

Games, park train, bungee, pony rides

Family Day coming up May 30 for 49th year of carnival events

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

With what seems like finally the onset of spring comes news about the city's typically best-attended event, which can attract some 3,000 people. It's Family Day, taking place this year Saturday, May 30 in Westmount Park for the 49th year.

While most exhibits and activities take place on the main playing field south from Sherbrooke and Melville, information tables

from community organizations such as Contactivity, which includes their bake sale, are expected to be set up along the park's paths.

The daylong attractions are scheduled to kick off at 10 and 10:30 am with inflatable games, the Eurobungee, park-train and pony rides as well as a petting zoo and attractions such as those from police, fire and military units.

"We're looking forward to Family Day this year, especially considering we had to cancel last year due to the heavy rain," said Dave Lapointe, the city's director of culture, sports, recreation and social development, who also continues in his roles as the city's substitute director general and as substitute city clerk (see May 12, p. 1).

"The long-range forecast is looking good," he *continued on p. 3*

In this issue:

- **University Women's Club gears up for centenary, p. 18**
- **Women's Canadian Club holds final regular meeting, p. 19**

Let there be ducklings!



As seen May 19 in Westmount Park. "Welcome to the lagoon," said photo contributor Sam Beitel. For a duck rescue story, please see p. 16. PHOTO COURTESY OF S. BEITEL.

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Newcomers welcomed to spring at flower show

Volunteers cited for role in building city's 'human infrastructure'

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

The city's annual spring flower show was opened May 20 with recognition of the city's many volunteers and a welcome to newcomers, who had been invited to the traditional reception at Victoria Hall.

"I want to say a big thank-you to our extraordinary volunteers, who give so generously of their time and energy," said

Mayor Michael Stern. "You are the reason Westmount is such an exceptional place to live."

While currently talking about "the significant investments needed to maintain buildings and so on, we must not forget what I call the human infrastructure of our community," he explained.

"They build connections between neigh- *continued on p. 4*

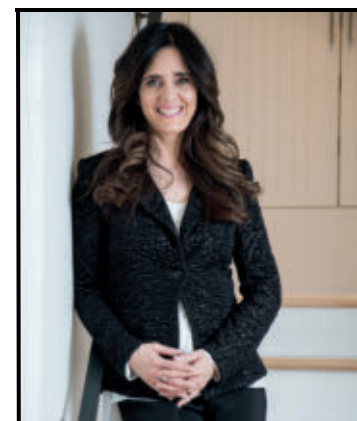
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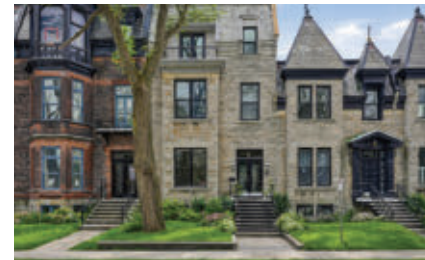
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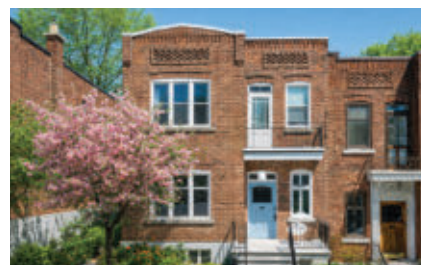
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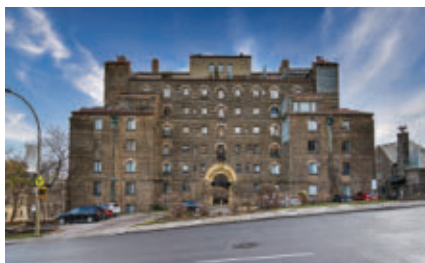
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Under-warranty car's battery catches fire on Belvedere Rd. near Côte des Neiges Rd.

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

Public Works called Public Security May 17 at 4 pm to report that a car had caught fire on Belvedere Rd. near the city's waste material depot close to Côte des Neiges Rd.

Reporting the incident, Public Security officials said a city employee assisted in putting out the fire. The car had been pulled over to the side of the road for safety.

Because the Ford Escape was still under warranty, the dealer sent a tow truck to remove it. While no damage was reported, the car was not driveable.

Fallen man assisted when key to home retrieved from lockbox

Public Security was able to go to the assistance of an elderly man who had fallen at home and was unable to get up, according to officials. The call to help the Westmount resident was received May 14 at 9:30 am through Telus Santé, a medical alert system to which the man subscribed.

This managed to notify Public Security to his need, enabling an officer to retrieve a key to the home from a lockbox, said assistant director Kim Colquhoun.

The man was helped to a chair, where he was examined and found to be able to stand by himself. It was determined that an ambulance was not needed.

The man was registered on Public

Security's vulnerable persons list, the second time recently in which this led to help for a Westmount resident.

City reaches out on Summit Woods



An information session on Summit Woods took place May 20 by Public Security and the city's forestry engineer Alberto Medeiros.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PUBLIC SECURITY.

Family Day, cont'd from p. 1

added, "so our fingers are crossed this will hold up."

New for this year is the Free Zone, he said. "This is what we had planned to implement last year but got rained out. This area will be dedicated as a free play area with various games available."

Check safety seats

Family Day also provides an opportunity to have a car's child safety seat checked out by Public Security for correct installation. This will take place on Melville Ave. alongside the park. From 11 am to 3 pm, Public Security will also hold its dunk tank.

Games over the lunch hour from 12:30 to 1:30 pm are scheduled to include egg toss, balloon toss and tug-of-war.

The traditional carnival booths open at 2 pm with tickets available from 1:30 to 4 pm. Food will be available for sale.

