

Cited as a 'safety measure': Mayor Smith

City asks province to extend 99-year lease for RMR armoury

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

In a series of ongoing efforts to ensure the Royal Montreal Regiment remains in Westmount past the end of April, city council February 26 asked the Quebec government to extend the city's 99-year lease regarding the armoury by one year. The emphyteutic lease was to expire April 28.

While the armoury itself was built in 1925 with publicly raised seed money, it sits on city land adjacent to the Westmount recreation centre (WRC), for which the regiment pays \$1 a year in rent.

According to details of the council resolution, which were not read out before the council vote, under the Quebec civil code the maximum term of an emphyteutic lease "is now" 100 years.

This could make it possible to extend

the expiry date regarding the armoury to April 28, 2025.

As a result, Mayor Christina Smith told the *Independent* the next day, the reason for delaying the expiry of the lease resulted from federal/Quebec relationships in which Quebec "controls" the armoury issue.

"Quebec has had everything in its hands since last July," she explained, but only two weeks ago had informed the city of the need for additional information.

As a result, the city is taking advantage of the change in emphyteutic terms to seek a lease extension "as a safety measure."

Previously approved

It was at the council meeting April 17, 2023, that a city resolution had been approved unani- *continued on p. 16*

Most scaffolding ever?



This house at 80 Sunnyside, just east of Lexington, has A LOT of scaffolding around it, as seen February 24. This view is of the house's back.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Not much snow this year – Are we rich?

Major savings expected on city's \$3.5M snow budget

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

As the current winter season comes close to winding down – except for the likelihood of a usual snow storm this month – the city's figures from Public Works at the end of February indicate that Westmount had received approximately half the amount of snow it recorded a year ago.

This has resulted in three major snow

removal operations costing around \$2.2 million rather than last year's five operations as part of the city's snow removal budget of "approximately \$3.5 million," according to Robert Talarico, Public Works director. "This budget can exceed or decrease depending on the winter weather."

While this year, 49,120 cubic meters had been collected, compared to 102,268 cubic metres *continued on p. 16*



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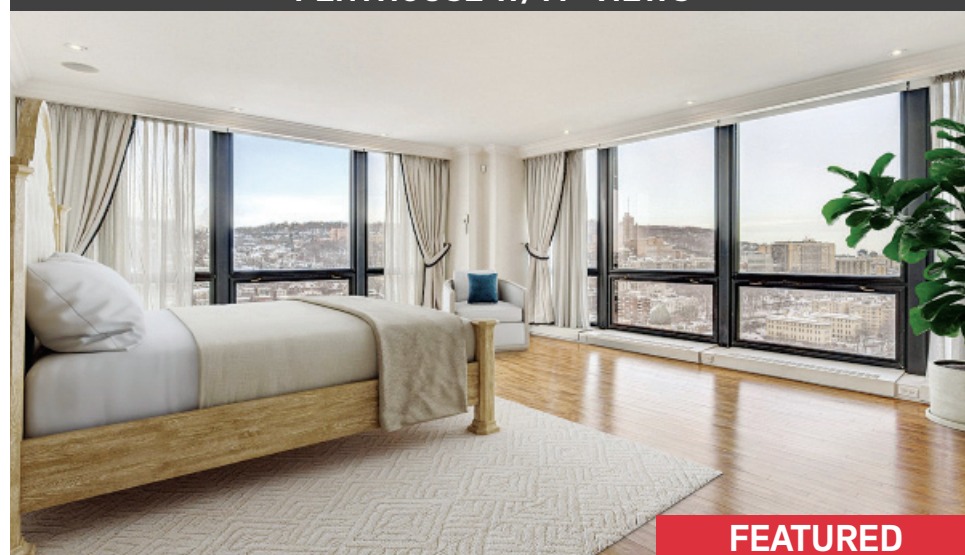
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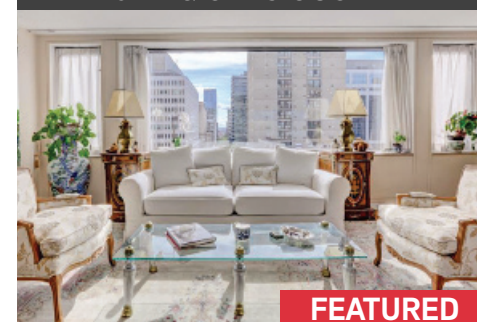
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Sherbrooke O., apt. 512 | \$599,000

Car crash near WRC



This car was photographed near the entrance to the Westmount recreation centre on St. Catherine St. on February 28 at 10:20 am. No other damaged car was visible at the time.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAM BEITEL.

Dog walker ticketed after previous warning

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A man from Ontario walking a dog without a licence tag in Summit Woods February 24 was issued a ticket for the offence, Public Security officials said. When encountered by a patroller, he argued that the by-law did not apply to out-of-towners. He had been warned on February 16, however, and was ticketed \$232 on this occasion.

Car fire breaks out at Victoria and The Blvd.

A car fire at Victoria and The Boulevard was extinguished by firefighters February 23, according to Public Security. When officers arrived at 8:40 am, they found a woman trying to retrieve items from the car. There were no reported injuries.

Woman falls at Greene and St. Catherine

A woman was reported to have split her chin in a fall at Greene and St. Catherine February 28, according to Public Security

officials. She did not want an ambulance and was taken to her home nearby to be given first aid. The woman was reported to have fallen accidentally around 1:15 pm.

Hurt leg in park

Public Security received a call February 24 at 9:10 am for a woman lying on her back in King George (Murray) Park, officials said. On arrival, officers found her conscious and believed to have hurt her leg. She was covered with a blanket while awaiting Urgences Santé, reported to be on the way.

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Gun scare leads to ‘team effort,’ proves unfounded

Victoria Hall serves as evacuation centre for Roslyn School students

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Montreal police, Urgences Santé ambulance staff, Westmount Public Security, city officials and employees came together quickly February 28 to help in coordinating efforts to open Victoria Hall as the main “shelter” for students evacuated from Ros-

lyn School after a report of an armed person in the school.

The report turned out to be false. “Children arrived by bus and in groups on foot led by their teachers,” said assistant Public Security director Kimberley Colquhoun. “The first group arrived at Victoria Hall at approximately 1:20 pm. Children

had all been picked up by about 5:25 pm.

“At one point, there were up to 530 students welcomed at Victoria Hall during that time frame,” she said. “Library staff recorded names, Public Works helped prepare Victoria Hall for what might be needed and one of the teachers made popcorn. It was a great team effort.”

Among the first there was Mayor Christina Smith. She had already received a call from someone who had seen the commotion at the school as the first police cars arrived. She immediately asked that Victoria Hall be opened.

