

INSIDE



Profile MARY BAXTER p. 22



Westmount Page p. 17

Our Man in Ottawa BY MARC GARNEAU

p. 9

Comin' Up p. 15

Green city conference targets implementation challenge

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

As more and more Canadian municipalities develop plans for sustainability, implementing them is turning out to be a new challenge, just as it is in Westmount.

That is one of the observations brought back by Councillor Theodora Samiotis from the Sustainable Communities Conference held in Ottawa February 10 to 12 by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).

"My take-home is that we're moving forward in the right direction but are faced by similar challenges to those of many municipalities," said Samiotis, the city's commissioner of the environment.

"We're generally all in the same boat in

trying to bridge the gap between plans and actions. But it's tricky. And it's on everyone's mind." It can be costly, involve community buy-in and require changes in mindset.

In this vein, Westmount will be announcing within days some of the priorities from the plan that it intends to put into action this year.

Good timing

Therefore, she explained, "it was great timing for me to attend workshops geared to a practical approach to sustainability and what can be accomplished by a municipality of our size."

The conference – previously known as the Green continued on p. 9

Unpopular construction at former Hogg, future SAQ scheduled to end in March

BY ISAAC OLSON

A major renovation project that has been disturbing businesses in and around 4823 Sherbrooke St. for nearly a month will soon finish, weather permitting.

"There may be a few things to add towards the end – signage, lighting or sills – but, all in all, the scaffolding should come down the first week of March at the latest," said Mary Riley, who manages the property for Cromwell Management Inc.

The three-storey building, complete with a basement parking garage, houses the former Hogg Hardware site that the SAQ will move into, Pâtisserie de

Gascogne and more than two dozen offices that range from accountants and legal services to physical therapy and architecture firms.

Blocking the store fronts and entrances of Gascogne, Pier I, Salon U and the offices, the scaffolding on the front of the building creates a tunnel for pedestrians shielded from falling debris, while workers lay a new brick wall. The renovation project has left some tenants, neighbours and customers disturbed by the ongoing construction noise, according to area business owners and managers like Angelica Banica.

Banica is co-owner of continued on p. 6

Two newspapermen: many links



Michael Goldbloom, left, with Norman Webster, former editor-in-chief of the Gazette and the Globe and Mail, and a graduate of Bishop's University where Goldbloom, a former Gazette publisher, is now principal. See story, p. 2.

Photo: Marianopolis College

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Goldbloom on the current state of journalism

BY JOANNE PENHALE

To stop the decline of media and democracy, a new national company must be created to buy the Canwest chain, reinvigorate Canadian journalism and invent a sustainable business model for quality journalism in the internet era.

This was the message from Westmounter Michael Goldbloom, who spoke at Marianopolis College February 17 as part of a speakers series celebrating the school's centennial.

"The model that has supported our journalism is declining at the same time as the health of our democracy is diminishing," said Goldbloom, the principal and vice chancellor of Bishop's University.

"Allowing the [Canwest] chain to be broken up into pieces would be bad news for journalism," Goldbloom said. "Now, more than ever, we need a strong national newspaper company."

Goldbloom, the publisher of the *Gazette* from 1994 to 2001, and of the *Toronto Star* from 2004 to 2006, proposed a new company be formed by the Canwest papers, the *Toronto Star* and the *Halifax Chronicle Herald*. He called it the Great Canadian News Company.

Until a new model is developed, he explained, concentrating ownership is a necessary evil to sustain high-quality journalism in Canada. "We're in a race against the clock to figure out a sustainable business model for journalism."

Goldbloom began his speech by explaining how the internet has created revenue problems for the journalism industry, as people are finding online what they once paid for, and newspapers are losing advertising revenues because they can't ensure the large audiences they once could.

Newsrooms are diminishing, Goldbloom said, and the irony is there are bigger audiences than ever before because content becomes available internationally and for free.

"But someone has to pay for the work our journalists do."

Goldbloom also described the increasing concentration of power and public relations in federal politics. Close management of information by the office of the prime minister and the simultaneous dearth in journalism is resulting, he stated, in a democratic deficit.

Goldbloom likened his proposal to Power Corporation of Canada, the owner



Westmounter Michael Goldbloom (centre) after his speech "Media and Democracy in the 21st Century" at Marianopolis College, February 17, with his wife, left, Fiona Macleod, and, right, Len Even, director general of Marianopolis College.

of several French dailies in Canada.

"It's this young generation who's going to have to find a new model that works," Goldbloom told listeners, which included a young audience of journalism and com-

merce students from Marianopolis. "We owe it to them to help."

Goldbloom also called for increased investment in the CBC to sustain its journalism.

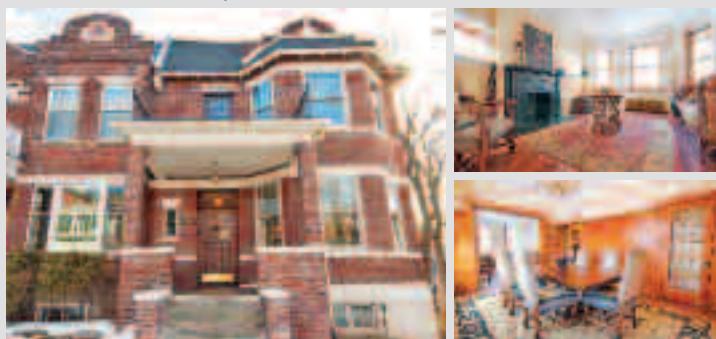
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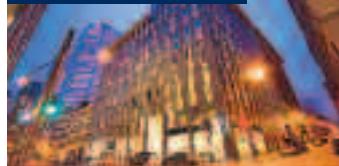
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Westmounters catch the Olympic spirit

Roslyn School skypes with gym teacher at Olympics



Roslyn School physical education teacher Gillian Merrifield, 24, talks with her students from Vancouver via Skype on February 19. She was one of 25,000 volunteers picked from 75,000 applicants all wanting a chance to be part of the 2010 winter Olympics. Students asked Merrifield questions about the games and about her work there. Merrifield has been driving the families of Canadian athletes around and, in her free time, watching competitions. Skype is communication software that, with cameras and microphones, allows face-to-face communication across the internet. The school used a projector in the gym to ensure all the students could see their teacher.