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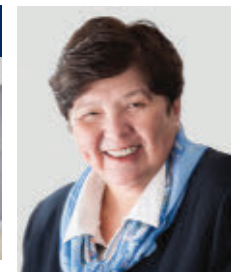
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From left, Public Works director Maxime Sauveur, one of the city officials serving wine at the city's spring flower show, and Natalie Ferrona Kuzyk of the Westmount Horticultural Society.



From left, Michele Beacom, Centre Greene board chair and new resident Julia Anderson.

Newcomers, cont'd from p. 1

bours, support community institutions and offer young people a sense of belonging and valuable guidance."

The city, the mayor added, "is full of smart, talented people and I am convinced

that our new residents will enrich the collective intelligence that will shape the future of Westmount."

He then quoted Sherry Anderson, Canadian curling and figure-skating champion, saying, "Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because

they're priceless."

He thanked new residents for "choosing Westmount" and invited them to meet the many members of the administration (senior unelected employees) whom he subsequently introduced, and were serving wine, as is tradition.

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Westmount mayor halts decisive Stanley Cup match!

GUEST COLUMN BY MATT ARONSON

In scenes of unparalleled drama not witnessed in the annals of Canadian sport, the second game of a Stanley Cup challenge series, between Montreal and Winnipeg, was brought to an abrupt and sensational conclusion when the mayor of Westmount, invoking the full dignity of his office, ordered a halt to proceedings at the stroke of midnight, declaring that no match, however consequential to the dominion's sporting honour, would profane the Lord's Day within his jurisdiction.

The date was Saturday, January 31, 1903.

The venue was the Montreal Arena, known to its regulars as the Westmount Arena, a building whose address at the northeast corner of St. Catherine St. and Wood Ave. is today occupied by the luxury

condominium tower at 1 Wood.

The arena had opened on New Year's Eve 1898, barely four years before the events described here, and was already the foremost hockey venue in the nation. A two-storey brick-faced structure of wood and steel, its pitched roof and three sets of round-arched entrances, with the word "Arena" emblazoned above the central doors, announced its purpose without ambiguity.

Inside, steel trusses arched over an ice surface unlike any previously built.

The playing area's corners were rounded rather than squared off, a novel design that allowed a puck to be shot along the outer rim, slide through the curve behind the net and emerge on the far side.

The arena is credited as the first rink in Canada built specifically to accommodate

hockey. It seated 4,300, held perhaps 10,000 in all, offered a refreshment buffet, smoking rooms and rental "rugs" for 10 cents.

On the night of January 31, 1903, a crowd had packed the arena to capacity and beyond, and was about to witness something new that has not happened since in Stanley Cup history.

Montreal starts ahead in series

The series had opened two nights earlier in thoroughly unsatisfying fashion, for the Winnipeg Victorias at any rate. The Montreal Hockey Club dispatched the challengers by eight goals to one on January 29, suggesting the cup was unlikely to leave the island. (The series was composed of three games.)

Saturday's affair bore no resemblance whatsoever to that débâcle. The Winnipeg men arrived transformed, and their play from the opening face-off drew considerably stronger murmurs from the crowd than their white dressing gowns had.

Montreal led 2-0 going into the final stretch, but Winnipeg rallied to tie it with two quick goals, sending the match into overtime. The two sides fought on for 27 minutes without resolution. A broken collarbone for Montreal winger Jimmy Gardner, sustained in a checking incident with Winnipeg's Billy Keane, did nothing to diminish the heat of play.

Then the clock struck midnight.

Mayor William Douw Lighthall – in one of his last official acts before turning the mayoralty over to his successor, Alexander S.G. Cross, just weeks later – exercised his authority without hesitation.

The match was stopped.

The Westmount by-law was clear: no commercial activity within the city on the Lord's Day, and a paid-admission hockey

match qualified beyond argument. Players from both clubs retired to their dressing rooms. Whether the capacity crowd's reaction could be described as supportive of the mayor's position is a matter of some delicacy.

Meeting of Stanley Cup trustees held

The following morning, on the very Sunday whose sanctity had occasioned the stoppage, Charles Chitty of the Montreal Hockey Club; A.B. Code, president of the Manitoba Northwest Hockey League and acting on behalf of the Winnipeg side; and referee Percy Quinn boarded the early train for Ottawa to lay the matter before the Stanley Cup trustees, Messrs. P.D. Ross and Sheriff John Sweetland.

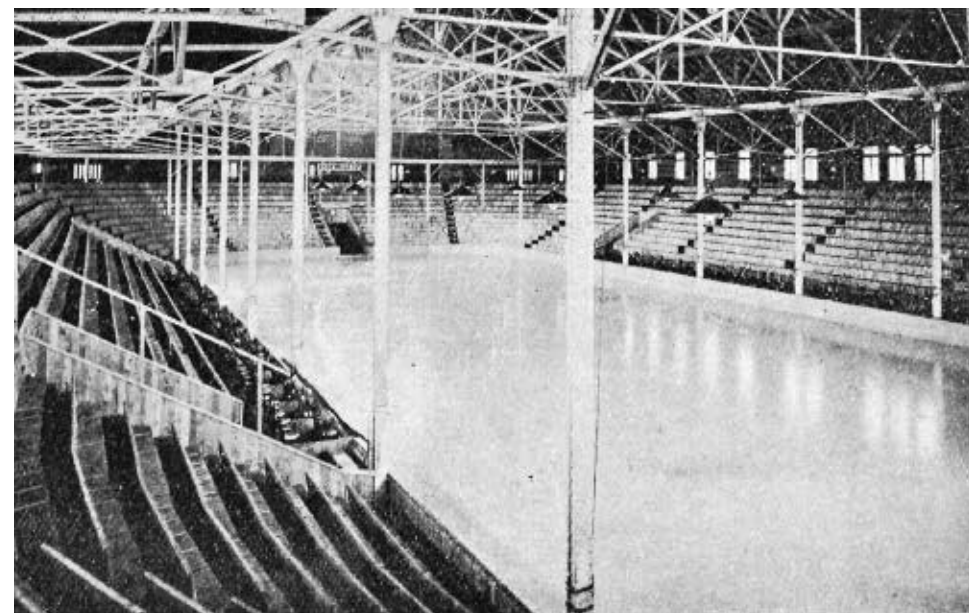
The trustees' deliberations were elaborate and not entirely tidy. Their first ruling, that whichever club scored first when play resumed would be declared the winner of the tied game, was abandoned upon the practical observation that no ticket-buyer would pay to attend a contest that might conclude after a single goal. A second scheme was also discarded.

