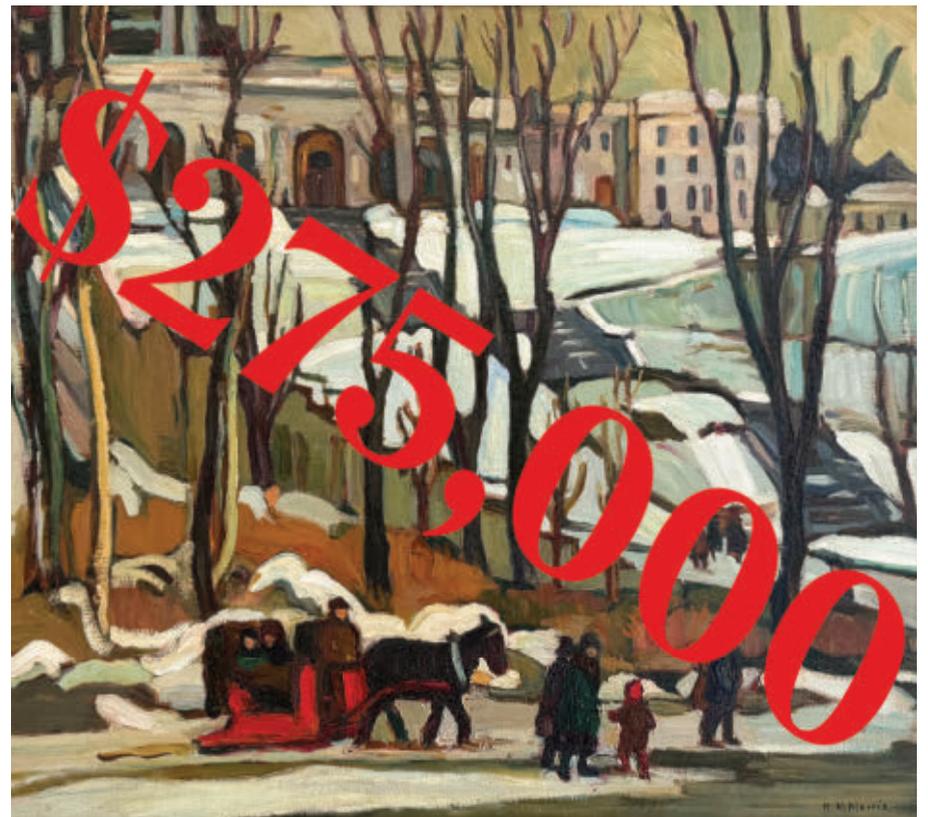
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Ernest Caven Atkins, *Hockey Melee (New York Americans vs Boston Bruins)*, 1941. 35 x 42 in.



Kathleen M. Morris, *St. Joseph's Oratory*. 24 x 30 in.



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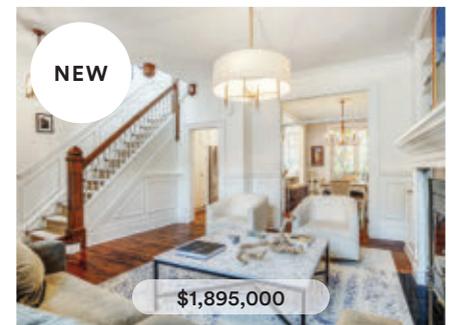
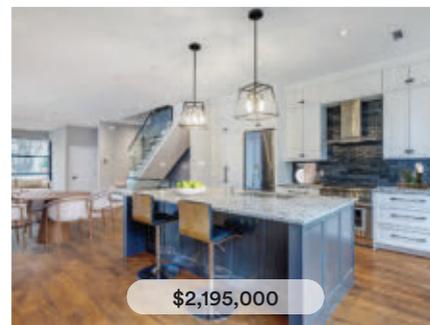
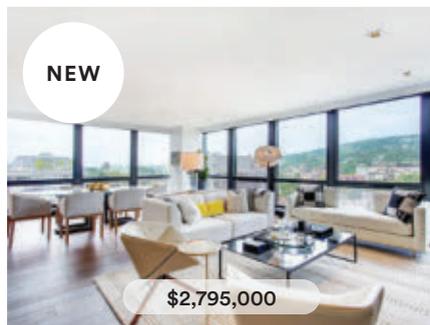
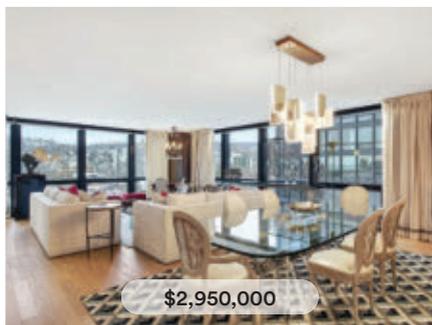
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