Photo: Isaac Olson

Martin, torch, ball



Westmounter Keith Martin ran with the Olympic torch on February 12. According to his mother, Judy, he "had a ball."

For a Westmounter who worked at past Olympic games, see p. 22

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Whistler mayor receives gift from his alma mater: Westmount High



Who knew? Whistler's mayor, Ken Melamed (centre right), is a Westmount High grad. He is pictured here on February 12 in North Vancouver with Westmounter Virginia Elliott (centre left) accepting an Olympic banner made by students of his alma mater. The Westmount links don't end there: the banner won an Olympic torch poster contest in December that was organized by the city of Westmount, where Elliott works as assistant community events coordinator. She is volunteering at the games with her husband, Victor Murciano (see Independent, January 26, p. 1).

Priory gets jazzed up for Olympics



In the spirit of the winter Olympics, Priory students and parents designed and hand-painted an Olympic banner which says "Priory Roars While Canada Soars/Trois Fois Hourra! Vive Le Canada.". The banner was raised on February 12, in time for the opening ceremonies.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NEW SPEED LIMIT

A minor incident happened to me last week, which may serve as a cautionary notice for fellow Westmounters:

On February 11, I was stopped by a police car parked by the side of the road, while driving west along Westmount Ave. near Forden. I was issued a speeding ticket. I did not imagine for one minute that I was speeding. My “sin”? I was going 50 km per hour in a 30-km zone. The sign indicating this new speed limit had apparently gone up days before. I assume I was just unlucky. Surely a warning ticket would have sufficed.

However, I chose not to contest the ticket as I suppose the police had clocked me correctly. The fine was \$90 and one demerit point. Rest assured that I will be careful in the future to observe the 30 km per hour sign on every street on which it is posted. I’m telling you this because it may bring the attention of others to the draconian measures meted out if one breaks the driving laws even in a minor way and is unlucky enough to be the “mark” in a police crackdown.

SHEILA WHITZMAN,
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

WESTMOUNT 450 YEARS BEHIND TIMES

I am a Westmount cyclist who has been cycling daily in all seasons for several

decades. Not having been trained or properly equipped with lights, flags, reflectors, mud and chain guards, helmet, gloves, etc. *has not* landed me in a body cast – proof that George Bowser’s Ruminations in his *Independent* column of February 16 are wishful thinking.

The writer also unwittingly exposes his belief that cyclists are “nuisances” on the roads according to city of London street rules of 1562, and should be appropriately fined for being on today’s roads. He also regrets that the elimination of parking spaces on the bike path will deprive Westmount of \$60,000 in annual revenue.

Ruminations ends with a wish that: “Cyclists now have to detour via other streets,” and “In a world of shared streets and spaces, that’s what you have to do.”

I hope that Westmount city council’s preparations for an all-season bike path will not be sidetracked or influenced by the opinions of Westmount’s former commissioner for parks.

Council is about 450 years out of date.

STEPHEN CHIN, SHERBROOKE ST.

REVISIT THE ARENA FIGURES

The former city council’s estimate of \$14 million to renovate the existing arena/pool complex (\$12 million for the arena and \$2 million for the pool) definitely needs to be revisited.

Perhaps someone overestimated the

cost of renovation to justify the grandiose \$35-million rebuilding project that evolved. The basic cost of ensuring the ongoing viability of the existing arena and its ice rinks in their present form might be substantially less and could justify retaining the existing facility, particularly in a cost/benefit determination, that takes into account the offsetting cost saving of not demolishing what already exists in preparation for rebuilding on the same site.

A new swimming pool is definitely desirable and from a cost/benefit viewpoint it would seem worthwhile to pay the cost

differential for providing an indoor pool, which could be used throughout the year in lieu of an outdoor pool that could only be used for about half that time. Also, in respect of any new pool facility, ozone water purification should be specified in lieu of chlorine.

Depending on results of the needs survey, grant money could substantially help to fund a new indoor swimming pool and, if justified, the addition of a new NHL-sized hockey rink located at a different site from the present arena.

JOHN DOREY, VICTORIA AVE.

Westmount for Haiti, Part IV

Villa Ste. Marcelline auctions art for Haiti

When students at Villa Ste. Marcelline decided to raise money for Haiti, they chose an upscale strategy – and were richly rewarded as a result.

The students raised over \$3,000 for Haitian charities at a February 18 dinner and art auction event held at the school’s Upper Belmont campus.

The paintings were created by three- or four-person teams in teacher Madame Proulx’s grade 10 art class.

And the girls ended up having an even bigger role than planned. The chef who was going to cater the event cancelled two days before, so students and staff had to step in.

“The service was much better than in a restaurant,” said Susan Hoffman, mother of student Susannah Hoffman-Mitscherling.