The final determination was this: Saturday's game would stand as a draw, and the teams would play a full third contest on Monday, February 2. A Winnipeg victory would force a fourth and deciding match on Wednesday the fourth.

Game three, and four

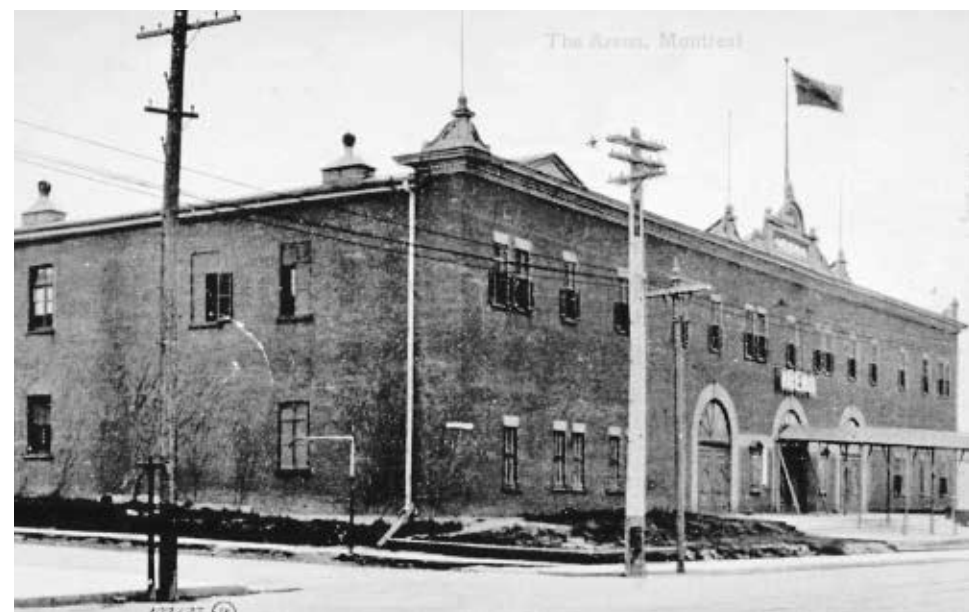
Game three drew even more people to the arena, with hundreds more turned away, and Winnipeg won it 4-2. Montreal won the decisive fourth game on February 4 by a score of 4-1, retaining the Stanley Cup.

History notes, with some wistfulness on Winnipeg's behalf, that had the trustees' orig- *continued on p. 6*



Interior of Montreal Arena, 1899.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.



Exterior of the Montreal Arena

PHOTO COURTESY OF TORONTO STAR.



Montreal Arena fire, 1918.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MCCORD MUSEUM.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK



CHARLES ANDERSON, GREENE AVE.

REALITY TRUMPS EXPENSIVE VISION



Westmount's main thoroughfare [de Maisonneuve] again re-cast as a temporary taxpayer-funded leisure lounge.

More than \$75,000 was spent in its first year (2022). Traffic frustration, toppled planters and constant maintenance compete with the city's curated vision of street-side civility amid persistent public disorder.

No reason to feel proud or safe.

NATASHA ARORA, WOOD AVE.

MORE THANK-YOUS

My heartfelt thanks to my daughter, Aline Zafirian, for inviting my friends and for beautifully gathering the photos and videos of the [Paul Harris/Rotary award] ceremony; and to my neighbour, Aletha Thompson, for inviting my fellow tenants (see May 4, p. 1).

Your kindness and support made this celebration truly special.

VIVIANE AGIA, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

Tap opened, left on



On May 16 at 8 am, an external McDonald's tap at the Alexis Nihon shopping centre on Atwater Ave. was turned on and left on. Doing so requires a special tool. The purpose of this outlet would appear to be to hook up hoses for sidewalk washing, and water indeed gushed onto the sidewalk.

PHOTO: JENNIFER BALL.

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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Stanley Cup, cont'd from p. 5

inal ruling held, the Victorias would likely have been declared winners of the January 31 game: it was Winnipeg that scored first when play resumed, and they won that match too.

The mayor's intervention, in other words, may well have saved the Stanley Cup for Montreal.

The Westmount Arena that witnessed all of this is long gone. It burned to the ground on January 2, 1918. The site at St. Catherine and Wood is now home to some of the most expensive real estate in the province.

But on a Saturday night in January 1903, 4,520 people packed its smoking rooms and rental-rug seats to watch a Stanley Cup match ended not by a goal, but by the sound of a clock and the word of a mayor.

No other mayor has had the tenacity, or the audacity, depending on your point of view, to defy Lord Stanley since.

Once, and only once: Westmount, 1903.

The author thanks the Westmount Historical Association for its encouragement.

Marianopolis' Iny to represent province at national science fair

BY JENNIFER BALL

Westmount resident and Marianopolis College student Sophie Iny – who is in her first year of the CEGEP's health science program – is representing Quebec at the Canada-wide science fair May 23 to 30 after winning the Quebec-wide Super Exposciences fair. Her entry was picked for the Premier Prix Hydro-Québec as best overall project.