“The teachers were amazing,” Smith said. “The kindergarten kids were scared. Parents were panicked. It’s the world they’re living nowadays. Public Works went to city hall for more water and cleared out the shelves at Metro for juice boxes and granola bars.” Among those helping was Councillor Mary Gallery, whose role was described as “shuffling the kids to the bathroom.”

Communicating with the parents involved a whole protocol from the school. In the end, she said, “I have never been prouder of the city and community.”

Remembering the ice storm

Victoria Hall served as one of the city’s two main shelters during the ice storm of 1998. Based on that experience, Victoria Hall has been outfitted with equipment needed during a major power outage, for ex- continued on p. 5



Police stopped traffic on Westmount Ave. in front of Roslyn School February 28.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.

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ample, and the protocol needed for over-night or extended sheltering.

Its purpose as a shelter is one of the reasons for the upgrading of the community centre's boiler/mechanical room, which previously serviced the old section of the library, but is now being split off considering Victoria Hall serves as the city's emergency shelter (see story Nov. 8, 2022, p. 7).

See p. 7 for the police's perspective on this incident.

► Roslyn children, teachers and parents arriving and waiting at Victoria Hall February 28. Two children's faces have been obscured by the *Independent*.



Stretch targetted: Sherbrooke to Westmount Ave.

Contract for Claremont Ave. to lead to public consultation

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Work concerning the re-do of Claremont from Sherbrooke to Westmount Ave. was awarded by Westmount city council February 26 to Groupe Civitas Inc. at a maximum of \$353,261, of which \$225,723 including tax credits would be for the 2024 fiscal year.

The contract was described as for “professional services in engineering, mobility, public domain development, design, prep-

aration of plans and specifications, and technical assistance for the execution of the work on Claremont and Lorraine.”

Because this contract concerned professional services, it was awarded on a system of bid weighting and evaluation on which Groupe Civitas was reported to be the highest conforming bidder after having obtained the best score.

It was described as being similar to one for Forden Ave. and Forden Crescent as being the beginning of a public consulta-

tion process.

Mayor Christina Smith told the *Independent* the scope of the construction project involves Claremont from Sherbrooke to Westmount Ave.

That intersection is at the east city limits near Marianopolis College.

This busy stretch of Claremont cuts through a residential area involving city busses, a hill, one side of Prince Albert Park, and many students and commuters travelling to and from NDG.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MAYOR: THANK YOU,
CITY EMPLOYEES, RE: ROSLYN
SCHOOL FALSE ALARM

This email was sent in both languages to all city employees on February 28. It was shared with the Independent by the mayor.

To all the employees of Westmount,
On Wednesday, February 28, 2024, the city faced an emergency situation at Roslyn School due to an unfounded threat. The SPVM [agglomeration police] reacted quickly, executing its evacuation protocol to ensure the safety of all students and staff.

Following the evacuation, the children and staff were relocated to Victoria Hall. I am immensely proud of our teams. Their rapid response and support were remarkable. I sincerely thank our public safety officers for their coordination, the Library and Events staff for providing food and games to help the teachers with frightened children, the Hydro Westmount and Public Works crews for assisting in opening the windows to help ventilate the crowded space, and the city council members who came to lend a hand.

I must also acknowledge the exceptional commitment of Westmount employees who helped our community at a crucial time. With their empathy, dedication and unwavering goodwill, they consistently exceed expectations. I express my most sincere gratitude on behalf of council, parents and children. I am deeply proud to be sur-

rounded by such an incredible team.
Best regards,
CHRISTINA M. SMITH, MAYOR

NO LACK OF HUMOUR
AT 150TH KICK-OFF

Attending the Westmount 150th anniversary kick-off event at Victoria Hall on February 22 was very enjoyable.

Who knew that the hall is actually in “Upper St. Henri,” as explained by Bowser and Blue? (Rick Blue further confessed to living in Beaconsfield, AKA Westmount-sur-Lac.)

In addition to the pieces mentioned by Veronica Redgrave in her account of the evening (February 27, p. 21), B and B gave some unforgettable renditions.

None of us who attended will ever again be able to listen to “Alouette,” or sit in traffic on the Decarie, without recalling their “Autoroute, gentille autoroute, je te fermerai,” and then proceeding to “close” the 20, the 15, the 30 and the 10.

Nor look on the new monarch and not hear, “Charles that’s me, KC-3”.

And then we learned that invoking the Emergency Measures Act for the noisy Freedom Convoy in Ottawa two years ago was entirely unnecessary. Their brilliant suggestion was that a few counter-demonstration signs saying “Honk if you like Justin” would have done the trick!

George and Rick’s SESQUICENTENNAIRE/sesquicentennial performance was summed up best by my son, with words to

the effect that: “They got my Bach-freak pa to enjoy electric guitar?”
ANTHONY WALTER, LANSDOWNE AVE., “USH”

READ REPORT ON SOUTHEAST

This is in reference to the letter to the editor in the February 20 issue of the *Westmount Independent* by residents of the southeast district (p. 6). They wrote to remind your readers of the efforts already made by southeast district residents to ensure that new designs and buildings will adhere to a human scale.

The letter also refers to the McGill University’s School of Urban Planning’s commissioned revitalization report.

The link to it is: tinyurl.com/Revitalisation-Report. I invite your readers to consult it.

ROSALIND HALVORSEN, WEREDALE PARK

LET RESIDENTS OF LARGE
BUILDINGS COMPOST

I agree with Dylan Lawless about the requirement for community compost bins (February 20, p. 6).

Large buildings are reluctant to incorporate compost into their buildings for a number of understandable reasons: cost, infrastructure, smell, vermin as well as tenants who will not abide by the rules. Unless the city can help them with these issues, there will continue to be resistance.

Those of us who believe strongly in composting (I take mine up north when I go), do so diligently and want to continue. Many of us used to have it at our houses and youth should be super conscious of the benefits.

Although there is a drop-off at the Public Works (I think*) building, it is difficult to get to and, without a car, leaves a lot of people unable to go.

I urge the city to continue to offer assistance and incentives to large apartment owners. However, in the meantime, enough bins close to larger apartment buildings with rules clearly shown, could decrease the landfill immensely.

ALETHA THOMPSON,
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

**Editor’s note:* I called Public Works on March 4. There is a bin for household composting in the Corporation Yard at the foot of Bethune. – DP.

MORE MEMORIES
OF STEPHEN CHIN

Thank you, David, for the tiny tribute to the late Stephen Chin (February 27, p. 7). He was indeed a quiet soul, who loved his dogs.