The highlight of the event was the sale for \$1,000 of one of the 16 paintings on the block. “I had to stop bidding at \$760,” said Hoffman, whose daughter was a part of the painting’s team. “There were 10 to 15 people bidding on it.”

Local artist hosts silent art auction

Westmounter Daphna Lewinshtein organized “A Silent Art Auction for Haitian Relief,” which took place February 20 at The Green Room in Mile End. Thirty five artists donated their work, proceeds of which will go to Doctors Without Borders. The final total was not yet tallied at press time due the many jars of change that had to be counted and the hope that someone will purchase a Neil Farber ink and acrylic on watercolour paper, which was donated by the artist. Anyone interested should email HaitiArtAuction@gmail.com.

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Making composting the new recycling habit



Civic Alert

DON WEDGE

Water-fountain talk could be about the Olympics, Tiger Woods or even the Canadiens' woes. But I have friends who use such a meeting to discuss self-improvement or the best techniques for composting.

Almost 20 years ago, blue box recycling was a big topic at such gatherings, but that task is pretty much routine these days. Now, the interest and the pressures are for composting.

All of Westmount's single-family homes have had separate collections of compostable putrescibles and old-fashioned garbage since May last year. Big Montreal has promised all its citizens the same split once the first composting factories are running. Last Wednesday, the executive committee approved the criteria for selecting the sites for those plants.

Of course, all this is way behind Toronto, which has had three different waste collections for some years. Its latest move is to give a tax break for those putting out the least amount of garbage.

The stimulus was that they were running out of landfill space and had to truck it to the US at enormous financial and environmental cost. They had every reason to recycle and avoid burying compostable materials.

Halifax as pioneer

Halifax had similar problems and a decade ago they developed huge composting factories that have dramatically reduced their landfill needs and also provided a flow of bi-products.

Meantime, public opinion in Montreal

forced the city to close all on-island disposal facilities and use the big dumps in the province's rural areas – also involving costly trucking.

The eventual closing of landfills has now become Quebec government policy. Incentives are offered to municipalities and others to build plants similar to those in Halifax.

One of the powers that Jean Charest failed to return to the reconstituted cities, after the forced mergers, was the disposal of all wastes. Although Westmount collects the different types, Montreal decides what happens to them. Only through great determination by Karin Marks, mayor at the time, and local officials were we able to get concessions allowing us to make our own compost processing arrangements.

Westmount's phasing-in

The green bins are now part of the weekly landscape. They were introduced in three phases, beginning in May, 2008 and ending a year later. There were suspicions that the enthusiasm to participate in the first phases was not shared in the third zone.

This is not the case. It is likely that the opposite is true.

While city hall surveys have shown a high participation everywhere and strong adherence to avoiding contaminants, no one is happy with the low volumes produced.

"Nevertheless, we have begun well," said Theodora Samiotis, councillor responsible for sustainable development, "although there is much more to do. We led the way on composting and other things, and don't want to lose that leadership."

Next week we will know how high composting is placed in the city's eyes when Mayor Peter Trent unveils this council's 2010 sustainability priorities.

The city has provided the basic tools –

the green bins and the clearly-defined separate collections, even though the same trucks may be used. How the bins are filled is up to the individual. Perhaps there are exceptions, but everyone who is really determined to fully separate their refuse finds that garbage is smaller than compostables or recyclables.

This is where advice from the water-fountain forum scores. One of the best helpers seems to be a counter-top unit. Use till full, then transfer to the green bin. Various designs are available from hardware stores.

If there is room in the kitchen, two

under-the-counter bins seem to be useful, particularly for family use. Our offspring in Toronto have the neat version with the lids attached to the door so that when the latter is opened, the cover lifts and it is easy to throw in whatever is on the way out.

It is so easy, in fact, that our 3-year-old granddaughter has mastered the technique and has expert knowledge on which of the cans to use!

Tom Thompson, a Victoria Ave. resident and chair of the Healthy City Project steering committee when a councillor, recently ex- continued on p. 15

Expert view

Jennifer Patton, chair of the Healthy City Project's environment committee, has long advocated compost collection and been a keen participant. She led a team of "ambassadors" on the original launch. Her comments:

- The best compost is in back-yard units. But clippings should be left on the ground to provide a natural fertilizer. However some things must go to a central plant and that these are finally coming is good news.

- When cleaning, we use a lot of paper, but, because we use biodegradable liquids with them, all are compostable afterwards. Paper is good for the process.

- I put old newspapers at the bottom of my green bin. This is in case the bag breaks – and not one has in nearly two years – it would save a mess. There is a lot of liquid among compostables.

- A counter-top unit gets heavy use in my home. There are some neat stainless steel ones. It is better to use metal than plastic. I found that odour gets into the plastic and you don't want that. – DW

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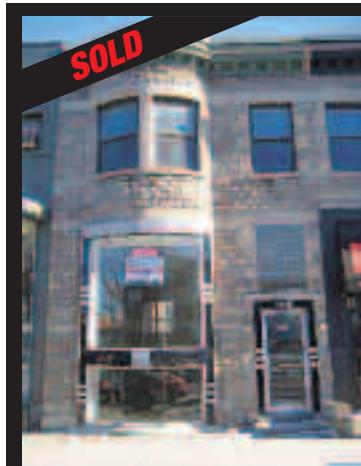
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Work disturbs

continued from p. 1

Salon U, which sits on the second floor of the neighbouring building. Between the partially hidden entrance and the ongoing construction noise, the renovations have not been easy for her clients – especially those seeking beauty treatments in a private, street-side room.

