

Closing the books on fiscal 2023

City re-allocates 2023 surpluses, prepares for 2024 capital works

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

City council March 18 re-allocated some of the city's surpluses to designate specific uses related to the 2023 capital works projects.

This is the time when any surplus appropriations from the 2023 fiscal year must be made before the year-end audit coming soon, explained Councillor Antonio D'Amico in moving approval of a resolution to re-balance surpluses.

The council designates some of the city's surplus funds by appropriating them to specific projects. This means "they cannot be used for purposes other than those designated by council," according to the resolution.

As a result, the council designated \$10,000 from the city's unappropriated sur-

plus to the pay-as-you-go (PAYG) project account for the 2023 year as already budgetted. It also moved an amount of \$1,827,056 from a previously appropriated COVID-19 surplus account into the PAYG account for the 2023 fiscal year along with another \$6,016,600 from the fiscal year ended on December 31.

As well, the re-balancing of surplus accounts does not affect PAYG projects as projected for 2024-2025-2026, according to the city's Finance department.

Despite the recent surplus re-balancing, "I can confirm that the city will (still) be borrowing to finance the cost of the Upper Lansdowne Road Construction Project (for 2024)," D'Amico told the *Independent*.

This is one of this year's major projects.

A loan by-law for some \$7.7 million was projected *continued on p. 9*

Spotted in Vic village: the Easter bunny



Steeven Chapados was seen on Victoria Ave. March 28 buying an Easter bunny at Leonidas Culture Chocolat for his daughter. Chapados is a creative artist whose work "The Moon" is on display at the Canadian Space Agency and is featured in his book *Lune: Culture-Nature-Exploration*. His portraiture includes Celine Dion and Pope John Paul II.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Concern at 4030 Dorchester since 2016: falling masonry

Court postponement leads to extension of fencing contract

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

In a series of city measures to safeguard traffic and pedestrian passers-by at a "dilapidated" castle-like house at 4030 Dorchester, city council March 18 voted to extend a contract for protective fencing at the high-profile building until June 2024.

The recent cost of \$1,076 awarded to Scaffolds Plus (Laval) comes in addition to

a previous amount of \$111,772 and another of \$53,296 in October as court actions continue to be delayed (see story October 31, 2023, p. 11).

Given the high profile of the house and its ongoing condition at the western/entry lane of Weredale Park road, the recent additional costs resulted from additional court postponements in the city's plans to be reim- *continued on p. 6*

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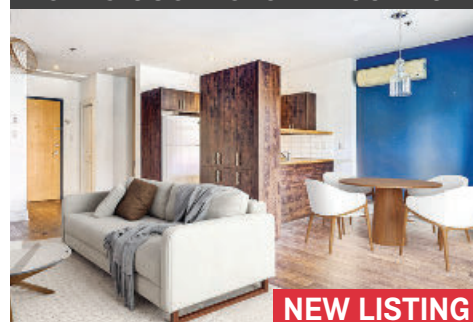
STUNNING DETACHED HOME



FEATURED

Westmount | 621 Ch. de la Côte-St-Antoine
\$2,900,000

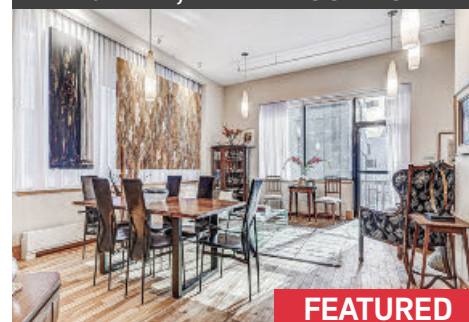
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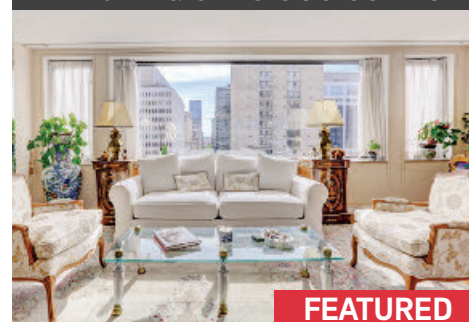
SUNNY 3-BED W/ PARKING



FEATURED

Ville-Marie | 4100 Ch. de la Côte-des-
Neiges, apt. 16 | \$950,000

BRIGHT & SPACIOUS CONDO



FEATURED

Golden Square Mile | 1455 Rue Sherbrooke
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FAMILY HOME W/ POOL



FEATURED

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Man in shock from midnight accident Public Security finds car driver hemmed in by air bag near 'POM'



PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT PUBLIC SECURITY.

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

A car travelling on St. Catherine St. March 27 just before midnight mounted and crossed the sidewalk outside the condo building at civic number 4700 east of Lansdowne, the former POM Bakery, Public Security officials said. It almost hit a fire hydrant and spun around a tree, deploying the air bags.

Officers responding to the call for the accident at 11:51 pm found it to be much more serious than reported. They cut away

air bags to extricate the driver and stayed with him until the arrival of Urgences Santé, fire department and police.

In a state of shock, the man was believed to have suffered a possible broken nose and was taken to the Montreal General Hospital by Urgences Santé. Two bystanders were spoken to, but it was reported that there were no actual witnesses.

Officers blocked eastbound traffic at Lansdowne to enable the work of Urgences Santé.

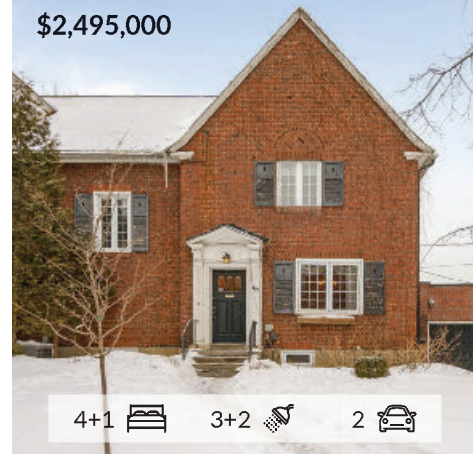
Pedestrian rage on Sherbrooke

An eastbound red car glided through a red light on Sherbrooke at Prince Albert March 27. The *Independent* saw the young male driver turn the vehicle to go north/left on Prince Albert, at which time an older male pedestrian whose route he crossed smacked the back of the car. – WI.

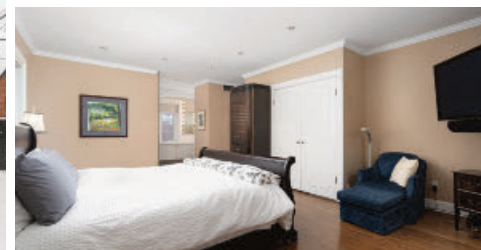
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Weiser/Laprise event, p. 29

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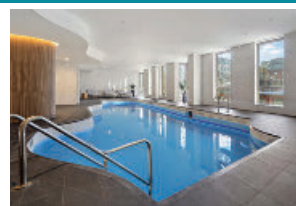
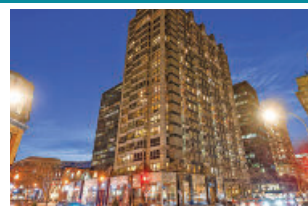
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579 Av. Roslyn, Westmount
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32 Ch. Edgehill, Westmount
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15 Surrey Gardens, Westmount
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59 Av. Oakland, Westmount
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586 Av. Claremont, Westmount
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642 Av. Murray Hill, Westmount
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573 Av. Grosvenor, Westmount
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Le Boulevard, Westmount Adj



SIGNIFICANT SALE

Av. Montrose, Westmount



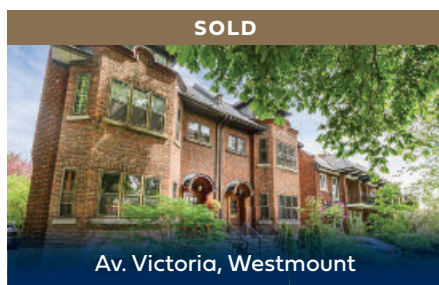
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SOLD

The Ritz-Carlton, Ville-Marie



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4030 Dorchester on March 29. PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

4030 Dorchester, cont'd from p. 1

bursed by the owner.