I live on Kitchener Ave. and have fond memories of seeing him walk his dogs and later one dog. He rode his bicycle, and the

See p. 10 for another letter to the editor, which recalls former prime minister and Westmounter Brian Mulroney.

dogs trotted along happily. Both the dogs and Stephen got older. Stephen then walked his bicycle alongside the remaining dog – because that was what the dog was used to – very slowly. How loving and patient Stephen was. How loyal the dog.

On behalf of all dog owners, well done Stephen, and thank you.

One day, there was no dog, no bicycle and, now, no Stephen.

BEVERLEY HUTCHISON, KITCHENER AVE.

WHAT CAN WE DO
FOR THE HOMELESS?

Similar to most Westmounters, my exposure to people severely in need is spare and episodic. Affluent Westmount, like other Canadian cities, now* has street people with no place to call home, unless labelling a tent below the Ville Marie Expressway “home.”

There are many unfortunates who panhandle throughout Westmount: sections of Greene, Victoria, Sherbrooke and St. Catherine are routinely selected, but these individuals are relatively better off because they are not freezing outside overnight; those that are have even fewer resources, personal and external.

Alcohol and other drugs are widely apparent at Cabot Square, Alexis Nihon Plaza and various tunnels and entries connecting to the Metro.

Recently, at least one bank in Westmount has curtailed service to customers for their safety. Bank lobbies with ATMs are now sometimes locked at bank closing, preventing legitimate transactions because lobbies were being regularly used as overnight shelters. Clients making cash withdrawals at night, in close proximity to a potentially harmful person, is apparently risky business.

Readers can agree that this is a sorry state of affairs, but unless personally touched, may remain at a remove.

I ask that they reflect on the following experience because something similar can happen to anyone. At 6 am on February 20, at the building that I live in, a woman who is a friend and neighbour later recounted to me her shock and dismay on opening her apartment door to retrieve a newspaper and confronting the body of a man with blanket, lying on chair cushions placed on the floor, inches from her doorstep. She locked the door and telephoned for help. When a valet arrived, the man was gone.

There are several things to consider: first, *continued on p. 7*

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Police Report

Police to parents: Stay clear of schools during threats

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

In the aftermath of an emergency evacuation which took place at Roslyn Elementary School on Westmount Ave. last week, a community police officer at Station 12 has some advice for parents.

Try to stay clear of the security operations at least until the police have declared the situation under control, says Cst. Mike Yigit, the Stanton St. station's community relations specialist.

An evacuation was ordered shortly after 11:30 am on February 28 after an apparent malfunction of Roslyn Elementary's internal phone system, resulting in a "Code Silver" warning that an armed individual was present in the school.

Although the school went into a classroom-by-classroom lockdown, and a thorough police search failed to locate a potential shooter, at least one person was reported to have been escorted from the school while handcuffed, then placed into a police cruiser.

.....
Letters to the editor, cont'd from p. 6

the situation could easily have devolved to something far worse. Second, what if it had been you? Third, what can the city of Westmount and concerned citizens do to create places for the destitute of Westmount?

STEPHEN COHEN, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

***Editor's note:** To avoid the propagation of rose-coloured versions of the past, I feel the need to point out that the homeless have been a part of Westmount since at least the advent of this newspaper in 2007. For an example from 15 years ago, see November 17-18, 2009, p. 25. The problem may be greater now – and the statistics say so for the province of Quebec – but the issue is not new, and not new to Westmount. – DP.

Media reports later identified the school's janitor, Angelo Martello, as the person who was removed as a precaution taken by the police until they were able to positively identify him.

Cst. Yigit said the trigger for the incident may have been an incorrect number sequence entered into the phone system, and that as soon as the warning was issued there was no turning back from the lockdown and evacuation procedures to be followed.

He said Montreal police officers from Station 12 were on the scene within three minutes, followed by colleagues from stations 13, 16, 20, 22 and 51. Members of the force's special weapons and tactics (SWAT) team also were called in, as well as officers and horses from the equestrian unit.

After being evacuated, students were brought to Victoria Hall on Sherbrooke St. as well as to Marianopolis College a few blocks west on Westmount Ave., where parents picked them up.

Regarding parents, many of whom turned up outside the school, Yigit said, "It's important for parents to understand that they should not go to the school because it adds to the stress of the police officers when a lot of parents are coming in. And any persons found in or around the school by procedure are handcuffed because we don't know who they are."

He said some parents who arrived on the scene may have mistakenly misidentified the person who was removed as a shooter. He also noted that in the state of confusion typical during such incidents, active shooters can evade being detected by discarding their weapons and posing as bystanders.

The police plan to meet soon with Roslyn Elementary administrators to review the response to the incident, Yigit added.

APPEL DE CANDIDATURES

COMITÉ CONSULTATIF D'URBANISME (CCU)

La Ville de Westmount est à la recherche d'un candidat pour siéger à son comité consultatif d'urbanisme (CCU) constitué en vertu du règlement 1575 conformément aux dispositions de la Loi sur l'aménagement et l'urbanisme.

Le mandat attribué au CCU par le conseil municipal consiste à étudier les dossiers qui relèvent de sa compétence et à formuler, selon les règlements en vigueur :

- Des recommandations au conseil municipal, à la demande de ce dernier, sur toutes questions concernant l'urbanisme, le zonage, le lotissement et la construction;
- Des avis concernant les demandes de dérogation mineure (DM), les plans d'aménagement d'ensemble (PAE), les plans d'implantation et d'intégration architecturale (PIIA), les projets particuliers de construction, de modification ou d'occupation d'un immeuble (PPCMOI), les usages conditionnels (UC);
- Des avis au conseil municipal concernant tout autre objet prévu par la loi.

Pour compléter la composition actuelle du CCU, le candidat recherché pour ce mandat doit résider à Westmount et être membre en règle de l'Ordre des architectes du Québec.

Le comité se rencontre habituellement deux fois par mois, à raison de deux matinées des mardis et jeudis de la même semaine, et le calendrier des réunions est disponible sur le site internet à westmount.org/ccu.

Après l'analyse des candidatures reçues, le conseil municipal pourra effectuer, à sa convenance, une nomination par résolution. Le mandat d'un membre est d'une durée d'un ou deux ans.

Toute personne intéressée est invitée à soumettre sa candidature avec sa lettre de motivation et son curriculum vitae au plus tard le lundi 25 mars 2024 à 13 h, en remplissant le formulaire en ligne à westmount.org/appeccu.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)

The City of Westmount is seeking candidates to sit on its Planning Advisory Committee (PAC, *Comité consultatif d'urbanisme - CCU*), established under By-law 1575 in accordance with the provisions of the Act Respecting Land Use Planning and Development.