“The noise has been disturbing clients during a normally relaxing experience,” said Banica in French. “They expect to relax, but the noise is very disruptive.”

The renovation project promises tenants a more presentable, energy-efficient building that will be attractive to customers, according to Riley. Besides redoing the brickwork and spraying on foam insulation, the renovations have also included the replacement of some roof flashing.

“We purchase buildings, and our plan is always to renovate and bring them up to a more modern look aesthetically,” said Riley, noting the project coincides with SAQ’s complete renovation of the space that once housed Hogg Hardware. “It’s an overall upgrading of the building.”

The project was in the making for three years, Riley explained, and was not influ-



The property manager of 4823 Sherbrooke St. says the renovation project will end soon.



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enced by the SAQ’s move. Cromwell, she continued, did have to go back to the city a couple times with revised plans before getting the green light.

Sébastien Langlais manages the Pâtisserie de Gascogne. The pastry shop has a temporary banner hanging from plywood out front to let customers know the business is open but, he said, the amount of people eating inside has dropped by at least 30 percent.

Customers are still coming in for

pickup, he said, but he suspects many are turned off by eating in a construction zone.

“It’s less interesting for customers to eat in with the plywood in front of the street,” said Langlais in French. “Many people think we’re closed, but we’re open.”

Cromwell also owns and manages properties in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, as well as several Westmount buildings.



Waiting to meet some friends for lunch, from left, Heather Doyle and Dennis Ellsworth, both residents of Prince Edward Island, sit in front of 4823 Sherbrooke St., which is currently under renovation.

NFB seeks women storytellers



From left, NDG resident and director general of Studio XX, Paulina Abarca-Cantin, and Kat Baulu, a Westmounter and producer with the NFB.

BY ISAAC OLSON

Two collaborating organizations, headed by two women with Westmount ties, have established a unique proposal for a competition that will eventually give six Quebec-based, woman-led teams the funding needed to use modern multimedia tools to tell a story.

First Person Digital (FPD) is an initiative created by the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) and the Plateau Mont Royal-based Studio XX – Canada's only media art centre focused on women and technology. Kat Baulu, a Westmounter and producer with the NFB's Quebec Centre, is co-heading the project with the director general of Studio XX, Paulina Abarca-Cantin, a former Westmounter turned NDGer.

Studio XX, NFB and Canadian Heritage are financial partners producing an English-language media competition that incorporates women and modern technology. Contestants might choose, for example, to use the internet, smart phones or even video games to tell their tale. The call for proposals ends on March 1 and, so far, more than 40 teams have already sent in project ideas.

Describing the partnership between Studio XX and the NFB as a fitting means to explore multimedia story-telling by women in a profession often dominated by men, Baulu said concepts will ideally be socially-driven from a woman's point of view.

“At first, humans told stories verbally,

and then we learned how to write them down,” said Baulu. “Eventually we had books and then audio books. What happens when you have a new tool like a mobile phone or the web? How can you tell stories in a different way that is a special experience that you don't have just reading off a page?”

FPD is a way for different artists from around Quebec to try out different story-telling tools, continued Baulu. While traditional storytelling techniques will be accepted, the aim of the project is to find new, innovative methods. After passing through two jury panels, six final candidates will be chosen to bring their project to life with a \$25,000 budget.

“It's new to all of us,” said Baulu. “That's what makes this project so exciting. You get a chance to experiment in all new territories. It gets everybody excited and nervous all at the same time.”

The six projects will be selected by a jury comprising of industry professionals. The finished projects, which will be due by the end of September, will then premier at Studio XX's HTMLles Festival in November 2010. The projects will eventually be distributed by the NFB and other organizations.

“Media in the world is changing and funding is changing in our country and around the world,” said Abarca-Cantin. “For now, this is a model that we think will work. In three years, who knows what the iPad will bring?” For more information visit www.firstpersondigital.ca.

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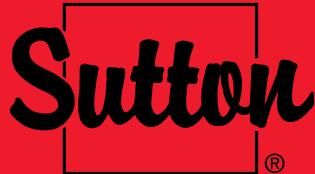
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DUPLEX

Westmount New Listing! A rare find! Well-maintained on fabulous street between 2 parks. Gorgeous garden +2 car parking, wood floors. **\$1,175,000**



ACCEPTED OFFER

Westmount West-facing sunny welcoming. Penthouse in well-located building near Greene. 2+1 bedrooms, 2 bths, laundry room, wood floors, granite kitchen **\$499K**



LOWER DUPLEX

Westmount Victoria Village. Detached building, cross-hall plan with gorgeous stain glass, fireplace, finished basement, garden, garage, separate entrances. **\$698K**

OPEN HOUSE
SUN. 2-4 PM



WESTMOUNT: 62 Aberdeen

Magnifique! Classic traditional home offering fine contemporary touches. Beautifully and extensively renovated.

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Westmount, Great location in Greene Ave. area. Stone façade townhouse with character, space, high ceilings, mouldings. Solarium extension family room. 3+ 1 bdr, 3+1 bath. Garage, 2 parking. Interesting!

\$949,000

MLS 828 4871



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www.carmenberlie.com



Marie Landry
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Outremont – 185 Springgrove – spacious classic residence located in upper Outremont, high ceiling, ground flr. den, large fin. bsmt., radiant heat, central A/C, double garage.

Downtown – 1515 Av. Docteur-Penfield apt.308, fabulous & large 1 bdr., large windows, eat-in kit., large closet space, high ceiling, A/C, skylite, garage, indoor pool, 2 balconies, 24 hr. security.