“It's been such a long-running case that the protective fencing still has to be maintained,” District 8 councillor Kathleen Kez told the *Independent* last week.

City inspectors began issuing notices to the building's owner in 2016 when masonry was noticed falling from the facade. A protective tunnel along Weredale Park that was installed additionally has since been removed.



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Resident Breslaw confused by mayor's, DG's replies

Questioner seeks up-to-date evaluations of land, RMR armoury

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

What are the up-to-date valuations of the armoury and land occupied by the Royal Montreal Regiment (RMR), which the city has agreed to sell to the federal Department of National Defence (DND) for an undisclosed amount?

And did the city solicit any independent professional assessment evaluations before agreeing to the terms of the sale?

These are questions being asked by Jon Breslaw of Grosvenor Ave. that led to allegedly confusing and contradictory answers after two requests under Quebec's Access to Information process.

He initially asked for up-to-date assessments (2020-2023) at the council meeting May 1, 2023 after the RMR sale agreement to DND had been approved by council at its meeting April 17, 2023. The city had said at that time it would disclose the sale amount once it had occurred (see story April 25, 2023, p. 1).

Existing valuation

Evaluations that Breslaw knew of dated from 2020, he explained at the May 1 meeting. These were some \$2 million for the land and \$1 million for the building.

Mayor Christina Smith replied (starting at minute 35:40) that "there have been multiple assessments." The amounts had changed and that they were "within the file" and she would get back to him so as not "to misspeak."

Breslaw did not wait and turned to the Commission for Access to Information (CAI) to obtain these documents.

In response to the commission's reply to Breslaw's request, the city sent a copy of a December 2020 report by evaluators Jones Lang Lasalle Services immobiliers inc., with which Breslaw was already familiar.

Second Access to Information request

This answer left him confused. What new amounts had the mayor been alluding to?

As a result, he sent a second request to the commission in February of this year, to which the commission responded stating that Westmount director general Julie Mandeville, in her capacity as acting city clerk, had written back on February 13, 2024 that she could find no written or electronic evaluation reports done by or for the city.

Furthermore, Mandeville wrote that the December 2020 report from Jones, Lang, Lasalle had not been commissioned by the city, but by the DND, and had been fur-



The RMR armoury on St. Catherine St. on March 29.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

nished in "good faith" by the city under a "broad interpretation" of Breslaw's request.

Breslaw calls these responses "deeply troubling."

Did the city obtain independent evaluations at all? And if not, why not?

Breslaw said he plans to continue his questioning at the next city council meeting, which is April 8.

As he told the *Independent*: "Why would the city not commission an evaluation of the RMR [armoury and land], knowing that the lease was expiring and the Department of National Defence had expressed interest in buying the building?"

"One fact stands out," Breslaw said: "By not undertaking an evaluation in this context ... Westmount has failed egregiously in its fiduciary responsibility to its citizens."

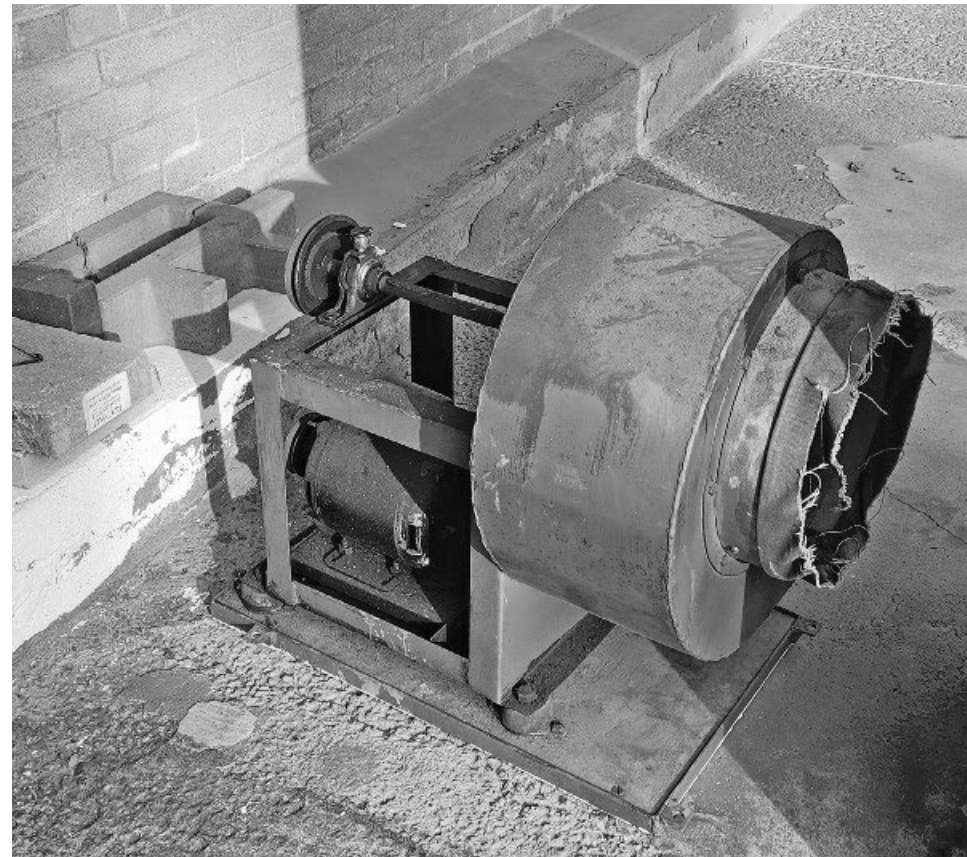
Amounts to be disclosed

The closing date of the sale has now been extended to April 2025 (see March 5, 2024, p. 1).

The RMR is located at 4625 St. Catherine adjacent to the Westmount recreation centre.

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 continues to pay \$1 a year in rent.

WUT? Weird urban trash



This piece of equipment was being discarded in the alleyway behind 310 Victoria Ave. March 22.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Correction & Update

Mountainside's Revah says residential zoning changed by city after purchase

In our March 19 article about the proposed project at the former Mountainside Church on The Boulevard ("Mountainside project still waiting, says developer Revah," p. SL-26), we mistakenly represented the developer, Daniel Revah, by writing: "He said that prior to purchasing the property, he realized he faced the task of convincing the city to grant him residential status."

The opposite is true.

According to Revah, and as he clearly expressed in his interview last month, he bought the property with residential zoning in place. He also contends that during the submission process for the development, he received reassurance from the city that residential use of the religious property was allowed. According to Revah, the city proceeded to change the by-law afterwards, thereby excluding residential

use of the property.

Our reporter misheard Revah during the interview, for which we apologize.

These recent statements are consistent with what Revah said to the *Independent* over three years ago: "Revah insisted that in addition to its religious zoning, Mountainside Church is also zoned for single-family residential development. 'It has multiple zoning,' he said," (November 10, 2020, p. 19).