The mandate given to the PAC by the Municipal Council, in accordance with the by-laws in force, is to review files within its jurisdiction and provide:

- Recommendations to the Municipal Council, upon request, on all matters related to urban planning, zoning, subdivision, and construction;
- Advice on applications for minor exemptions (ME), comprehensive development programs (CDP), site planning and architectural integration programs (SPAIP), specific construction, alteration, or occupancy proposals for an immovable (SCAOPI), conditional uses (CU);
- Advice to the Municipal Council on any other subject provided for by law.

To complete the current composition of the PAC and fill a vacancy in accordance with the by-law, the candidates sought for this mandate must be Westmount residents and members in good standing of the Ordre des architectes du Québec.

The committee usually meets twice a month, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings of the same week, and the meeting schedule is available on the website at westmount.org/pac.

Following the administrative analysis of the applications received, the Municipal Council may, at its discretion, make an appointment by resolution. A member's term of office is one or two years.

Anyone interested is invited to submit their candidacy with their letter of application and their resume no later than Monday, March 25, 2024 at 1 pm, by filling the online form at westmount.org/callpac.



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Editor's follow-up

Rat kingdom's communications team doesn't miss a beat

Attentive readers will have noticed my short editor's note at the end of the "rat king's" satirical piece in last week's paper (p. 6): "The *Independent* wrote to the city February 15 to check the facts about this job posting [for an environmental inspector], which was not visible then. The city has not replied."

On Wednesday, February 28, the rat king emailed me a link showing that the job posting was archived on the city's web site at westmount.org/en/ait-job-offer/environmental-inspector/ (also reproduced at right).

Perhaps you can forgive me for not finding the posting. When I checked a section of the city's website called "Cur-

February 28, i.e. unchanged from February 15, as far as I can remember). I see now that the inspector job posting expired February 12 and was archived.

Couldn't the city have directed me to that part of its website?

I had no idea it archived past job postings. And the city has still not replied to my email.

Perhaps I can direct other future inquiries about the city to the rat king? To his credit, he seems to be a fairly informed and hands-on monarch. – DP.

CURRENT JOB OPPORTUNITIES

1028 – 2024A – Assistant Superintendent – Parks and Roadways
Department: Public Works
Deadline: 13 March, 2024

3034 – 2024A – Switchboard Operator and Maintenance
Department: Hydro-Westmount
Deadline: 4 March, 2024

2092-2024B – Technician – Underground Electrical Distribution Network
Department: Hydro-Westmount
Deadline: 4 March, 2024

▲ A screenshot from the city's website on February 28.

rent job opportunities" on or before February 15, it listed three jobs, none of which was "environmental inspector" (see below how that page appeared on

► A screenshot from the city's website on February 28 (three images turned into one).

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Environmental Inspector

Category: White Collar
Status: Permanent
Competition #: 2091-2024A
Salary scale: 9 – \$32.62 to \$43.49
Department: Public Works
Deadline: 12 February, 2024

Purpose of position

Reporting to the Division Head – Environment, the incumbent carries out inspections to ensure compliance with residual materials regulations. He/she is responsible for best practices in eco-responsible waste management and implements measures to correct various problems. The incumbent has an influence on the protection of the environment and the preservation of the City of Westmount's biodiversity by being involved in all projects relating to this sector of activity.

Qualifications

- The job requires a specialized college diploma, with the appropriate sector and profile.

Experience

- One (1) year to less than two (2) years of experience.

Main Responsibilities

- Oversees the application of municipal and provincial by-laws pertaining to its function to citizens, institutions, merchants, etc. Identifies any infractions and, where possible, collects data to establish evidence. Where necessary, carries out sampling and analysis. Notifies offenders; issues a statement of offence when a breach of regulations is detected and records it in the appropriate software.
- Visually inspects bins and bags to ensure that there is no contamination with rejected materials, and refuses collection if necessary.
- Informs, raises awareness and educates the population (residents, institutions and merchants) about the importance of adopting good practices to dispose of their residual materials in an eco-responsible manner, and informs them about the nature of collections and the various materials accepted.
- Implements various collection programs (e.g. compost) across the territory.
- Ensures that collection personnel comply with contractual requirements (dress code, no throwing of bins, courtesy towards the public, etc.).
- Follows up on missed collection complaints, claims and incidents.

Job Profile

Essential Knowledge

- Of both languages (French, English) spoken and written;
- Of appropriate computer software;
- Of eco-responsible management trends and practices.
- Of residual materials collection

Abilities and Skill

- To exercise good judgment, tact and courtesy;
- To exercise critical and analytical skills;
- To use initiative and judgment;
- To have good oral communication skills;
- To provide quality customer service;
- To write clear, precise reports;
- To have autonomy and rigor;
- To plan and organize his/her work.

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Too soon for thoughts of spring?

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (CONT'D)

THANK YOU,
PRIME MINISTER MULRONEY

In 2009, I was a university student. I ran for city council in Westmount at the age of 21. It was a three-ticket race and I was 30 years younger than my opponents. But I like a good challenge.

I had no political experience. My campaign was simple. We are the younger generation, and our generation should have representation on council. Our objective was to get out the younger people to vote who typically are disengaged with municipal politics.

After an exhausting campaign (I knocked on every constituent's door), election day comes. As candidates do, I voted for myself early in the morning. As I am walking out of the polling station, Brian Mulroney is walking in. I am star struck. I try to avoid eye contact. He stops me.

"You're Philip Cutler," he says. Embarrassed, but impressed he recognized me, I say, "I am."

"Good. I've come to vote for you, and it's a pleasure to shake your hand," Brian says. "To vote for me?"

"Yes. I've followed your campaign. You've worked harder and are the most qualified candidate."

I didn't know what to say. Westmount is a community of many distinguished folks, but a prime minister is a prime minister. And Brian Mulroney is Brian Mulroney.

Fan-boying, I ask Brian if we can take a picture. "Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister," I say as I walk away.

Hours later, I lost the election, finishing second by a slim margin. I was disappointed. But having a prime minister vote for you will give you a certain confidence.

In 2013, I ran again. If you know me, you know I don't like losing so four years was a long time for the sting to sit. Again, like déjà-vu, I walk out of the polling station on election day to see Brian Mulroney walking in. This time, I approach him.

"Mr. Prime Minister," I say. "Philip. Congrats. I look forward to you being my city councillor." He says as he shakes my hand again.

"I haven't won anything yet." I tell him. He looks at me with a smile. "No, but you will." And walks in to vote.

This time I won. At 25, I was, and still am, the youngest ever city councillor elected in Westmount's 150-year history.

For the next eight years, I was Brian's city councillor.

We didn't speak very often, typically to discuss small municipal matters. We'd see each other on the streets from time to time.