Cote des Neiges – 3285 Jean-Brillant #204, **Open House 1-2:30 Sunday** – great condo-1065.5F – 2 bdr.-2 bath, open concept, central A/C, balcony, very quiet, garage. (concrete bldg.). **Asking \$372,000.**

Adj. Westmount/New Listing/ Open House 3-4:30 Sunday – Fully renov. upper duplex approx. 1500 SF, absolutely beautiful, located in a small cul-de-sac, facing small park, 2 or 3 bdr.-1½ bath-open concept, large windows, A/C, 2 balconies & private roof top terrace, garage, very quiet area, city views **asking \$495,000 or rental \$3000.**

Adjacent Westmount/ Rental – 5117 Sherbrooke W. 3rd floor, private elevator, spectacular loft-style, 2900SF completely renov., 2 bdr.-2+1 bath, windows all around, fabulous location, central A/C in the heart of Victoria Village, **asking \$3,200.**

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WESTMOUNT: For rent x 2 years from June 1st. Lovely 4 bdrm. house in a prime Westmount location w/panoramic views on Murray Park. **Asking \$4450/pm**



NDG: Elegant detached 5 bdrm. Lambert built house with garden and parking. **Asking \$869,000**

Liberals working on visibility for Canada's 150th



Our Man in Ottawa

MARC GARNEAU, MP
FOR WESTMOUNT-
VILLE MARIE

Despite Stephen Harper's shutdown of parliament, Liberals have been present on Parliament Hill.

For three weeks starting January 25 – the day parliament was supposed to resume before Mr. Harper prorogued – our caucus hosted a series of policy roundtables on Parliament Hill to discuss the issues that matter to Canadians.

The roundtables brought together Canadians to focus on a wide range of issues. On week one, we addressed job creation, protecting independent institutions from political interference, women's equality, the needs of Canada's veterans and Alzheimer's disease.

On week two, we looked at poverty and homelessness, international aid, Afghanistan, crime, the environment and issues facing rural Canada.

And on week three, we addressed life-long learning, the future of health care, the

rights of Canadians abroad, medical isotopes, Canada's north, the digital economy and infrastructure.

I had the pleasure of co-chairing two of these roundtables, the first one dealing with job creation and the second on the digital economy.

These sessions were a prelude to the national dialogue made possible by the "Canada at 150" conference we have organized for March 26 to 28 in Montreal.

This non-partisan conference will look to the future and ask what Canada should be in 2017 – when we will celebrate our country's 150th birthday – and what needs to be done today to get there. This conference will bring together Canada's leading thinkers and doers, and Canadians nationwide via webcast and online tools, to look at the major, long-term issues that will determine our future well-being and prosperity.

But that doesn't mean we're not putting forward policy ideas right now.

Recently, Michael Ignatieff put out the Liberal plan to prevent future prime ministers from abusing the power to shut down parliament. The Liberal Party will seek changes that would formally codify the prorogation conventions that were re-

spected until Stephen Harper became prime minister, while adding the requirement that parliamentary committees continue to function during prorogation.

We have also proposed initiatives to immediately create jobs and strengthen Canada's economic future. The proposals

focus on support for manufacturers, jobs for young Canadians and encouraging investment in start-up companies.

Canadians expect their MPs to be working, particularly during a fragile economic recovery. They've made their feelings known, loud and clear.

Bringing back green ideas

continued from p. 1

Cities Conference – was attended by representatives of municipalities across the country. Some are more advanced than Westmount in the quest for sustainability, others have not yet drawn up vision statements or action plans as Westmount has, Samiotis said.

"I was proud to talk about our accomplishments." These include a number of consultation meetings.

She also brought back updates on FCM grants available for subsidizing new initiatives such as education, energy and waste water programs.

As well, Samiotis picked up ideas from the trade show that might be useful to Westmount. These included a model of

bin suitable for apartment composting, new types of green bin liners, containers for capturing rainwater, and a volcanic salt for use on icy roads.

Particularly impressive and newsworthy at this time, she said, was a talk on "out-of-the-box" thinking by Whistler officials in creating a "green" Olympics that would lead to future sustainability. One example of their long-term vision was in building small units for athlete housing that could be sold separately afterward.

Perhaps, she said, "it's a mindset" of a mountain community living so close to nature.

But one thing very evident at the conference, Samiotis added, was that "sustainability is no longer a catch word."

Hogg Hardware is open!

In order to get our new Westmount location ready, we have moved to the corner of Vendome Ave. and Sherbrooke St. (5128 Sherbrooke St. W., near À Votre Santé)

Bureau en Gros	Vendôme	Grey	Claremont
			Sherbrooke
	Hogg Hardware	Pharmaprix	

The grand opening of our new location will be in May 2010:
4855 Sherbrooke St. W. (corner Victoria, old SAQ location)

Our phone number has not changed: **(514) 934-4644**

No change to our Nuns' Island location: 7 Place du Commerce – (514) 761 4441

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Cash or cheque: \$100 – concert

\$125 – concert and reception

Information: 514-937-9176 x 21 – 514-935-6631

Writer Pasold returns home to read from *Rats of Las Vegas*

BY JOANNE PENHALE

Themes of money and fate underpin the debut novel from Westmount-raised writer and journalist Lisa Pasold.

Rats of Las Vegas, based in 1940s Vancouver and Las Vegas, features wild tomboy Millard Lacouvy, who learns to play poker in Depression-era Vancouver. Aspiring to bigger games than the back rooms of Gastown taverns, she ups the ante to high-stakes games on luxury trains, and finally to Vegas, where old loves and buried secrets refuse to stay in the past.