Update: 'Cautiously optimistic'

As of last week, Revah is cautiously optimistic that, with certain modifications to the proposed re-development now being presented to the city, it will value and approve the project, and end what he calls "the unfortunate stalemate of so many years in limbo." - DP

Unleashed dog runs around lagoon in Westmount Park

The guardian of a dog was ticketed \$232 for allowing it to run unleashed March 24 in Westmount Park, Public Security officials report. A patroller witnessed the dog at 1:26 pm running around the lagoon while the guardian threw items for it to retrieve. The area was where the well-known willow tree had once stood.

Identified as a Westmount resident, the man was told that in future the dog would have a better place to run in the nearby

dog run. The dog also needed a licence tag. A statement of offence for \$232 was issued for allowing the dog to run loose in the park.

In the same way as the driver of a vehicle needs a licence and must stop at a red light, the city's dog regulations "are pretty straight forward," said Public Security director Greg McBain. "Dog owners need to obtain a licence, keep the dog leashed and pick up the poop."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MUSIC NURTURES OUR SOULS

I was delighted to read about Dorothy Fieldman Fraiberg's musical series featured in Social Notes (March 19, p. 17).

Music nurtures our souls and brings people together. Because of Mme. Fieldman Fraiberg's vision, the Allegra fundraiser brings young musicians together with masters of their instruments.

I hope there will be another to celebrate their sixteenth anniversary. I'd like to be at Schulich Hall to hear and watch the magic.

CAROLINE JONDAHL, ST. CATHERINE ST.

LET THE SCIENTISTS SET GHG TARGETS

Anna Gainey, MP for NDG-Westmount, has invited Westmount residents to weigh in on "Canada's national greenhouse gas emission reduction target for 2035."

I believe that determining GHG reduction targets should be the purview of scientists. On the eve of World War II, did the federal government ask its citizens for their opinions regarding military strategy?

Perhaps the Canadian government is seeking citizen input re: GHG reduction targets in order to justify its current lack of serious commitment regarding the ongoing emergency of climate change.

MEGAN DURNFORD, VICTORIA AVE.

THOUGHTS ON GARBAGE, GARDENS

Westmount's upcoming garbage collection schedule (starting May 1, see November 14, 2023, p. 1) makes good environmental sense. Many municipalities have been doing it for years. Anything that gets us to think about how much waste we produce is a good thing.

Since doing my recycling properly and

starting to compost, I only fill up a small white kitchen bag every three weeks. But I also do make the effort to leave stores with as little plastic as possible.

If people worry about their garbage starting to stink, it means they are still not composting. It's not complicated or difficult to do, and it's a positive environmental step everyone can take. It reduces landfill waste and turns food waste into valuable soil. Win-win.

If you're worried about the smell, you can keep a small bin or paper bag in the freezer, and only take it out on the counter while you are cooking or cleaning up, and then again on pick-up day.

Really, it's not as hard as you think.

*

When is a memorial garden not a garden?

The \$770,000 budget for the Douglas Firstbrook Ellis memorial garden has had me pleasantly curious for a while! I was imagining all the beautiful trees, shrubs and (dare I hope) native pollinator plants that a budget like that could afford! A lovely project in my mind.

The sketch released in the *Indie* March 19 (p. 1, 10) was a disappointing surprise. It is a cement, gravel and metal walkway. It is a very strange decision, a very strange design, and a shame.

Why not drop the word "garden," and move the display inside the recreation centre? It would be an interesting, location-appropriate feature there, and allow the wildflowers to continue to grow on that hill.

The thing is, it's not a garden - unless you're thinking Madison Square Garden. But then, why in a park?

PENNY ARSENAULT, ST. CATHERINE ST.



The area southwest of the Westmount recreation centre on March 29 where the Doug Ellis Memorial Garden will be built.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Ticket issued for riding gas scooter in Stayner Park

The driver of a gasoline-powered scooter was ticketed \$81 for riding it in Stayner Park when spotted March 27 at 12:27 pm, according to Public Security officials. The

operator, identified as a 21-year-old man, disembarked and parked it outside the park, but was told that riding it in a city park was "unacceptable."

Capital works, cont'd from p. 1

as one of the ways the city would be financing its 2024 capital works budget of \$35.5 million (January 16, p. 8).

Preparing for 2024 infrastructure work

The 2024 capital works budget calls for:

- \$9.7 million for roads and street lights;
- \$9 million for buildings;
- \$6.5 million for water and sewer work;
- \$4.9 million for parks;
- \$2.4 million for electrical distribution by Hydro Westmount;
- \$2.2 million for vehicles, and
- \$0.9 million for IT.

Park work includes pathways in Westmount and King George parks as well as in Summit Woods. Included is the creation of the Douglas Ellis Memorial Garden in Westmount Park (see plan March 19, p. 1).

◀ Upper Lansdowne on March 29. Major street work is scheduled for this year. ▼

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.



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No more music from these flowers



In our April 26, 2022 issue (p. 1), we reported on the city's plan to install in Westmount Park "four musical 'flowers' ... whose pedals create different musical notes when struck with a small hammer." The flowers were installed, but the hammers have been removed. Too much noise for caregivers? Too tempting for vandals? We don't know.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

A whole family of bins



As seen on Melville Ave. near Westmount Park School March 26.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Police Report

'Flash mob' thieves rob Sherbrooke boutique in broad daylight

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

While there have been no overnight break-ins for a while at high-end clothing and fashion retailers along Sherbrooke St., a brazen robbery at one boutique on March 23 suggests they are still being targeted by thieves.

Likening the incident to a smaller version of a "flash mob robbery," Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit said two male suspects walked briskly into the store around 3 pm, "grabbed clothes off the hangers and walked out."

He referred to the retailer as "a very high-end store" and that the suspects stole nearly a dozen designer women's bathing suits with a value of around \$400 each.

"They grabbed the bathing suits and ran out," he said, adding that they made good their escape on foot.

Although the suspects are described as two white males in their 30s, and their actions were clearly recorded by security cameras, no further information about them is being made available by the police as the incident is the subject of an open investigation.

Cash missing

Police at Station 12 received complaints in recent weeks from car owners in Westmount claiming their vehicles were broken into and robbed.

One Sherbrooke St. resident filed a report on March 24, saying he was out driving that afternoon to several banks and stores in Westmount to pay bills and make purchases.

After a few stops, he suddenly realized that an envelope containing cash that he thought he'd placed on the passenger seat beside him was missing.

"He believes he had left it in the vehicle," said Cst. Yigit, noting that the complainant wasn't completely certain whether he had dropped the envelope or whether he had left the car unlocked and vulnerable to a robbery.

There were no visible signs of forced entry.

Land Rover stolen

Although a recent wave of car thefts in Westmount appears to have settled down for the time being, at least one such incident was reported in Westmount last week.

On March 25, a 2020 blue Land Rover was reported stolen by its owner on Clarke Ave. Security camera images obtained by the investigators revealed that the theft took place between 5 and 5:30 am.

Apple products stolen from car

A couple visiting the lookout on Westmount's summit during the afternoon on March 25 learned the hard way about the perils of leaving the car for a relatively short

period of time with valuables unconcealed.

Upon returning a half-hour later after admiring the view, they found a car window had been shattered and several items were missing. These included a MacBook laptop, an iPad tablet and an Apple iPhone.

"Don't take it for granted that you won't be gone for long and that no one will take your stuff," said Yigit.

Update: Items were stolen

Cst. Yigit issued an update regarding a break-and-enter incident that took place sometime between 2 and 4 am on March 22 at an apartment building on Clarke Ave. and was reported on last week (March 26, p. 6).

At that time, the glass front door of the building was shattered, although investigators initially believed at the time that none of the apartments inside had been broken into and nothing was reported to be missing.

Subsequent to that, according to Yigit, the building manager provided additional information to the police, stating that he took a second look at security camera footage in which a suspect is seen heading to the basement garage.