To this day, I think about that first interaction often. It is etched in my memory.

He was a true leader. Everywhere he went he radiated and uplifted the people around him. It was almost like an infectious glow that rubbed off. I feel privileged to have been one of those people.

I never had the opportunity to properly thank him. What I wish I could have told him was that small interaction gave me a confidence I didn't think I deserved and shaped who I am today.

Rest in peace, Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you for changing my life.

PHILIP A. CUTLER, FORMER CITY COUNCILLOR, DISTRICT 2

Remembering Mulroney in Westmount



On June 5, 1985, then prime minister Brian Mulroney (1984-1993), right, who died February 29 in Palm Beach, Florida was given the key to the city and honorary citizenship at city hall. After the ceremony, he mingled with some of the 300 school children invited to the event. At left is the late, then-mayor Brian Gallery, who officiated. Mulroney had lived many years in Westmount before becoming PM, including at 68 Belvedere Rd., and upon his return from Ottawa in a house on Forden Crescent until 2015, where he and his wife Mila were often seen handing out Hallowe'en treats.

PHOTO: LAUREN SWEENEY



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427 AV. LANSDOWNE, WESTMOUNT
4 BEDS, 2+2 BATHS | **\$2,375,000**



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MMFA exhibit highlights connections between O’Keeffe, Moore, Canada



Art

VERONICA REDGRAVE

The just-opened exhibit at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) is an exclusive Canadian premiere.

It stars two 20th-century giants: artists Georgia O’Keeffe and Henry Moore. Although O’Keeffe was a painter and Moore primarily a sculptor, both sourced found objects for their creativity.

In particular, they were inspired by bones and stones. Curiously, though, they rejected gifts of stones: they preferred to discover their own.

Moore’s morphed into massive monumentality; O’Keeffe’s into luminous enlargements of nature, often flowers. Indeed, landscapes were pivotal to both artists.

Interestingly “in her first trip outside

the US, Georgia O’Keeffe chose to visit Montreal and the Gaspésie,” noted Stéphane Aquin, director MMFA.

These pioneering icons of modern art met only once in 1946 at New York’s MOMA (Museum of Modern Art) where Moore had a solo exhibition. O’Keeffe had a show there the same year.

Present at the launch of *Georgia O’Keeffe and Henry Moore, Giants of Modern Art*, were the MMFA’s president **André Dufour**, director **Stéphane Aquin**, director curatorial division **Mary-Dailey Desmarais**, **Jo-Anne Duchesne**, general director MMFA Foundation; **Iris Amizlev**, curator community engagement and projects; and **Henry Danowski**, grandson of Henry Moore.

From the San Diego Museum of Art were **Anita Feldman**, deputy director curatorial affairs, and **Roxana Velasquez Martínez del Campo**, CEO.

Organized by the San Diego Museum of Art, this exciting exhibit is complemented by events at the museum (mbam.qc.ca)



André Dufour, Jo-Anne Duchesne, Anita Feldman, Iris Amizlev, Roxana Velasquez Martínez del Campo, Henry Danowski and Stéphane Aquin.

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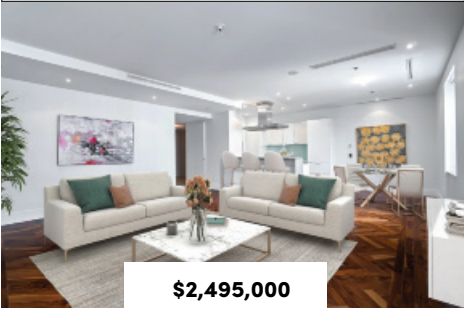
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September transfers: Summit Circle house sells for \$12M



Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in September 2023, gleaned from city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 15.

The majestic stone house at 90 Summit Circle became the first home to sell over \$10 million in 2023, according to the latest list of registrations.

The house, built for Gerald W. Birks in 1933, sold for exactly \$12 million, taking a long stride ahead of 619 Clarke Ave. which went for \$7,650,000 in July. The Montreal Real Estate Board shows six Westmount houses with asking prices over \$10 million, but even in Westmount the higher prices are meeting with resistance.

On the other hand, only two of the nine single-family sales in September were for less than \$2 million, with the lowest price involving 77 Somerville Ave., at \$1,300,000.

The percentage of houses that sold for more than \$2 million – 77 percent – is the

highest monthly percentage since October of 2022, when all of that month's eight sales were above that mark.

The average price in September was \$3,464,778, significantly boosted by the \$12 million for 90 Summit Circle. The median price, which in this case might be a little more indicative of the overall market, is \$2,378,000.

Mark-ups over valuation also covered a broad range, from -33.5 percent for the large house at 4318 Montrose Ave. to +56.1 percent for a row-house at 355 Olivier Ave. The average mark-up was 6.8 percent; the monthly averages have been hovering in a range between -10 and +10 percent for the entire year so far.

Condos

September also heralded the sale of five condominiums – three from successions/estates including four from apartment buildings and only one from a former duplex.

The price/valuation ratio was much more uniform, except for one ground-floor apartment at 1 Wood Ave. which spent more than eight months on the market and brought the month's lowest condo price, \$535,000, despite having a municipal valu-



90 Summit Circle. All photos taken February 27.

ation of \$878,400.

So far this year, the average price/valuation ratio for one- and two-family dwellings, based on the 2023 valuation roll, is 0.7 percent, basically saying the values have

not changed since 2021, the year the valuations are based on.

For condominiums, the average mark-up is 3.0 percent, so not much more than for homes.



77 Somerville.



355 Olivier.



4318 Montrose.

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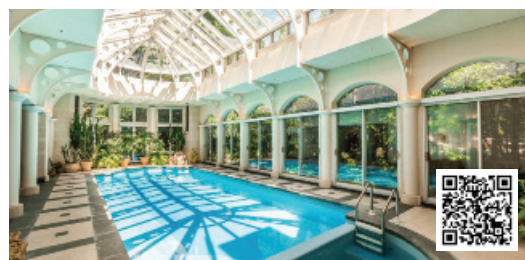
ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2023 VAL	RATIO (±%)
3200 Cedar	Xu Guiling	\$2,885,000	\$3,059,000	-5.7%
11 Douglas	Louis Arsenault & Maurice Côté	\$2,040,000	\$1,792,400	13.8%
667 Grosvenor	Robert Itzkovitz & Tania Cefaloni	\$3,450,000	\$2,700,000	27.8%
340 Kitchener	estate Pak Chow Cheong	\$2,350,000	\$2,319,700	1.3%
4318 Montrose	Susan Maclaren-Khan	\$1,480,000	\$2,224,100	-33.5%
355 Olivier	Warren Fremeth & Nina Vaccaro	\$3,300,000	\$2,113,800	56.1%
77 Somerville	Keith Carrier & Nicole Meloche	\$1,300,000	\$1,181,000	10.1%
90 Summit Circle	9333-6071 Québec Inc.	\$12,000,000	\$11,117,300	7.9%
4732 The Boulevard	Liufen Liu	\$2,378,000	\$2,699,700	-11.9%
CONDOMINIUMS				
77 Bruce	Elisabeth Evans Olders & Andrew Johnston	\$795,000	\$825,500	-3.7%
285 Clarke #402	estate Jacqueline Renaud	\$1,300,000	\$1,362,000	-4.6%
4175 St. Catherine #1405	estate Janet Molinas Modiano	\$1,450,000	\$1,339,900	8.2%
4700 St. Catherine #410	Frances Berg	\$1,150,000	\$1,084,900	6.0%
1 Wood #105	estate Raynald Bordeleau	\$535,000	\$878,400	-39.1%