“My imagination gets snagged by details,” said Pasold, a writer since her days at Roslyn School. The inspiration for Lacouvy came from an elderly woman who leaned over to her at an all-you-can-eat Sunday brunch in Las Vegas and with her smoke-stained voice said, “This is the best brunch in town, honey. And I know. I’ve lived here most of my life. I eat here after playing cards through the weekend.”

“Sometimes you have a brief encounter with somebody, and they just kind of spark your imagination.”

Pasold wrote *Rats* – her third major publication after two books of poetry – while living in Paris. “I think I was homesick for Canada.” Vancouver had been her last home and another encounter there – where she learned the art gallery she was in had once been an illegal gambling bar with a dirt floor – also helped inspire the book.

Pasold credits her mother, Ann Pasold, past president of the Atwater Library, for her love of writing. “We always had tons of literature in the house, and writers would come over to the house and talk literature with me. Mum would take me out to readings too. And my parents let me read everything. They didn’t try to push me into reading ‘appropriate’ material.”

Pasold, who has written for numerous publications, including the *National Post*, *Billboard Magazine* and the *Globe and Mail*, teaches creative writing and is the co-organizer of the Toronto Small Press Book Fair. This May, she travels to the Banff Centre to work on a new poetry manuscript, and she is beginning work on a second novel.

Pasold reads from *Rats* at the Atwater Library Friday, February 26 at 12:30 pm. She’ll be accompanied by Montreal saxophonist Dave Turner playing ’30s and ’40s jazz-inspired songs.

She reads again February 28, 8:30 pm at the *Matrix* magazine’s Pilot series, at The Sparrow, 5322 St. Lawrence Blvd.



Lisa Pasold

Retail Watch

BY ERIN STROPES

Mink's celebrates 50 years of fabric

“Fashion comes and goes, but style stays,” said Frances Mink of Mink’s, the haute-couture fabric store that has called Greene Ave. its home since January 1960.

With husband Charles, Frances has grown her business at three Greene locations over the years, settling at the current 1355 address 22 years ago.

Mink’s, which carries only natural fabrics such as silk, cotton and cashmere, prides itself on supplying high-quality cloth, from vintage pieces to styles from the likes of Yves St. Laurent and Armani.



Frances Mink

25 years in the handbag business on Greene

Owner Sarah Porper attributes the quarter-century success of Fiora International Handbags (1336 Greene Ave.) to two simple values: quality and service.

“I try to match the bag with the customer,” said Porper, who admits that it’s her weakness for “leather, beautiful quality and colour” that has kept her in the business of handbags, luggage and wallets since 1984. Fiora guarantees every handbag it sells, and will repair problematic handles and zippers long after purchase.



Sarah Porper

News that appears in *Retail Watch* about its clients and non-clients is provided by the *Independent*. Businesses that appear do not pay for or approve what is written.

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Selwyn House ups its financial aid

In a continued effort to increase the amount of students receiving financial aid, Selwyn House School is now offering assistance to as many as 15 more high school students, bringing the total number of potential applicants up to 50.

Due to a busy endowment campaign, the newest addition to bursary coffers means accepted high school students from families that meet certain financial criteria could have as much as 50 percent of their annual tuition covered. High school tuition ranges from \$16,000 to \$19,000 a year.

Available for the upcoming 2010-2011 school year, students must first be accepted to the school and then apply for fi-

ancial aid. The bursary applications are then reviewed and selected by an independent non-profit organization so as to maintain objectivity. There is no minimum income requirement as each family is assessed on an individual basis.

Eventually, explained headmaster Hal Hannaford, the all-boys institution aims to have as much as 25 percent of the student population receiving financial aid. That works out to about 125 pupils.

Having a more diverse student population from wide-ranging backgrounds strengthens the school, the headmaster said, and the bursaries mean financial constraints won’t stop potential SHS students from applying.

A cute little ol' dog couple

BY: JESSICA GHERSI



Let me guess, you're thinking about getting a dog. You probably want a tiny lit-

tle puppy, with tiny little paws, who leaves tiny little puddles on your new carpet. You're so predictable! Why not consider doing something different for a change?

Everyone gets puppies. Do something crazy. Adopt an old dog. No, wait. Two old dogs.

It just so happens that I have two old dogs right here, waiting for you to take them home. It's turning out to be a pretty good day for you. Let me introduce them now.



Harley



Roxie

Harley and Roxie are both 7-year-old shepherd mixes. They were living happily in a house full of flower upholstery, finishing each other's barks. Harley always fell asleep in front of the TV during Leno, while Roxie made noisy bodily sounds without ever noticing. They were the perfect little old couple until their owner passed away and left no arrangements for them.

Now they find themselves homeless and at risk of being separated. It's hard enough finding a home for one old dog, but two? It's at least twice as hard. The least we can do is write about Harley and Roxie here, try to give them a fighting a chance. Because I'm pretty sure there's someone out there, probably with those plastic covers on their sofa, who has room for this amazing couple in their life. I just hope that they're reading this article.

To find out more about this sweet old couple, call Erika Cassivi at 514.938.8114 or visit underdogclub.org.

We misidentified the shelter that rescued Pepere in the Underdog column of February 9, p. 18 and 22. He was rescued and nursed back to health by the SPCA Montérégie.



Westmount – 1st ad!

Gorgeous and spacious Victorian home. 4+1 brms, 3+1 baths, woodwork, large eat-in kitchen, finished basement with family room, garden, parking for 5 cars and separate garage!!