The building manager also reported that maintenance and construction equipment were stolen from the basement. Among these were Milwaukee and DeWalt power tools.

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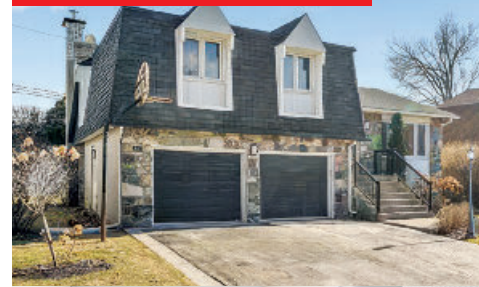
Dorchester lot for sale



This for-sale sign, photographed March 29, has gone up since the March 15 photo published in our March 19 Spotlight (p. SL-9). The asking price for the land on Dorchester west of Greene is \$3 million plus GST and PST. A project was approved for this site early last year (see January 24, 2023, p. 1), but it is presumably on hold now.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Open House April 7 - 2-4



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Spring means green, St. Patrick's



From left, Logan and Alex were still enjoying what was left of the toboggan run without toboggans March 15 on a beautiful warm sunny afternoon in King George (Murray) Park. The Roslyn students had been celebrating St. Patrick's Day at school so both boys were wearing green tees but no sweaters or down jackets.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.

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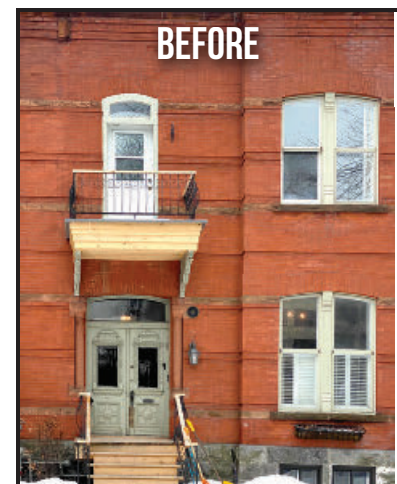
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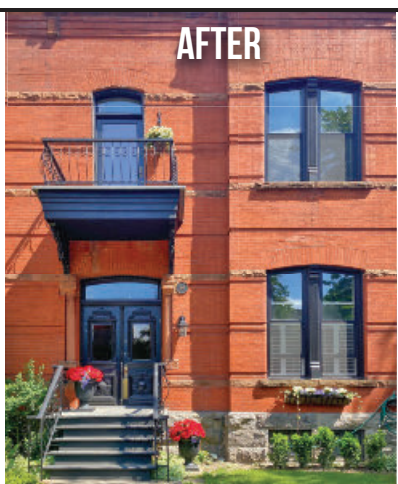
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ea.

KEDEM
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2³⁹
ea.

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SWEET AND SOUR OR
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SELECTED VARIETIES
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ea.

B'GAN
APPLE JUICE
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ea.

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ea.

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STREIT'S
MATZO BALL & SOUP MIX
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2⁹⁹
ea.

STREIT'S
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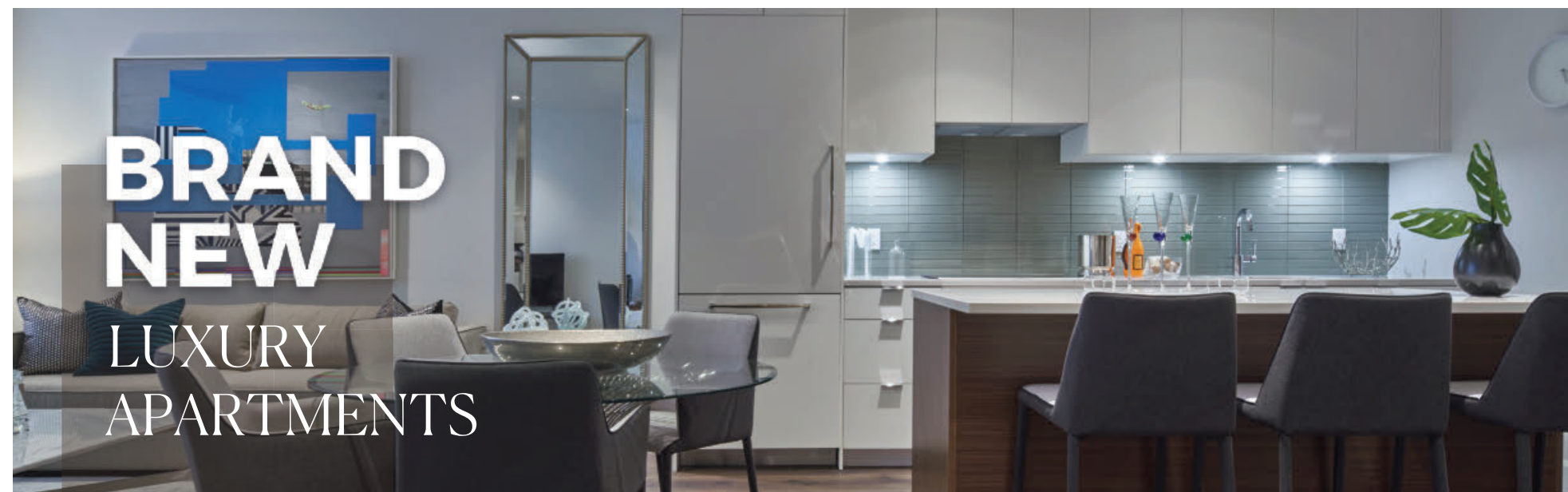
*Specials in effect from April 4th to April 10th, 2024 at Metro Queen Mary (5201 Queen Mary Road, Montréal), Metro Plus Wilderton (2875 Van Horne Avenue, Montréal), Metro Plus Westmount (4840 Sherbrooke W Street, Montréal). The regularity of fruit and vegetable supplies is at the mercy of weather conditions. We reserve the right to limit quantities. In the event of a shortage, please ask for a deferred purchase voucher. No sales to merchants. Photos for information only. TM : brand owned by METRO RICHELIEU INC.

Looking east, from Westmount



A panorama from above King George (Murray) Park, looking across eastern Westmount towards downtown on March 8.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



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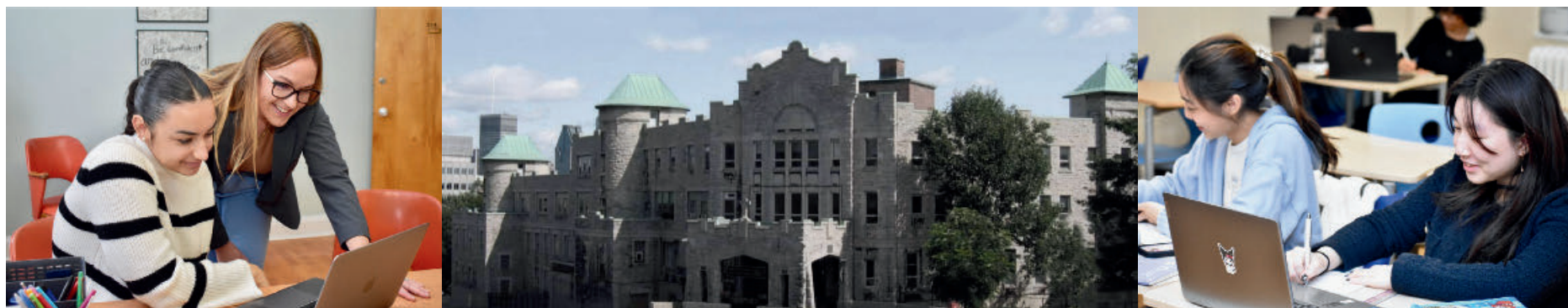


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Greek, Canadian PMs stop by Balos



Right, the owners of Balos restaurant on St. Catherine St. near Gladstone Ave., Hara Lapatsani, left, and her husband Bobby Michailidis, centre, flank Greek prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, as they pose with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and chef Tasso Konidis, right, on March 24. The two PMs had been in Park Extension earlier in the day at a parade celebrating Greek independence (see March 26, p. 1). Above, a larger group at the restaurant.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BALOS.