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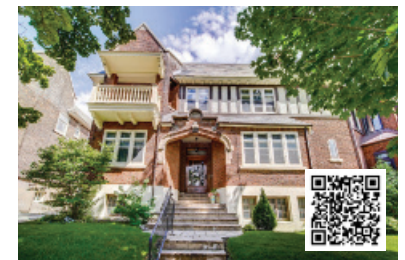
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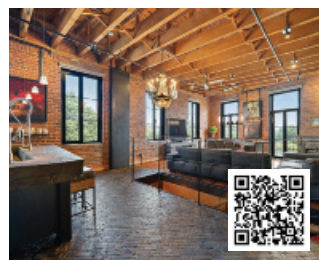
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Barrier for Greene rail bridge late, but coming ‘soon’

In our October 17, 2023 issue (p. 1), we wrote about work to erect a protective barrier on Greene below Dorchester to shield the rail bridge from truck strikes, which have occurred many times in recent and not-so-recent history.

The project was scheduled to be completed in January. When the *Independent* went by February 23 and March 4, there was no visible barrier. What’s up?

On February 26, Jean-Maxime St-Hilaire, spokesman the Réseau de transport métropolitain (EXO), which leases

the tracks from CP for its commuter trains, replied “We have completed all the electrical, structural and civil work and are now preparing for the last phase of the project.

“There is only one step left, which is the installation of the crash beam itself. We are currently consulting our partners to find the best time to do so.

“The work should be completed soon.”



This June 30, 2023 truck strike of the Greene Ave. rail bridge was the most recent one covered by the *Independent*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DENIS BOUCHER.



We thought we had problems in Westmount! According to the BBC on December 29, 2023: “Video shared on social media shows an [Air India scrap] plane jammed under a bridge in the city of Motihari, in the eastern Indian state of Bihar.”

PHOTO FROM VIDEO ON THE BBC WEBSITE, WITH THANKS TO PATRICK MARTIN FOR THE HEADS-UP.

Armoury, cont'd from p. 1

mously to sign an agreement for the Department of National Defence (listed as His Majesty the King) to purchase the armoury from the city.

The approaching expiry of the lease had been raised at the council as recently as December 4 when a change in signing officers for the agreement was adopted following the departure from the city of Legal Services director Denis Ferland.

The position is now held by Julia Levitin, appointed December 18 (see story January 16, p. 1).

It was in May 1937 that the lease was transferred from the RMR Foundation in a notarized deed to the Department of National Defence.

The regiment has been described as now the only “remaining” bilingual one in Canada.

Long negotiation

Negotiations regarding expiry of the lease have been ongoing for some years, over which an agreement had been reached between the city and DND. This agreement was hailed by the city as meaning the regiment itself would remain in Westmount and not be possibly relocated elsewhere by DND.

Aside from military use of the armoury, it is used by many local community groups including activities by the Montreal Oral School for the Deaf, some of city’s own sports programs, cadets, Scouts and also rented out to charitable groups.

Snow, cont'd from p. 1

last winter, the cost of actually removing it and transporting it to non-Westmount dumps has been \$485,162 compared to \$950,732 a year ago.

The use of the actual dumps themselves has been \$90,000 compared to last winter’s \$165,000.

In all, figures exclude such costs as those related to city vehicles, fuel, manpower, overtime and management teams.

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9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

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For more information on Leopold, please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, refer to his information page by his identification number, 52860346, and then click on the "Fill out the form" rectangle in order to provide contact information for the adoption coordinators to get back to you.

Leopold is a sweet companion, very cuddly and intelligent, he is waiting for a forever family and it would be wonderful if it could be yours.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



Adorable Rosie, thief of hearts



Westmount
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Her more formal Chihuahua name is Miss Rosita Margarita Florita Chiquita. Throughout days of cuddling and play, "Rosie" is her favourite name and she responds with great affection and interest. Delightfully pretty, her short fawn-coloured coat contrasts with her huge soulful brown eyes. Rosie is a thief of hearts!

Her story is unique, as she was brought to Montreal from Mexico a month ago by a Good Samaritan who took her home to three cats, which she gets along with quite well. Being in a high-rise apartment building downtown, the arrangements for getting in and out include hallways, an elevator and the lobby. This timeline does not work very well.

Rosie would be better in a home with faster access to the outdoors, a backyard or regular neighbourhood street frontage, and parks for routine pee breaks and walks. Rosie loves everyone and gets along beautifully with cats and dogs. She would



do well in another home with pet friends yet, as she is only a petite eight pounds, best in a home with children over 10 years of age.

She is very healthy, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. As part of her vetting, she is also having a full dental.

Rosie is up for adoption through the Gerdy's Rescues & Adoptions volunteer group. You can find out more about her by enquiring at their email address info@gerdysrescue.org, referring to their website at www.gerdysrescue.org or following them on their Facebook presence.

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What does Hydro Westmount do? A technical primer



T's Takes

RALPH THOMPSON

Newcomers to Westmount, as well as many long-time residents, may be curious about the different roles of Hydro Westmount and its big brother Hydro Quebec in supplying electricity to our homes, street lights, traffic signals and public facilities.

Public servants wax eloquent about the “enormous pride” they have in Hydro Westmount and, as a citizen for over 30 years, I can attest to its reliability, often waking on a cold winter morning to a warm home and hot coffee whilst hearing on the radio about prolonged power outages in other cities and regions of Quebec. Excluding major events such as the 1998 ice storm or routine maintenance work, power interruptions in Westmount are very rare in my experience. Even during the ice storm of 1998, Westmount fared much, much better than most areas of the province.

But one should also view Hydro Westmount in context.