It focusses on Spinocerebellar Ataxia Type 27B (SCA27B), a rare disease that has rapidly become recognized as one of the most frequent causes of late-onset cerebellar ataxia (lack of muscle coordination) in adults, including in French-Canadian cohorts.

The *Independent* asked Iny on May 13 what she wanted to uncover with her research into SCA27B, which is an autosomal dominant neurogenetic disorder. She said, "The limitations and the potential that comes with rare disease research in general."

Other examples of autosomal dominant neurogenetic disorders are:

- Huntington's disease, which is caused by a CAG repeat expansion in the HTT gene,
- Spinocerebellar ataxias (SCAs) – which has several types, including SCA27B – follow autosomal dominant inheritance,
- Neurofibromatosis type 1 causes nerve-related tumours,
- Tuberous sclerosis complex affects the brain, skin and other organs.

The SCA27B disorder is relevant to her because her grandfather suffers from it and according to Iny, "One in 10 people



Sophie Iny on May 14 outside the Westmount Public Library.

have some kind of rare disease so when we're talking about things like discovering new medications or finding out ways to assess functional disability, those are the challenges that I'm encountering and they are the challenges that can apply to rare diseases more broadly."

Iny said her experience at the Quebec fair opened her eyes to the projects her peers were creating, which in her opinion are amazing.

"Some of my friends made an app/algorithm to help reduce wait times in emergency rooms. One person did a study on

pain perception; one person built an algorithm that could let you detect your percentage of body fat just by walking in front of it and there was a person next to me basically explaining quantum physics."

Off to Edmonton

The Canada-wide science fair is taking place in Edmonton at the University of Alberta and Iny is travelling with nine other students from Quebec. In her luggage are two city of Westmount lapel pins to trade with other delegates at a pin-trading event.

The pins are courtesy of Annique Dufour, executive assistant to Mayor Michael Stern, and delivery was facilitated by District 6 councillor Paul Levine.

After the competition, her personal goal is to highlight the importance of having FDA approval for emerging and novel treatments, and to highlight how new indications for an accessible medication can be useful.

"For SCA27B, there's a medication called 4-aminopyridine, which was originally developed for multiple sclerosis, but it's showing a lot of promise at treating SCA27B symptoms, which is incredible. The problem is it's very expensive..."

"And the other problem with rare disease research is it's hard to get people for clinical trials, but you need clinical trials to get FDA approval.

"You get stuck in this loop of 'We need people to do the research and we need research to get the medication to the people.'

"Based on the evidence we have, it's looking optimistic but there's still a lot of work to be done."

Police Report

Authorities report two car thefts

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Police at Station 12 on Stanton St. reported two car thefts in Westmount last week, although full information for one of them was incomplete at the *Independent's* deadline.

In the first incident, a rented Land Rover Defender that was parked on The Boulevard near the corner of Carleton Ave. was stolen around 3:30 pm on May 19.

"The gentleman went to pick up the car, and brought it back home and left it there," said Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit.

While there were no signs of forced entry into the vehicle, security cameras located nearby captured good images of the suspect at the wheel driving away.

Early morning theft

In the second vehicle theft incident, a car parked on Tupper St. near Atwater Ave. was stolen around 8:30 am on May 21. No further details, including the vehicle's make or model, were available as the investigators hadn't completed their report.

Grand Prix increases workload

According to Cst. Yigit, the staff at Station 12 were facing an especially challenging weekend last week, as they were among the police officers who would be providing security downtown and in other areas during the 2026 Formula 1 Canadian Grand Prix.

"Everybody's on high alert, with a lot going on," said Yigit.

Independent prevented from reporting directly on police meetings with Wood area residents

BY JENNIFER BALL

The *Independent* was asked to leave the meeting space where the Montreal police (SPVM) and 1 Wood residents were meeting, and was barred from entering the similar meeting space at Tower 3 of Westmount Square.

Residents were expected to express concerns to the SPVM over fluctuating protests since October 7, 2023 on Wood Ave. in front of the Israeli consulate at 1 Westmount Square.

1 Wood Ave. is between de Maisonneuve and St. Catherine St., while the two residential towers of Westmount Square (2

& 3) are between Wood and Greene on de Maisonneuve.

The *Independent* was in the meeting room at 9:30 am on May 20 at 1 Wood and was met by a woman representing the building, who was not wearing a security or police uniform and who did not provide her name. She insisted that the reporter from the *Independent* had to leave the premises before the 10 am meeting because it was "For 1 Wood residents only, the media were not invited and that even if the SPVM had alerted the *Independent* to the meeting, 1 Wood had not."

Some 90 minutes later, while onsite at *continued on p. 18*

Funny Ed B. puppy



Westmount
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Here he is, a joyous one-year-old Black Labrador type with the softest expression in his brown eyes. He is ready for play, often gifting people a tennis ball, as seen here. He clearly wants to have a fun toss-and-run.

A best companion, Ed B. is presently making friends at the Montreal SPCA while waiting for adoption into an active family. For his young age, Ed B. is moving along from puppyhood to adolescence.

He is ready to continue his bonding and training with a new family. It is very important for him to integrate into a home routine as soon as possible to take advantage of the summer activities and opportunities. He enjoys his walks, is learning leash walking and active play with other dogs, and likes training sessions. As he is an active pup, it is best that he be in a home without young children or cats.

For more information on Ed B., please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at



www.sPCA.com, then scroll to his information page by his identification number, 2000411704. You can then plan your visit to 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. It is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4.

Ed B. is a delightful young fellow, ready for the next stage in his life, a home of his own and your loving arms taking him there.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

Magnificent Quinzel



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Taken in and enjoying foster care for the SPCA Montréal, gorgeous Quinzel is a delicate and affectionate Tonkinese.