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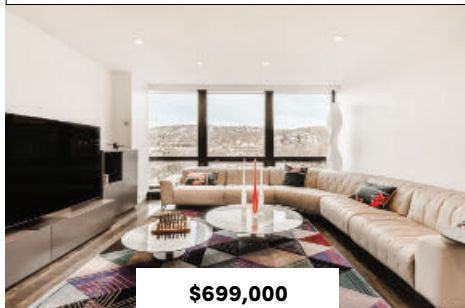
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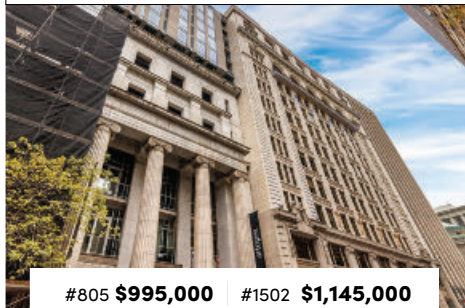
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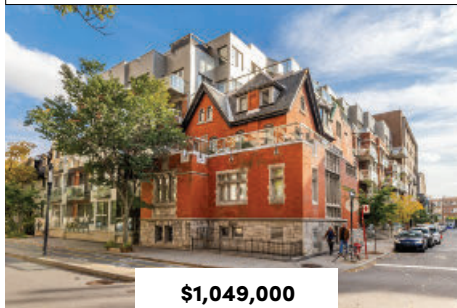
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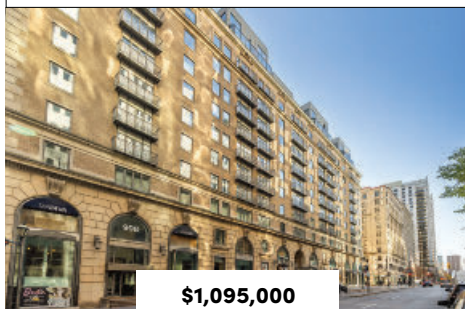
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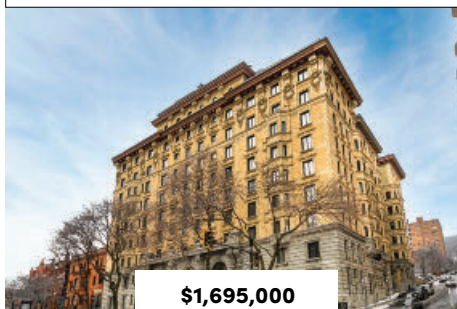
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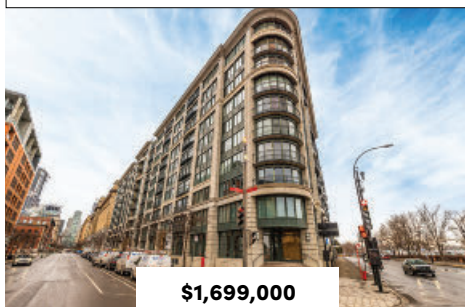
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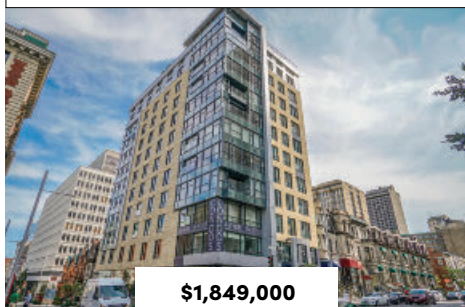
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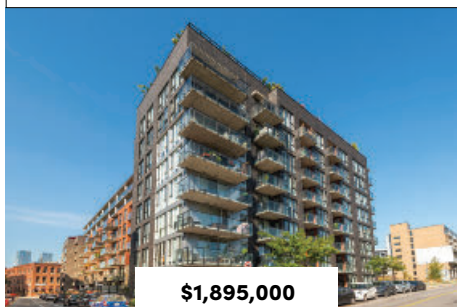
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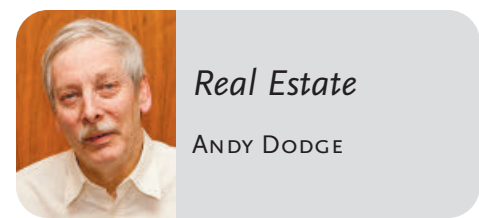
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Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

October transfers: Average mark-up over valuation jumps to 31.1 percent, a 2023 high



69 Prospect.



110 Columbia.

Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in October 2023, gleaned from city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 19.

A wide range of sale prices and price: valuation ratios helped boost the average price of a Westmount home to more than \$3 million and the average mark-up over

the 2023 valuation to 31 percent, meaning the “typical” Westmount house might have sold last October for more than \$3,337,812, its second-highest point since June 2022, when the same house might have sold for \$3,363,627.

The main feature of last October was the sale of 118 Upper Bellevue Ave. for

\$11,500,000, more than double its municipal valuation of \$5,695,100. It had been the home of Carrie Kastner and her husband, Gary Garbarino, a well-known building contractor, since 2014. The price ranks second thus far in 2023 after the \$12 million price of 90 Sunnyside Ave. in September, and sixth highest for a home in West-

mount’s history.

From there, the residential prices went all the way down to \$1,250,000 for 69 Prospect St.

Four of the prices cleared \$3 million but, with six of the 13 less than \$2 million, the median price was only \$2,260,000.

And while the highest-priced house also represented the highest mark-up over valuation in October, the second-lowest-priced house at 110 Columbia Ave. drew the biggest mark-down of the month, as the \$1,300,000 price tag represented only 81.1 percent of its municipal valuation.

Overall, the 13 sales averaged a very strong 31.1 percent above valuation, by far the highest monthly ratio so far this year, which was the first year for comparison with the new assessment roll. The previous high was eight percent in June, and four of the ten months so far have averaged negative figures.

Condos

Condominiums also *continued on p. 20*

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Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in October 2023

ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2023 VAL	RATIO (±%)
62 Chesterfield	Carol Buckingham	\$1,630,000	\$1,677,700	-2.8%
570 Claremont	Katarzyna (Kate) Bohdanowicz, Danuta Bohdanowicz-Dworzecka & Andrzej Bohdanowicz-Dworzecki	\$2,260,000	\$1,359,000	66.3%
110 Columbia	Beverley Leblanc & Gregor McGregor	\$1,300,000	\$1,603,600	-18.9%
181 Metcalfe	Peter Dalfen & Julie Timmins	\$1,320,000	\$881,900	49.7%
4293 Montrose	Richard McLachlan & Betty Edwards	\$1,700,000	\$1,677,100	1.4%
639 Murray Hill	Sovack Enterprises Inc.	\$2,975,000	\$1,925,200	54.5%
69 Prospect	Gregg Montpetit & Andrée St-Laurent	\$1,250,000	\$1,201,300	4.1%
44 Roxborough	estate Nina Schlesinger Spiegel	\$3,240,000	\$3,075,600	5.3%
9 Severn	Yan Zhang	\$3,900,000	\$4,686,000	-16.8%
3186 The Boulevard	Lino Maurizio & Annie Cardinal	\$5,300,000	\$3,453,400	53.5%
33 Thornhill	Mary Home	\$1,445,000	\$1,453,300	-0.6%
118 Upper Bellevue	Carrie Kastner	\$11,500,000	\$5,695,100	101.9%
4350 Westmount Ave.	Gilles Cohen & Nadine Jachimowicz	\$2,700,000	\$2,214,100	21.9%
CONDOMINIUMS				
399 Clarke #7A	Andrea Bobkowicz	\$850,000	\$856,000	-0.7%
267 Olivier #304	Samuel Castaing	\$460,000	\$520,000	-11.5%
4175 St. Catherine # 502	Brian Rosen & Jessica Elbaum	\$1,864,000	\$1,392,800	33.8%
4175 St. Catherine # 802	estate Ruth Lauter	\$2,100,000	\$1,771,900	18.5%
4821 St. Catherine	Veronique Cohen & Zachary Neuman	\$580,000	\$522,600	11.0%
1 Wood # 406	estate Barbara Moscovotch	\$1,200,000	\$1,237,400	-3.0%
1 Wood # 508	Ida Cernis	\$905,000	\$1,119,600	-19.2%