It dates back to 1906 and earlier, when electricity supply in Quebec was a patchwork of standards, local generators and distributors. Subsequently, Quebec has led the world in hydroelectricity firsts, from the 30-year Beauharnois project, the largest run-off generating station in the world at the time to even bigger gambles at Churchill Falls in Labrador and the enormous James Bay complex.

Decisive action by the Quebec government, most notably by premiers Robert Bourassa and René Lévesque, has resulted



At lower left is the Hydro Westmount substation and control centre 995 Glen Rd. The tall building at top right is the city's incinerator, which has been unused since the 1960s and is slated for demolition (see May 17, 2022, p. 1). The building at top left is a part of the Public Works complex in the Corporation Yard, accessible from Bethune St.

in our enviable position today: a surplus of environmentally friendly, renewable energy and arguably the cheapest electricity in the world. It's hard to overstate this achievement.

Inexpensive Quebec electricity

The average price of electricity in Montreal in 2022 (<https://www.statista.com/>) was 7.59 cents per kilowatt-hour. By comparison, the average price of residential electricity in Edmonton was 19.48 cents per kilowatt-hour, more than double.

The cost without tax for my home in Westmount in the same time period was

8.58 cents per kilowatt-hour, although this may not be a representative comparison. (Our individual cost depends on many factors.)

Dams are the greatest generators of electricity in the province: 94 percent of Quebec's electricity is hydroelectric, and five percent comes from wind. And some remote communities still depend on oil-powered generators. Quebec's last nuclear generating facility, Gentilly-2, was permanently shut down in 2012, according to the National Energy Board.

Hydro Westmount's role

The big question. What does Hydro Westmount do?

To answer this, I had a meeting at the Glen Rd. substation with Hydro Westmount director Salah Bouziane February 12.

Firstly, Hydro Westmount does not generate any electricity and hasn't done so for about 70 years. It all comes from Hydro Quebec.

Indeed, all Westmount's electricity comes, with the exception of Alexis Nihon, from Poste Maisonneuve on St. Antoine St. near Greene Ave. This graffiti-dorbed concrete monolith at 3467 St. Antoine is like a heart, pumping life-giving electrical power to the body of Westmount. Ten 15 kilovolt (kV) lines, like blood vessels, run beneath the surface from Poste Maisonneuve to feed Westmount's four substations: Glen Rd., Olivier Ave., King George

Park and at the bowling green.

If Poste Maisonneuve were to go down, Westmount would be in the dark.

The substations step down the 15 kV lines to 5 kV and distribute the power in a radial design, underground to localized blocks of residential or commercial buildings, where the voltage is stepped down again to split phase 120/240 volts. These lines connect to our homes.

For most, the three black cables running between our properties and our rear neighbours, with large grey, pole-mounted transformers every few hundred feet, are the two out-of-phase lines plus one neutral one that supply our properties with 120 and 240 volts of power.

For commercial or large needs, three phase 347/600 volts are provided, identifiable by the triple, pole-mounted transformers.

Some fortunate property blocks are supplied underground. The radial rather than a mesh topology, combined with redundancy, are key to our its reliability according to Bouziane.

The network, and its back-up

Two underground 5 kilovolt cables, a “normal” and “reserve” line, connect one of the four substations to a local block of, for example, two rows of houses back to back.

The “normal” cable is the main supply and “reserve” is a back-up that can be switched on if the normal supply fails or



Hydro Quebec's “Poste Maisonneuve,” which supplies all the electricity to Westmount with the exception of Alexis Nihon.



Control monitors at the Glen Rd. substation are manned 24/7. The four corner monitors provide active schematics of the distribution from each of the four substations. The active map on the right shows where normal or reserve power is operating. Possibly, maintenance is being conducted in the reserve blocks, but this would be invisible to the households because of duplicate lines.

is undergoing maintenance.

Also, back-up connections between substations are available, e.g. the Olivier substation can supply Glen Rd. Battery banks can be connected as a supply for circuit breaker control and operations.

For those who dislike those ugly wires behind our properties, Hydro Westmount may be able to locate them underground, presumably for a contiguous block, but it comes at a cost.

Some blocks in Westmount do have underground connections to their properties with the additional benefit of reliability and unimpeded views of their neighbours' backyards.

The whole network is monitored and

controlled, manually, from the Glen Rd. substation facilities. Four screens are used to monitor each of the four substation networks plus a fifth screen displays a map, visually identifying which zones are operating on the normal or reserve supply.

Bouziane explained that Hydro Westmount is responsible for all the electrical supply and maintenance of the cables, wires, poles, street lights and traffic signals, although certain tasks like replacing poles are subcontracted to specialists.

Hydro Westmount has 36 employees, who monitor, control and maintain the system 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Most would agree that managing this vital resource locally, like other city functions, is tremendously advantageous.

Local services handled on a larger scale would be detrimental. We have the best of both worlds. We benefit from an ecologically friendly and efficient province-wide grid and from an efficient and responsive local service.

Would I have got an interview with the director of Hydro Quebec in a couple of days?

Westmount contracts Hydro Quebec to purchase 94 megaWatts of power. This allows for a small surplus.

The highest demand experienced by Hydro Westmount was in 2019 when the demand reached 87 megawatts, according to Bouziane. At the time that I visited the Glen Rd. centre – which was at around 11 am, not a peak time – the four substations were distributing between 4 and 10 MW, a total of about 32 MW, well below the maximum availability.

Westmount has requested tenders from outside experts to assess the cost of future maintenance and upgrade work to Hydro Westmount's service and infrastructure, with an expectation that demand could double in the next 25 years (see January 23,



2009

On February 6, 2009, Hydro Westmount's then new control panel was unveiled by then Hydro Westmount director Pierre Dubé and operator Robert Radu. See February 10-11, 2009, p. 9 for story.

PHOTO: LAUREEN SWEENEY.

p. 3). Bouziane feels this demand might be a little exaggerated.

Hydro Westmount runs like a not-for-profit entity: any surplus revenue must be

fed back into the operations. Electricity rates are regulated throughout Quebec by Régie de l'énergie, meaning that Westmount cannot sell electricity for higher rates than elsewhere in Quebec but rates vary according to differing volume, usage and many other factors.

The 2024 budget for Hydro Westmount (available at Westmount.org) shows expected gross revenue of \$32 million and Hydro Quebec costs of \$23.5 million.