With her beautiful cream-and-pearl coat, and accented black mask and boots that contrast with her azure-blue eyes, she is a stunning and loving companion to all in the family.

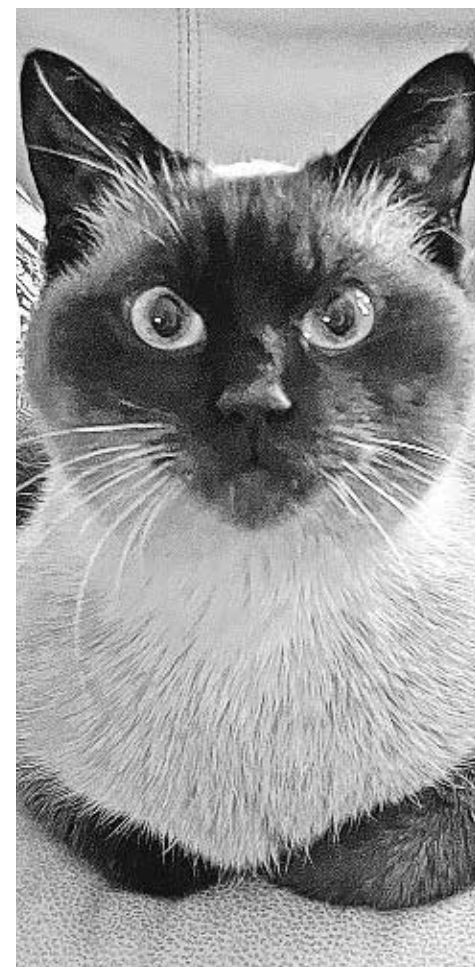
She is most pleasant, intelligent and curious. She enjoys looking out the window and loves to play with string toys. She is a funny girlie, has her water habit at the faucet and is partial to Temptation treats (like most cats!).

Precious Quinzel is seven years old, up to date with her inoculations and spayed. She has also had all her tests and treatments – the parasite treatment, the FIV and FELV tests – and all is well. She has also had a dental cleaning and been micro-chipped.

Quinzel had a blood test that showed a kidney insufficiency, yet she shows no symptoms. She has now been prescribed specialized renal-diet foods, and does not require any medication.

If you would like more information on Quinzel, please do not hesitate to refer to the SPCA Montréal website at www.spcamontregie.com, and refer its Petfinder or Les Pattes Jaunes listing for her.

You can then submit your application via those services. You can also send the volunteers an email at adoptionpcamontregie@gmail.com and discuss your interest, your home environment, ask all your questions, present your contact information, etc. in order for them to contact you back and start a discussion about adoption.



There is no fee for her adoption as she is considered a compassionate case to ensure that she is placed in a family that is ready to prioritize her specialized dietary care. Quinzel is in a foster family at the moment, and she is not at the cattery.

The shelter itself is on a lovely drive to St. Angèle de Monnoir in the Montréal, on the South Shore at J0L1P0. The volunteers are looking forward to hearing from you about Quinzel. Please do not hesitate to reach out to them.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

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NUC MED brings new techniques to Westmount Square



Retail Review

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Recently, NUC MED Clinic inaugurated its new facilities in Westmount Square.

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From left, Dr. Christian Cohade and Dr. Karine Provost, nuclear medicine specialists & co-owners of NUC MED; Sébastien Girard, Desjardins Entreprise; Mayor Michael Stern; Mike Hamilton, GE Healthcare; Pierre Moffet, CFO & co-owner NUC MED; Dr. Adel Assaf, CEO and medical director of Radimed; René Rebaud of Hermes Medical Solutions; Dr. Sylvain Beaulieu, president and medical director of NUC MED; Annie Messier, COO and chief-technologist NUC MED; Simon Bolduc of Christie Innomed; and Rebecca René, Isologic.

The facilities reflect an environmentally responsible approach. Selected materials and specialized elements were recovered and re-purposed.

Through its partnership with the Radimed clinic, located in the same building,

patients benefit from streamlined access to complementary imaging services in one location.

Mayor Michael Stern addressed guests at the inaugural event, stressing the advantage of having this type of clinic in West-

mount as being part of an increasingly comprehensive medical environment.

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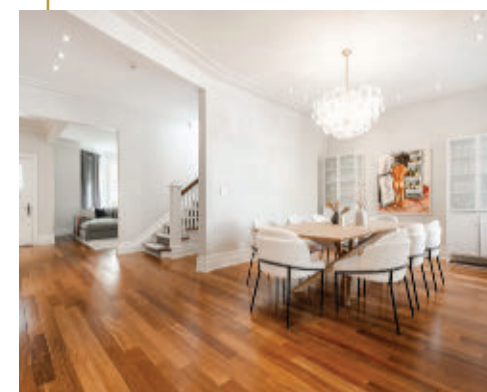
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Officiated by Cllr. Moss

Marriage ceremony at city hall an ‘intimate venue’

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A marriage performed at city hall May 15 by Shawn Moss in his capacity as a city



Nicholas Lim Johnson. PHOTO COURTESY OF NADIA KIM.

councillor became a triple celebration for what was the first reported marriage held there during the current council tenure.

It was attended by some 40 family members and close friends of the couple, Nadia Kim and David Johnson, along with their small son, Nicholas, who was celebrating his 100th day of life, described by his mother as “a milestone traditionally celebrated in the Korean culture.”

It also marked “a successful urgent heart procedure our son had undergone just three days prior,” she told the *Independent*.

Also attending was the bride’s mother, Sung (Sunny) Hye Lim, who has lived in Westmount since 2004.

“The city of Westmount extends its warmest congratulations to Nadia and David as they begin their married life together,” Moss explained. “We are honoured that they chose our local heritage landmark for this milestone occasion.”