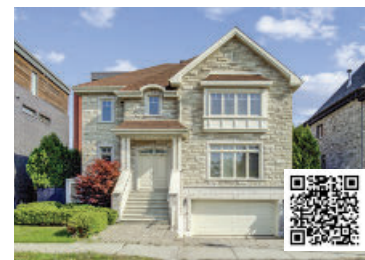
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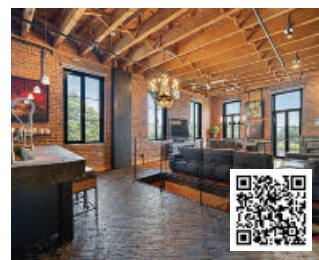
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627 Av. Murray Hill
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56 Rue Turgeon | Le Sud-Ouest
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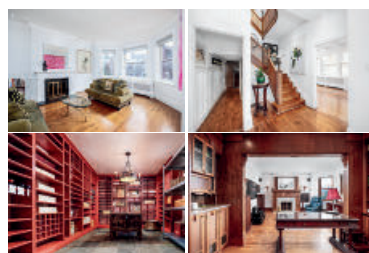
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Real estate, cont'd from p. 18

showed some strength in October, the first month of the last quarter of 2023, with seven condo sales averaging \$1,137,000.

Almost as many changed hands in that month as during the entire third quarter, July to September, when nine were sold. October saw two sales at Château Westmount Square, 4175 St. Catherine St., including the highest-priced condo at Apt. 802 and the highest mark-up of the month – indeed, of the year – at Apt. 502.

In fact, both of those apartments sold above valuation while the two at 1 Wood Ave. sold below valuation, including the 19.2 percent mark-down for Apt. 508.

Overall, the average mark-up over valuation for the October condos was 7.26 percent, with only three of them selling for more than the tax value.

No commercial or multi-residential properties were transferred in October, according to city records.

Correction

An error found its way into the latest house history, about 1-3 Church Hill (March 19, p. S1-28). Contrary to what we wrote, Stanley Nemiroff and Gretta Hoffman, who purchased the duplex in 1980 and sold it in 1994, lived at No. 1 Church Hill throughout the time they owned it. *The Independent* regrets the error.



118 Upper Bellevue. All photos March 27.



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Lanken talks Bourgeau, Grey Nuns



The Westmount Historical Association held the second of its four winter/spring lectures March 21 at the Public Library. It was entitled “Victor Bourgeau and the Grey Nuns.” Architect Peter Lanken introduced his lecture by talking about the evolution of Montreal, the Grey Nuns and the role of Victor Bourgeau, who had little schooling but apprenticed as a carpenter and joiner, and went on to become an exceptional architect. His work can be seen in many religious buildings in Montreal and Quebec. Lanken’s presentation then focused on his involvement in the preservation of the Grey Nuns’ motherhouse (now the Concordia University student residence) on René Lévesque Blvd. and, in particular, the architecture and restoration of the chapel.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



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On March 11, we noticed the large urban lake that had formed at the Sherbrooke entrance to city hall's parking lot. By March 22, the water had drained away, revealing not one, but two sewer grates. Those must have been significant blockages!

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

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Retired Anglican priest Ratcliffe unveils her funeral urns at Rotary

BY JENNIFER BALL

Holly Ratcliffe is a retired Anglican priest with a flair for fine art ceramics. Her efforts of late have been to create funeral urns that are things of beauty intended to demystify one's end-of-life milestone and to create comfort for the bereaved.

She is of the belief that death in our culture is hidden, avoided and sanitized, but that hasn't always been the case.

"In human history and prehistory, death has been very real and close to daily life, invested with religious and symbolic meaning, and surrounded with communal practices – and some of the greatest art humanity has known."

Ratcliffe lectured on her ceramic projects – one of which will be exhibited at Christ Church Cathedral at 635 St. Catherine St. later in April – at a Rotary Club of Westmount luncheon on February 21. They meet on Wednesdays at Victoria Hall, which is found at 4626 Sherbrooke St., and alternate bi-weekly with the Zoom platform.

Her talk was titled "Befriending our mortality: spirituality, death, and ceramics" and she told an attentive group that her spiritual and creative focus is to restore a contemplative dimension to death.

Rotary connection

Ratcliffe divulged that she had been a Rotary exchange student, so the Rotary club has a special place in her heart. "It was over 50 years ago, so that reveals my age! I went to Holland for a year. It was a life-changing experience, and it opened the way for me to study anthropology."

In the creation of the ceramic vessels, she said that she is "doing theology, in a sense, with my hands." Her ceramics aim to start conversations and help to break the silence around our mortality.

There is a deeply personal connection to the artwork. Ratcliffe said that what was



Holly Ratcliffe speaking to Rotarians at Victoria Hall on February 21. "Womb tomb," a ceramic funeral urn by Holly Ratcliffe.

RIGHT PHOTO COURTESY OF H. RATCLIFFE.

"the royal road into having a spiritual life – when the Christian message made the most sense – was when I first experienced a deep grief..."

"My interest in the spiritual life has now translated into the priesthood but also teaching the spiritual life. The history and practices of spirituality are still a passion for me."

Presided over many funerals

Her work in ceramics seemed obvious for someone who had done pastoral work and presided over many funerals.

In this work, she said that she "made sense of the more disparate parts of my life: the artist, the anthropologist and the person who reflects on the spiritual life..."

Ratcliffe was the ceramist-in-residence

at the Museum of Anthropology at University of British Columbia in 2020 and at the centre for studies in religion and society at the University of Victoria.

She gives workshops on befriending our mortality as another way to engage creative reflections on attitudes towards death.

While she has retired from the priesthood, she said that "my interest in the spiritual life also includes teaching the spiritual life..."

"The history and practices of spirituality are still a passion for me."

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A groundhog caused a commotion on the north side of Sherbrooke between Claremont and Prince Albert March 27. One woman was even trying to catch it in blanket. It is one of the most paved blocks of the city. Perhaps the groundhog has learned to dig through concrete or asphalt?

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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Montrealers with GP increases 3.1 percentage points – Dr. Roper disputes provincial statistics

Melville Ave.'s Roper Clinic still in pursuit of family doctor

BY JENNIFER BALL

The Roper Clinic on Melville at Sherbrooke is looking for a family doctor and so are 19.1 percent of Montrealers, at least.

As of March 20, Dr. Mark Roper's sign trying to recruit one was still up outside his medical clinic.

If he has not been able to find a family doctor to join his practice – as signalled by the recruitment sign still *in situ* – how have Montrealers fared in their pursuit of one in the 16+ months since it was hammered in?

Marie-Pierre Blier, a media relations officer at the Quebec Ministry of Health and Social Services, directed the *Independent* to an online dashboard that outlines the performance of the health and social service sector.