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ELEGANT RESIDENCE | HAMPSTEAD \$2,599,000
Located on the most prestigious street, this stunning custom built residence boasts over 6,500 sq. ft. of living space. Magnificent wrought iron & mahogany staircase & brazilian cherry wood patterned floors. High end gourmet kitchen are but a few of the outstanding features. Experience the exquisite taste & quality in every detail of this impressive property.

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UNIQUE DESIGN | WESTMOUNT \$2,495,000
The expansive vistas and breathtaking city and river views are the hallmarks of the contemporary concrete construction. Originally custom built for a Montreal based pharmaceutical magnate, this home offers a unique perspective on modern design. Located on over 9,000 sf of land on a quiet cul-de-sac, your privacy is assured. MLS 8291311

LIZA KAUFMAN 514.232.5932

RESTORED RESIDENCE | WESTMOUNT \$1,495,000
Impeccably restored residence in sought-after Westmount location. This extremely bright home was lovingly renovated and restored with nothing but hi-end finishes and materials: gourmet kitchen, wood panelled dining room, fantastic exterior deck, preserved original details, finished basement and exterior tandem parking for 3 cars.

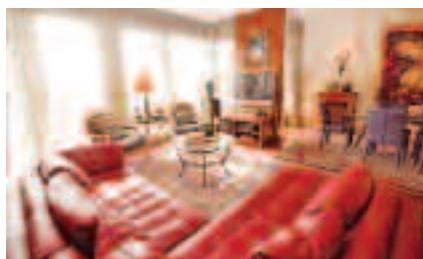
JOSEPH MONTANARO 514.660.3050

No. 1 WOOD AVE | WESTMOUNT \$1,395,000
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DIANE OLIVER 514.893.9872

TRAFALGAR H
Fantastic, inspiring view
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JILL SHPRITSE



CONDOS AT 333 SHERBROOKE \$1,550,000
Contemporary architecture, two beautiful units combined into one gracious apartment with an immense private terrace and an elegant plan. Quiet, exceptional finishings, chic inclusions, many details, extremely bright, floor to ceiling windows. 24-hour doorman, 4 garages, gym, hanging pool, terraces. Ideal location!

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UNIQUE PENTHOUSE | DOWNTOWN \$995,000
Unique enchanting oasis in downtown Montreal in a small & quiet bldg w/phenomenal panoramic southern views! Completely rebuilt in '99 with fabulous attention to detail, this extremely bright 3 bdrm unit offers wonderful entertaining space, fireplace, 2 balconies, garage, c/a, tons of storage. A real gem.

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MAUREEN BROSSEAU 514.935.4597**

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indoor pool with sal
2+1 bedroom 2,400

DAVID WILK



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One of the most beautiful homes in the region, featuring more than eight types of wood were used from the ceilings to the floors. Great hall, radiant heating, central air conditioning, double garage, 48Kv generator plus caretaker's house. MLS 8170116

S. GILBERT | P. BLONDEAU 418.951.0770

DOMAINE SHEFFINGTON | BROMONT \$2,250,000
Ancestral estate | Land zoned for development opportunities, plans approved by the city of Bromont. Features private lake, pond, forest, paths. Entirely renovated farm house with pool and spa. Serene site, lush landscape, views. Rare opportunity!

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PIERREFONDS | WATERFRONT \$1,645,000
Majestic European styled waterfront residence on peaceful crescent. Spacious open concept home conceived to afford lake views from all three levels. Grand hallway featuring imposing suspended granite staircase. 20' ceilings in living room. Near floor to ceiling windows.

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This elegant large home
spectacular home has
3 full bathrooms and
Inground pool, built-in
and beautiful landsc
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LORRAINE \$929,000
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MAJESTIC VICTORIAN | WESTMOUNT \$1,195,000
Majestic detached Victorian located just steps from the park, library and the "Y". The elegant double front door opens to a spacious entry hall with beautiful period details that include wood pillars, plaster moldings, lofty ceilings, inlaid wood floors & stunning stained glass. Ideal for those who want to be in walking distance to all amenities.

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LE CRYSTAL | DOWNTOWN \$1,190,000
It is time for a change! This magnificent condo of 1,555 sq. ft. in the heart of downtown with high-end finishes, 3 bedrooms, incredible views of the city and the mountain plus hotel services. MLS 8272588

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514.577.2009



DOWNTOWN | GOLDEN MILE \$895,500
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LAKESHORE | BEACONSFIELD \$4,890,000
A stunning waterfront residence located on picturesque Lakeshore road. Features a magnificent panoramic view of the water and the picturesque church by the lake in Pointe Claire.

PETER ALOVISI

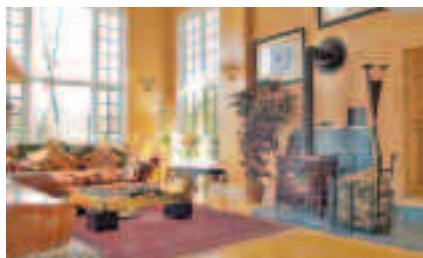
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WESTMOUNT AVE | WESTMOUNT \$2,190,000
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ice on the main level,
bar. Dream backyard,
waterfall, lots of sun,

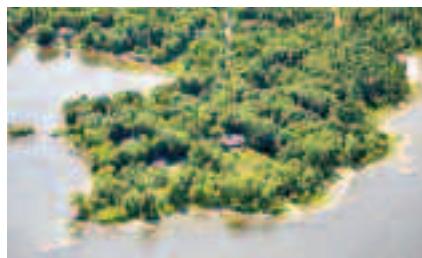


VIEUX VILLAGE | MT. TREMBLANT \$1,550,000
Spacious residence situated in the charming old village of Mt-Tremblant. This property was built with quality components, it has 4 different quarters, a studio, a bachelor, a 2 bdrm apartment and a familial comfortable home of 3 bdrms.