‘Reached out to us’

The bride said that while they had never met Moss before, he was the councillor “who agreed to officiate...He reached out to us personally ahead of the ceremony to



From left, groom David Johnson, officiant/councillor Shawn Moss and bride Nadia Kim.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MUGISHA RATISHISHA.

get to know us...and his warmth and dedication set the tone” for the occasion.

She said she had been looking for “an intimate venue” when her mother suggested city hall, which is close to where she and her mother had been living for many years.

She describes her husband as “a solutions architect in the tech industry with an engineering background from McGill Uni-

versity,” while she is “a patient-rights coordinator at the Jewish General Hospital and a flight attendant, also a McGill alumna, currently on maternity leave.”

What did the bride wear?

“A *hanbok* (traditional Korean clothing to honour our Korean heritage, a choice that felt especially meaningful as our son also wore one for his 100th day in the tradition of this celebration.”



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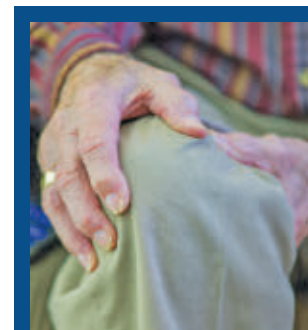
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As seen May 18 in the alley running north from de Maisonneuve Blvd. to Victoria Ave.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



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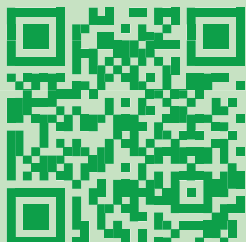
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One duckling saved!



On May 21, a mother duck was escorting her ducklings down Mt. Stephen Ave. towards Westmount Park. Two ducklings fell into a storm drain, Sandra Szewczuk told the *Independent* the next day. Public Security was called, who called Public Works, who soon arrived on the scene. At least one duckling was rescued and placed temporarily in a recycling bin. A Friday, May 22 email to the city to ascertain the fate of the second duckling was not returned by press time May 25.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF S. SZEWCZUK.

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Rotary Club of Westmount tours Welcome Hall Mission



Executive director Sam Watts explaining how the dental clinic works at the Welcome Hall Mission on May 14.

The Welcome Hall Mission's onsite grocery store, left, and warehouse contain the items used in the charitable organization's services.

BY JENNIFER BALL

The executive director of the Welcome Hall Mission, former Rotarian Sam Watts, gave the Rotary Club of Westmount a tour of the charity's compound on May 14. It is located at 606 de Courcelle St. in St. Henri. The group was founded in 1892.

Welcome Hall is Montreal's largest entry point for services to people experiencing poverty and homelessness, with an

annual operating budget in the tens of millions, offering food security, emergency shelter, transitional housing, medical and dental care, youth programs and support for families and single mothers.

According to Charity Intelligence Canada – which is a Toronto-based non-profit that researches, analyzes and rates Canadian charities – Welcome Hall's core purpose is support and care, food and its family program.

In 2024:

- Support and care were 72 percent of Welcome Hall's annual program spending. It has 26 apartments available that provide emergency shelter, residence and transitional housing. The Mission provided 74,826 nights of emergency and transitional housing to 986 individual men.
- The food program was 23 percent of its annual program spending. 438,000 meals were prepared and served, and approximately 1,500,000 kg of food was

recuperated across the city for use by the Mission.

- The family program was five percent of its annual program spending. This includes employment support, academic support and youth programs, and it gave over 5,000 free dental exams and distributed approximately 8,000 toys during a Christmas event.

Jennifer Ball, the reporter who wrote this story, is a member of the Rotary Club of Westmount.

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University Women's Club of Montreal gears up for its centenary

BY JENNIFER BALL

The University Women's Club of Montreal (UWCM) was founded in 1927 by female university graduates. It operates out of the Atwater Library club room, and Westmount and Westmount-adjacent women make up approximately 50 percent of its membership.

On May 13, it held a 5-à-7 to celebrate new members and welcome potential ones as it gears up for its centenary. Its core purpose is to promote social interaction, social responsibility and the growth of women in all areas of life.

A membership-based, non-profit club for women with university education (or equivalent professional experience), the club is dedicated to:

- Lifelong learning through monthly dinner speakers, lectures and special-interest groups,
- Advocacy for women's rights, education and gender equality,
- Community support, including bursaries for girls' and women's education,
- Friendship and networking among professional and like-minded women.

Board president Lorraine O'Donnell –



From left: University Women's Club board president Lorraine O'Donnell and board member Olga Shevchenko at a May 13 event for new and potential members at the Atwater Library, which is located at 1200 Atwater Ave.

who manages a research unit at Concordia University – described the club as “An open and friendly women's group that people in

Westmount might not know about.”

The club is affiliated with the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW),

which holds special consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). O'Donnell went to the UN in 2025 and, when asked about the shifting women's issues that the club has observed over its 99 years, she said, “While women have made great gains into certain sectors, we all know that in STEM women are still lagging. There are questions about why that is, but that's still an issue.”

O'Donnell said other issues include “the triple burden of paid work, [unpaid housework and care work], the scope of gender-based violence around the world and financial literacy. Being financially independent [as a woman remains a challenge] especially in older years.”

Olga Shevchenko, who is a board member and professionally a gemologist and jewellery designer, explained the complexion of the club by giving insights into some of the professions of its members.

“They are in finance, lots of women still teach at Concordia or McGill and lots [are former] nurses. We have a lady who is a retired judge, and a lady who was a curator in the museum in Belgrade...”

“We are so diverse and cosmopolitan.”