Percentage with GPs up

According to their data when Dr. Roper wrote his guest column for the *Independent* (November 22, 2022, p. 6), 77.8 percent of the Montreal population had a family doctor. As of February 29, 2024, this has increased to 80.9 percent, or a 3.1 percentage point increase.

The data is in French only and the *Independent* translated it into English.

According to a *Montreal Gazette* article by Jocelyne Richer of the *La Presse Canadienne* that was published on May 31, 2022, “against the will of doctors, Quebec adopts Bill 11 on access to health care in May 2022...”

“The new law aims to increase the supply of front-line services by revising the schedules of general practitioners, who will be asked to make time slots available to see more patients.”

Introduced in November 2021, “the bill calls for the deployment of a management platform for making medical appointments. The goal is to enable so-called ‘orphan patients’ to see a doctor or a health professional in less than 36 hours. The system will be managed by Quebec’s family medicine groups.”

Even with Bill 11 in play, it takes time for the effects to be noticeable to the public.

When reached March 29, Dr. Roper contended that the government statistics on people with access to GPs do not capture the real story. For instance, in his view, the percentage of people in the RLS (*réseau local de services*) that contains Westmount who have real, continual access to a GP is 60 percent, the second lowest in the province, giving it the highest gross number of people in an RLS without a doctor in the



The Roper Clinic on Melville at Sherbrooke is looking for a family doctor, as seen March 20. The sign has been down from time to time in recent weeks, but that is due to the wind, not filling the vacancy, Dr. Roper told the *Independent* March 29.

province. People “inscribed” by the government in certain programs in order to arrive at the roughly 20-percent higher statistic only have access to a doctor once a year, Roper pointed out.

Value of family doctor

In an interview that Roper gave to the CBC in 2015, he stressed the importance of having a family doctor. “Studies show that if you don’t have a family doctor, your mortality from all causes increases by six percent per year for a population. Mortality goes up, admissions to hospital increases and visits to emergency rooms increase as well...”

“...it’s not good enough to say that patients don’t want a family doctor. We should encourage everyone to have a family doctor. They should have easy access to one including our young, our adolescents and our new immigrants to Montreal.”

Roper is an assistant professor of family medicine at McGill University, the director of the division of primary care in the department of family medicine at the McGill University Health Centre and the director of the Queen Elizabeth Family

Medicine Group.

His private clinic, the Roper Clinic, is found at 4500 Sherbrooke St., and he was looking for a family doctor to join his clinic as long ago as November 2022 (see November 15, 2022, p. 5).

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9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

tion, please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, then scroll for Cookie's information page by her identification number, 2000017261. Such adorable photographs of her, a delight.

When you click on the "Fill out the form" box on the right-hand side of the page, you will be invited to present some basic contact information and outline the family environment for a new kitten. Once this has been provided, a coordinator will contact you to discuss adoption and your interest in little Cookie.

Please do not hesitate. Cookie is a lovely youngster, full of affection and joy.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne

She is a lively and cuddly kitten, gentle as can be. Cookie is presently in a temporary foster home for the Montreal SPCA cattery. She is a young female, under a year of age, very healthy, up to date with her juvenile inoculations, spayed and microchipped.

Cookie is very pretty and soulful, most attentive in bonding. To meet her for adop-



Precious little one



Westmount
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

My heart melts and aches at the same time. Divine petite Precious is memorable in the contrast of her white silky fur and dark button eyes and nose. A little doll and a sweet friend.

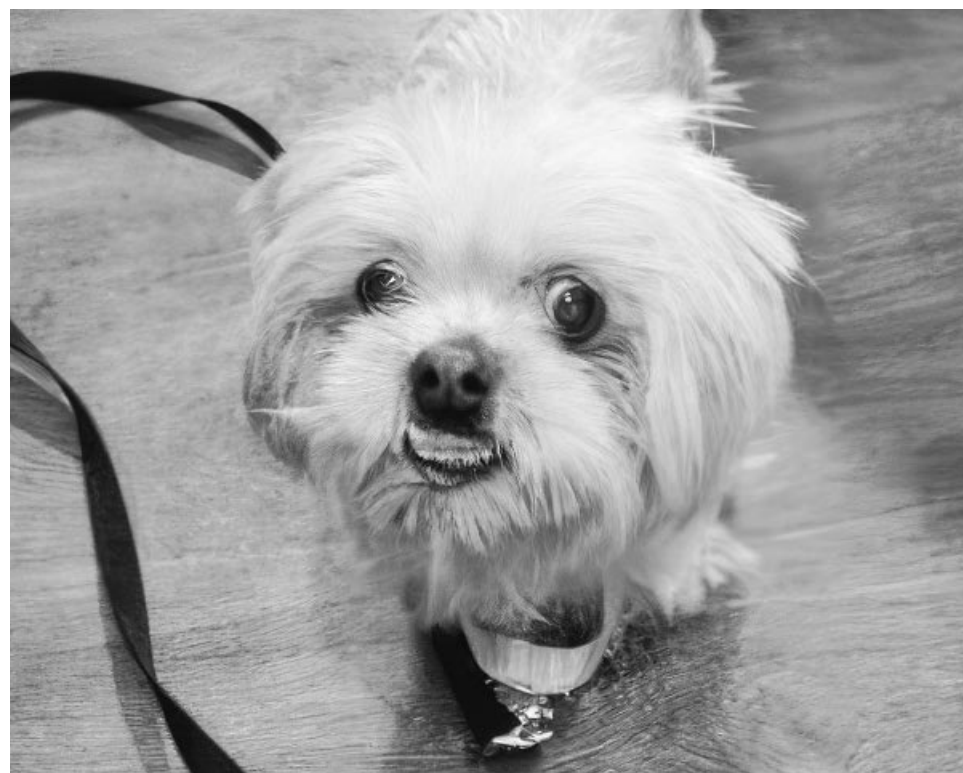
Precious is presently at the Montreal SPCA kennel. Yes, you read that right. Please consider adopting her. She needs a new home as soon as possible. Precious is a very healthy senior, 13 years young, up

to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. She is affectionate and playful in a delicate way, very keen on cuddling and joining in activities or walks.

Please go to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, where you will find her information page by her identification number, 200010444. Then make sure to check the shelter opening hours on the day of your visit, from Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm then Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 6 pm.

The SPCA is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West in Côte des Neiges, H4P 1X4. It would be wonderful if you could go and meet Precious. She will make you smile as she is most lively and spirited.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

**Social Calendar
(addendum)**

Oops. I missed this event in the Spring Social Calendar. (Luckily, we have avid readers.)

Thursday, May 9

Up Beat presented by Paradis Urbain. “A journey of expression and empowerment through urban fashion.” A fundraiser for UP House in support of mental health. Featuring urban, street and skate styles. Hoodies are *haute!* Dress: Come as you are. Fashion direction: Sophie Lanza. Musical director: Christian Pronovost, famed DJ and creative director. Tickets \$250. Two tickets \$375. Four \$500. Student (with ID) \$50. Paradisurbain.org. 6 pm. Fashion performance 7 pm. Maison Alcan, 1188 Sherbrooke St. West.

Please send your event information to veronica@redgravepr.com.



Barbara and Philip Silverberg at the 2019 reception for the 10th anniversary of Urban Pardes, the charity that supports UP House. Along with the late Dr. Ron Brown and Reuben Feldman, they founded UP House in 2010. It is a community centre that aims to eliminate social isolation and rebuild the confidence, purpose and community of adults living with mental illness.