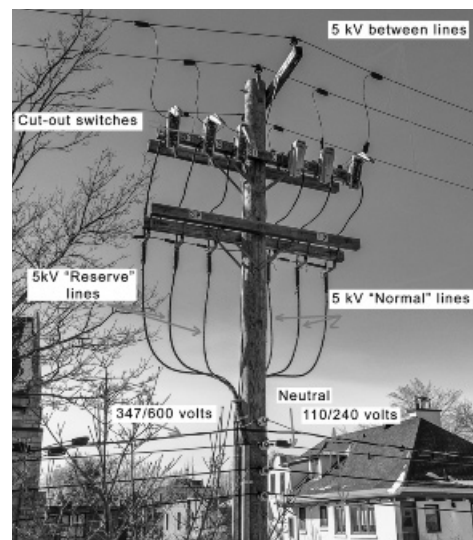
More information on electricity in Westmount & Quebec

- "Exploring the secrets of Westmount's electric utility" by Laureen Sweeney (July 15, 2008, p. 1).
- A historical summary was provided by then director of Hydro Westmount Benoit Hurtubise on February 20, 2014 at a Westmount Historical Association lecture (see February 25, 2014, p. 7).
- A summary of the history of electrical generation in Quebec: www.hydroquebec.com/history-electricity-in-quebec/
- A comparison of rates between provinces: energyrates.ca/the-main-electricity-sources-in-canada-by-province/

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A hydro pole beside Westmount Park. Duplicate underground 5kV lines provide normal and reserve electricity to the overhead lines. Three lines at the bottom of the photograph provide neutral and split phase 120/240 volts for residences. Above these three lines is a twisted three-phase 347/600 volt cable, in this case to power the refrigerated skating rink and some underground drainage pumps next to Westmount Park United Church.

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‘Westmount 150’ sells out first event



A crowd assembled February 22 at Victoria Hall for a sold-out event in celebration of Westmount's 150th anniversary. For more coverage, see February 27, p. 21.



Violinist Emilie Livernois-Desroches and circus artist Sarah Louis-Jean performed.



Former mayor Peter Trent, right, pictured with former city councillor George Bowser, was part of the comedy side of the evening.



Comedy duo Bowser & Blue sang, played guitar and harmonica, and told jokes.

Lorenzetti Foundation gala raises \$800k for mental health



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

The Barry F. Lorenzetti Foundation gala took place at Maison Principale. Foundation founder **Barry Lorenzetti** is chair and CEO of BFL Canada Inc., an independent insurance company. A supporter of women in sports and business, the Barry F. Lorenzetti Centre for Women Entrepreneurship and Leadership at Concordia University bears his name.

The soirée was held under the honourable presidency of **Lisa Giannone**, CEO BFL Canada. Over 400 guests attended the fifth annual evening hosted by **Natasha Gargiulo**.

Amazing entertainment included Barry himself! The line-up also included **Brittany Kennell**, country singer and NBC's *The Voice* former contestant; Montreal comedians **Joey Elias** and **Joe Cacchione**; The Perpetual Praise Ministries Choir; **Denis Ducharme** and the Other Side of Cool; and singers **Gwen Torriani** and **Mackenzie Moreau**. continued on p. 22



From left, standing: Justin Lorenzetti, Michèle and Jean Laurin, James Bickerton, Pauline Kabitsis and Julie Chu; seated: Mike Dorfman, Barry Lorenzetti and Carine Watier-Lorenzetti, Sophie Methot and Caroline Ouellette.





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Lisa Giannone.



Steve Moreau, Renee Kessler, Norm Steinberg and Nancy Moreayu.



Vittorio Rossi.



Joe Cacchione and Natasha Gargiulo.

Social notes, cont'd from p. 21

Moreau sang the grand finale, *I'll Stand by You*, accompanied by Lorenzetti and the other performers.

Caterer Traiteur Brera and bar master Brahm Mauer ensured guests had a delicious time.

Seated at the head table were Barry and his wife Carine Watier-Lorenzetti, Michèle and Jean Laurin, Pauline Kabitsis and James Bickerton, Julie Chu, Mike Dorfman, Sophie Methot, Olympic hockey gold medalist Caroline Ouellette, and Liv McIlvenney and Justin Lorenzetti, president BFL Foundation.

Guests included Beatrice Addona and Romeo Argento, Lisa Giannone and Frank Montoro, Michelina Borelli and Herve Doucat, Peter Perdakis, Karen and Brian Parsons, playwright Vittorio Rossi and Shahira Rhoualem.

Also noted were National Bank executive vp, head of commercial and private banking Michael Denham and his wife

Laura Denham, Lotta Braam and Mark Weightman, CEO Montreal Alouettes; Diana Ferrara and Sam Scalia, president Samcon; Sandra Vaz and Danny Maciocia, general manager, Montreal Alouettes; Rogers exec Paolo Fortugno and Ristorante Da Vinci's Vince Amodeo and Lavy Mainuddin.

BFL vice chair Norm Steinberg attended with his wife Renee Kessler.

The Ritz-Carlton's Gwen Torriani and Katia Piccolino were noted as was Carlo Petosa, senior vp and regional manager, STARR companies.

Also enjoying the fun night were Sal Guerrero, Frank Niro, Sal Parasuco, Tony Zara, Vince Tassone, Tommy Alberga, David Colasurdo, Sabino Grassi, Rocco Tassone and Darren Carmosino.

The gala raised \$800,000 towards the foundation's mission to help de-stigmatize mental health and to support veterans who suffer from PTSD.



Barry Lorenzetti with Perpetual Praise.



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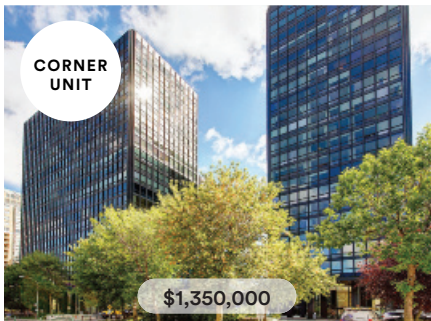
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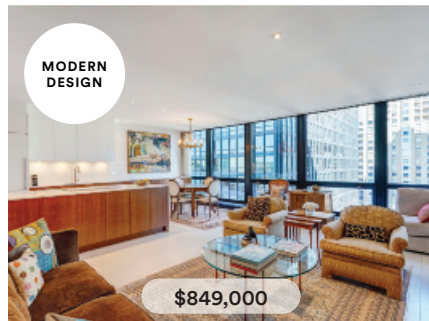
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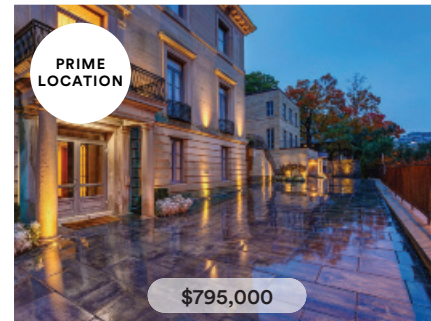
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