Police reporting, cont'd from p. 7

Tower 3 of Westmount Square, the building's security guards kept the *Independent* from entering its meeting room, pending the SPVM's okay. *Independent* spoke with Commander François Sauvé of the SPVM, who is a senior officer with operational responsibility for public-safety enforcement, and a little later separately with Eddy Wiltzer, who is the president of Westmount Square ownership board. Each said that they wanted the *Independent* to attend, while pointing to each other as the definitive decision-maker. The meeting started without the *Independent* being able to resolve the issue and enter.

As reported on May 12 (p. 13), the *Inde-*

pendent received statements from police officer Michel Yigit of Station 12; Jonathan Green, president of the 1 Wood condo association; and Eddy Wiltzer, president of Westmount Square ownership board, saying that the delayed April 14 police-resident meetings would be held on May 20.

At no time during these three exchanges was it expressed that the *Independent* would be prevented from reporting on the meetings.

On May 20, the *Independent* received a statement from Anik de Repentigny, communications officer in the media relations department of the SPVM, which said, “Upon verification, it was indeed the security staff at 1 Wood Ave. and Westmount Square who refused [the *Independent*]

access to private meetings with the residents of the buildings, not the SPVM.”

What the police heard, said

On May 22, Marc-Antoine Bélanger, a spokesman for the SPVM, explained what the outcome of the meetings was for the chief of police at Station 12, Marie-Eve Lamarche.

“The two meetings provided an opportunity to learn more about the concerns and questions of citizens regarding the impacts of the demonstrations that took place in their area...”

“It was essential for the SPVM teams to listen to and inform the public about the role and responsibilities of police services during gatherings or demonstrations. The SPVM prioritizes public safety while ensuring the right to protest is preserved.”

The SPVM explained to the *Independent* that it worked to ensure a strong police presence during the demonstrations in order to ensure public safety and maintain order and peace. Moving forward, “concrete actions have already been put in place including police officers visiting businesses and residents to inform them about upcoming demonstrations and the security

measures to take.”

The *Independent* observed that Mayor Michael Stern; city councillor Paul Levine, the city's commissioner of public order; and city councillor Kathleen Kez, commissioner of public safety; attended both meetings but their path was not straightforward either.

City wanted in

During the May 5 council meeting, Levine had said, “At a joint meeting on November 16, 2025, it was agreed that the city and the SPVM would work together on a resident awareness initiative with the presence of municipal authorities in order to reassure residents regarding the frequent demonstrations taking place on both Wood and Greene avenues...”

“This coordinated approach formed the basis of the city's involvement. Following the cancellation of the scheduled meetings, the city was subsequently informed that arrangements were being made directly with the two buildings to proceed with meetings, while excluding city representatives.

“It is essential that communications with residents be conducted in a coordinated, transparent, and coherent manner between the city of Westmount and the SPVM. Anything less risks undermining public confidence and creating confusion for residents.”

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'We hope to continue in some way, shape or form'

Dr. Joe addresses final regular meeting of Women's Canadian Club after 120 years' service



BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A talk on the health benefits of laughter by pseudoscience critic Dr. Joe Schwarcz was on the agenda for the Women's Canadian Club of Montreal's meeting last week at Victoria Hall.

Some humour with a bit of stage magic thrown in were needed as it was also the final regular gathering of the women's group after its leadership decided recently to suspend the Montreal chapter's activities after nearly 120 years.

The club (the first of several Women's Canadian Club chapters operating in major cities across Canada at one time, according to the club's website) was founded in 1907 by prominent Montreal philanthropist Lady Drummond and Mrs. Elsie Reford.

It was an era when many women were homemakers and probably had more time in the middle of the day to meet together to learn about current events as well as matters of public concern.

Pat Fox, a Westmounter and former member of the board who attended the final gathering, said in an interview with the *Independent* that membership – which once stood in the hundreds – was around 150 most recently.

'Aging membership'

She said several vacancies on the board, including the president's position, remain empty. "We were asking for people to step forward," she said, although none did, while adding, "I think we have an aging membership."

Fox acknowledged that the model that

the club has followed for generations may not have kept up to pace with the way women have been evolving in their lifestyles over the same time period.

According to 2025-2026 Statistics Canada data, 61-64 per cent of women aged 15 and older are now in the Canadian labour force. For women 25 to 54, participation is even higher, with employment rates consistently around 80 per cent.

According to Fox, the remaining board members are uncertain what form the club's activities will take after this. "Perhaps we'll have a few special events," she said. "It's hard to keep up with the same format. We hope to continue in some way, shape or form to be determined."

While a web search for Women's Canadian Clubs across the country lists Winnipeg, Toronto, Hamilton, Calgary and Ottawa among the cities where the organization is apparently still active, many have

closed, Fox maintained.

"At one time, there was one in every major city across Canada," she said. "We feel quite proud that we managed to keep it going here until 2026."

In his talk on "the joy of laughter," "Dr. Joe" (as he is known to thousands of fans who listen to his Sunday afternoon CJAD broadcast as well as his podcasts) contended, among other things, that the mass-marketed memory enhancing medicine Prevacen is essentially bogus.

"The fact is that there is absolutely no science here," he said.

"There are no studies that show that Prevacen does anything in terms of memory."

But on a brighter note, he said humour can function as a placebo that can potentially help relieve symptoms, albeit without causing a cure when someone has an especially serious illness.



Dr. Joe Schwarcz included a rope trick in his presentation to the Women's Canadian Club of Montreal in Victoria Hall on May 19.

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Speechwriter Hurwitz turns her hand to writing about the Jewish-American awakening

BY JENNIFER BALL

Sarah Hurwitz, former senior speechwriter for Barack Obama and chief speechwriter for Hillary Clinton, has written about the Jewish-American awakening in her new book *As a Jew*, which was a *New York Times* bestseller.

She was at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, which is located 4100 Sherbrooke St. at Wood, on April 23.