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Memories of Brian Mulroney



Social Notes

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At a Fondation du CHUM (Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal) fundraiser honouring Brian Mulroney in May 2019. Back row: Andrew Lapham, Mark Mulroney, Nicolas Mulroney and Ben Mulroney; front: Vanessa Mulroney, Brian and Mila Mulroney, Theodora Lapham and Katy Mulroney. \$3.6 million was raised.

Brian Mulroney helped me out over 20 years ago. I was the “new kid on the block,” having just been hired to write the weekly society page for the *Montreal Gazette*. Then, a black-tie gala meant escorts accompanied ladies wearing magnificent floor-sweeping couture gowns and jewellery with more carats than crystal.

Covering the Daffodil Ball amidst a sea of scions and titans, I searched in vain for the evening’s PR guide.

Brian, attending with Mila, on observing my lost look, got up from his table of very distinguished guests and said, “Hi. I’m Brian Mulroney. Let me introduce you to some people.”

And he did.

At future meetings, we shared our Celtic heritage: his Irish and my Welsh (my grandfather was director of the National Museum of Wales).

Indeed, he was an internationally respected statesman; and his empathy was also super special.

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A revolution is coming in cancer therapeutics



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE



John McCall MacBain.



Reginald Weiser, Charlene Laprise and Dr. Lesley Fellows.

A venerable Westmount house built in 1923 was the site of a recent celebration. **Charlene Laprise** and **Reginald Weiser**, founder and CEO Positron, welcomed guests to an entertaining and informative event.

Morag Park, director Rosalind and Morris Goodman Cancer Institute, and **Thomas Duchaine**, dean faculty of medicine and health sciences and chair McGill Centre for RNA Sciences Vanguard, presented advances in cancer therapeutics. The professors noted that this field will undergo a revolution in the next 10 years.

Dignitaries in attendance from McGill University included former Montrealer and McGill chancellor **John McCall MacBain**; **Marc Weinstein**, vp university advancement; **Lesley Fellows**, vp health affairs; and *principal emerita* **Suzanne Fortier**.

Noted during the elegant cocktail hour were **Eddie Leschiutta**, former managing partner Deloitte and chair faculty of medicine & health sciences' advisory board for Dean *continued on p. 30*



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Marc Weinstein and Lenore Harris.



Eddie Leschiutta and Teresa Rochon.



Cynthia Price, Morag Park and Paul Levesque.

Social notes, cont'd from p. 29

Lesley Fellows; **Monica Flores, Jonathan Sigler and Valeria Rosenbloom.**

Key connectors supporting industry-university collaborations included corporate health committee members **Paul Levesque**, CEO Theratechnologies, and **Benoit Larose**, executive director, Bio Quebec.

After the inspiring presentations, guests enjoyed Restaurant Beatrice's renowned delights: lamb chops, vegetarian gyoza, and arancini with wild mushrooms.

In honour of Park's birthday, a red velvet McGill-themed cake prettily prepared by Café Desserts Etc. lit up the night with applause-worthy sparklers.

Noted enjoying the evening were **Mia Melmed Goodman, Eunice Mayers, Lenore Harris, Teresa Rochon, Meghan Kennedy, Ted Claxton and Cynthia Price.**



Suzanne Fortier.



Morag Park.



Valeria Rosenbloom, Charlene Laprise and Eunice Mayers (seated).

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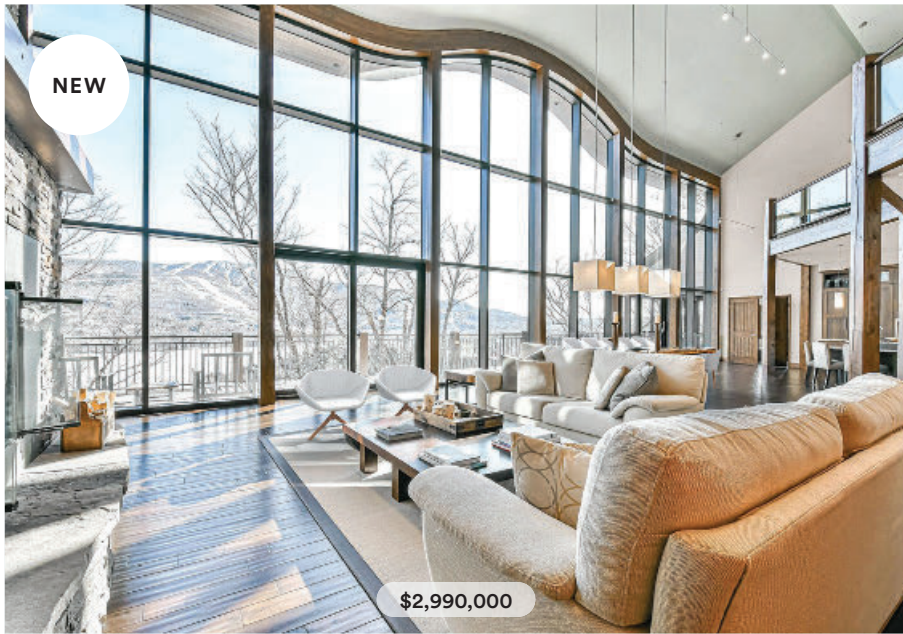
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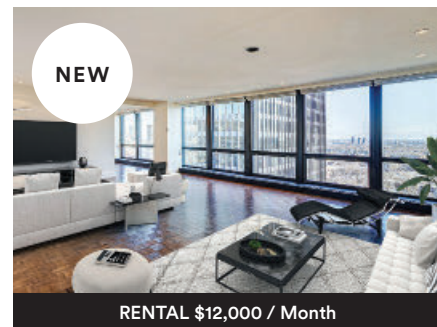
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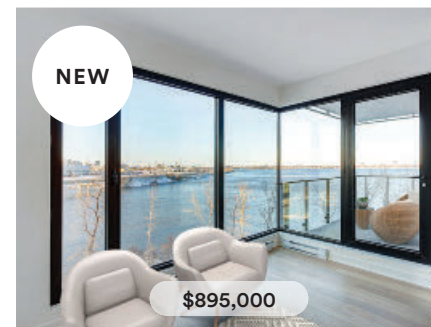
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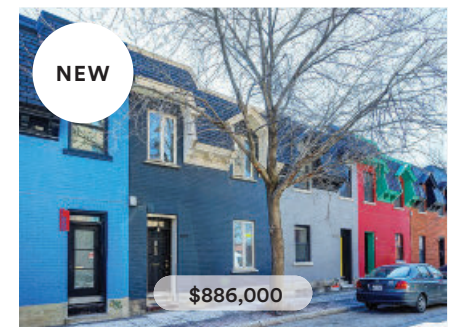
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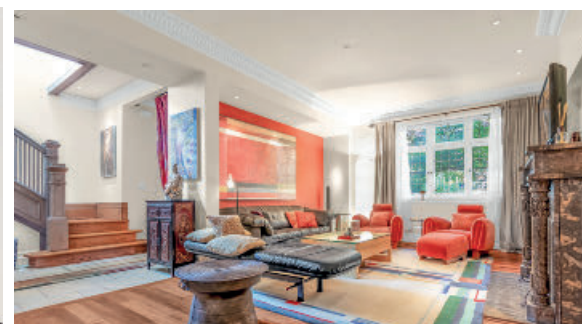
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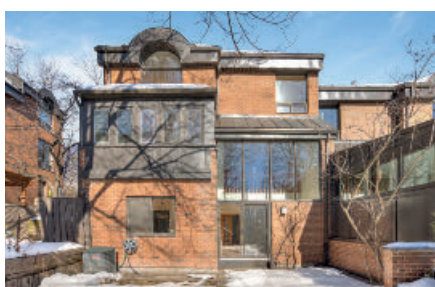
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