Hurwitz's book is a wide-ranging exploration of Jewish identity, written after years of studying Judaism as an adult. She argues that many modern Jews have identities built around caveats ("I'm Jewish, but not that Jewish...") rather than pride or depth.

The book is her attempt to strip away those inherited distortions and re-claim Judaism's wisdom, beauty and complexity.

**Growing up:
Four holidays,
four values**

Senior rabbi Lisa Grushcow asked her to explain why she wrote *As a Jew*.

"How did I get from the White House to writing books about Judaism? – which my colleagues are still very confused about, as are my parents.

"I grew up maybe like some of you, where Judaism for me was four holidays: two of them were boring in a synagogue, one of them was medium-boring at a *seder*, and one of them was a great Hanukkah party...

"So, four holidays and universal values that anyone who is not a sociopath would agree with – don't lie, cheat, steal or kill."

Hurwitz said it was after a very painful romantic break-up that she took a closer look at Judaism.

"This is not an obsolete religion. This [is a] 4,000-year-old civilization with millions of pages of wisdom from thousands of years of my ancestors [who are extremely

articulate] about the human condition."

Anti-Semitism, utopian views of Israel

Rabbi Grushcow guided Hurwitz to the topic of the rise of anti-Semitism post-October 7 on university campuses, of which it is reported Hurwitz has toured over 30.

Hurwitz said she would come across Jewish students on campuses who said, "It's not that bad on my campus. I can still wear my Jewish star, and I won't get harassed."

But when asked if they would wear a tee-shirt emblazoned "Israel," they demurred, pulling Hurwitz into educating them on anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.

Citing *The Times of Israel* and *The Guardian*, Israel has accepted a Gaza death toll of roughly 70,000 post October 7 and one questioner at Temple was reflecting on the idea that Israel is a utopia when she said, "I've heard from the younger generation, who had a very compelling argument, that 'I was lied to!'"

Hurwitz sympathized with that young person and brought up *hasbara* – which is a Hebrew term meaning "explaining," widely used to describe Israel's organized public-diplomacy efforts – saying, "So actually, I think in some cases, it's true..."

"We have made a mistake of giving our children a *hasbara*-nonsense propaganda Israel education. When you tell kids that Israel is a magical utopia of moonbeams and unicorns and rainbows, and it's been perfect, and it's so moral, that's not true..."

"What we need to tell our children is that Israel is a country. It is an extraordinary country but we need to get Israel out of the category of utopia and into the category of a country, [but] I think anyone who thinks Israel is uniquely evil as a country is dead wrong."



Sarah Hurwitz.



Sarah Hurwitz and senior rabbi Lisa Grushcow at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom on April 23.



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Wener showcases ancestor Raphael, Canada's first Jewish professional artist

Work by Pierre-Olivier Ouellet. Published by the Art Canada Institute, the book shows Raphael's depictions of life in Montreal as well as his rural landscapes.

Held at Le 9e downtown, at the launch reception Jonathan greeted guests along with his wife **Susan Wener**.

Joining them were daughters **Jacqueline Wener** and **Katherine Wener**, with her son **Izaya Cormier**, Jonathan's aunt **Harriet Wener** and sister **Pamela Wener** with her children **Carly** and **Daniel Fridman**.

Noted in the crowd were author **Pierre-Olivier Ouellet**, **Jonathan Goodman**, **Joel Segal**, **Laurent Ferreira**, CEO National Bank; **Rhoda** and **Robert Vineberg**, **Justin Vineberg**, **Paul Tellier**, retired CEO Canadian National Railways and Bombardier; **Rabbi Lisa Grushcow**, **Michael Goldbloom**, Westmount mayor **Michael Stern**; **Jacques des Rochers**, curator Montreal Museum of Fine arts; **Lillian** and **Morris Goodman**, **Sisters Rita** and **Madeleine** from the Congrégation of the Sisters of Sainte Anne; **Graham Carr**, president Concordia; **Alain Dancyger**, executive director Jewish Public Library.

Philip Dombowsky, continued on p. 22



Sara Angel, Pierre-Olivier Ouellet, Jonathan Wener and Clarence Epstein.

As an Italophile, one of my favourite artists is Raphael (Raffaello) of Renaissance fame. So I was intrigued to learn about Montreal's "Raphael" – "Canada's first Jewish professional artist."

William Raphael, born Israel Rafalsky in Prussia, immigrated to Montreal to join his brother Meier. Trained in Berlin, he began a career in Montreal as William Raphael and was a sought-after portraitist.

His work caught the eye of photographer William Notman, with whom he worked for a while, adding his artist's touch to Notman's photos.

Despite his portrait work, Raphael is most known for his landscapes – scenes of 19th-century Montreal and rural Quebec.

Today, his art is known again thanks to **Jonathan Wener**, founder of the Canderel Group. William Raphael is Jonathan's great-great-grandfather. For the past 50 years, Jonathan has been collecting his artwork.

Recently, Jonathan presided over the book launch of *William Raphael: Life &*



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The Wener family. Katherine, Jonathan, Susan, Jacqueline Wener and Izaya Cormier.



Rabbi Lisa Grushcow and Michael Goldbloom.

Social notes, cont'd from p. 21

archivist emeritus, National Gallery of Canada; Karen Beaulieu and Clarence Epstein, Fiona MacLeod and Michael Goldbloom, chair CBC/Radio Canada, André Desmarais, Tim Dunn, Peter

Kruyt, Mandeep Kaur (Roshi) Chadha and Jeannie and Brett Miller, CEO of CandereL.

Art historian Clarence Epstein joined Ouellet and Sara Angel, executive director Art Canada Institute, in a discussion of Raphael's work.



Mayor Michael Stern, with the Vinebergs: Justin, Robert and former city councillor Rhoda.

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