14.293.2277

ROBERT OUMET

514.212.0533



QUARRY POINT | HUDSON \$1,495,000
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514.774.9999



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LAC SACACOMIE | ST ALEXIS \$1,250,000
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\$620,000
. Main floor with 4



DOMAINES DE LA RIVE-SUD | BROSSARD \$529,000
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514.836.4062

**INTRODUCING**

FONTAINEBLEAU | BLAINVILLE \$469,000
Clean classical lines, bright spacious rooms and superb hardwood floors are but a few of the features which create perfect harmony in this stylish home.

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TOWNHOUSE-LIKE CONDO
LAVAL-DES-RAPIDES \$399,000
Exquisite condo offers 2 bdrms solarium, fireplace, mezzanine, heated in ground pool, 2 garages + lrg storage. Enjoy beautiful landscaping, & spectacular water views from the backyard. A true retreat with proximity to all amenities. Possibility to add your own deck for boat.

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Ogilvy en Rose



Social Notes from Westmount and Beyond

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Ogilvy en Rose, the annual event raising money for the Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation, attracted almost 2,000 fans on a cold night late last year. Chilled but chic supporters lined up around the block to enter the fashionable downtown department store.

Co-chaired by **Suzanne Côté** (Stikeman Elliott) and **Isabelle Perras** (Optimum), the cocktail/shopping extravaganza was supported by Montreal's famed Buona Notte and Globe restaurants, as well as Café Méliès, Chez Lévêque, Distribution Saeco Canada, Dr. Scholl's Pour Elle, La Gâterie J.R., Les Produits Alimentaires Viau, Il Cortile and Saputo.

Fabulous food from Lesters Deli, Bronte, Koko, Chandelier, Première Moisson, Mignardise, and Collège LaSalle was offered on different floors of the store. Much loved were the tiny cupcakes (from Itsi Bitsi), iced in pretty pink – the sym-

bolic colour of the cause. Liquid refreshments were provided by Vincor, Aquaovo, Nocochi, Alizé, Nestlé Waters Canada, Van Houtte and Boréale. Martinis from Tavern Square Dominion were much enjoyed.

Honorary patrons from firms throughout the city ensured a sold-out event. A bevy of beauties (and their elegant escorts) shopped the night away with a 15 percent discount on almost everything in the store.

The evening was crowned with a fashion show, featuring Quebec celebs as models. Greeting guests at the door were the Ogilvy VIPs: **Bernard Paré** (president), **Steeve Lapierre** (vice president), **Carolina Gallo La Flèche** (events planner) and out-of-towner **David Jubb**, CEO, chairman Ogilvy Canada. Much admired were the two gorgeous cross-dressers whose blonde hair, artful dark make-up and six-inch stiletto height made them sensational stand-outs!

Please note: Eric R. Laflèche is president and CEO of Provigo. I misidentified his company in my February 9 column on the Museum of Fine Arts' ball.

If you are interested in sponsoring this page, kindly contact Arleen Candiotti at 514.223.3567.



From left, Steeve Lapierre, at centre Elizabeth Glimenaki, and David Jubb, with fabulous "Blonde Babes" in the back row.



Westmounters Sue and Jawaid Khan with Michele Kaulbach.



Westmounters Vanessa Laframboise and Isabelle Roberge



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Bruno, Lock and Miler at Vic Hall

PHOTO BY ROBERT J. GALBRAITH



Westmount photographer Jaroslava Miler and one of her works entitled "Tropical Rain Over Port of Spain" (2008) at the show's vernissage, February 17 at the Gallery at Victoria Hall.



The Independent's photographer gets artistic himself.

Comin' Up

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26

- Former Westmounter **Lisa Pasold** reads from *Rats of Las Vegas*, Atwater Library, 12:30 pm. Saxophonist Dave Turner plays music of the era.
- **TGIF** at Centre Greene: dinner and games, 6 pm to 8:30 pm. Cost: \$12 per child or \$90 for the season. Ages 5 to 12. Info: www.centregreene.org or 514.931.6202.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27

- **Atwater Library Books Roadshow**, 1 to 4 pm. Antiquarian booksellers Wilfrid de Freitas and Susan Ravidin consult on value of special books. Fee: \$2 per book, members, \$3 per book, non-members. All proceeds go to library.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28

- **Kids First Costume Purim Party** at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom (395 Elm Ave.), 10:30 am. Games, snacks and the Story of Esther. All welcome, no reservations. Cost: \$10 per family. Info: 514.937.3575.

MONDAY, MARCH 1

- **Council meeting**, 8 pm at city hall.

THURSDAY MARCH 4

- **March Break Camp** at Centre Greene. March 1 to 5. Cost: \$25 per day or \$100 per week. Pre-registration required. Forms and info at www.centregreene.org or 514.931.6202.
- **ArtNow** presents Susan Pepler, Diana Bruno and Aurélien Guillory. Bring a small rug for discussion on colour palettes. Westmount Library, 7 pm. Free.

FRIDAY, MARCH 5

- **Atwater Library** (1200 Atwater) lunchtime series celebrates international women's day with professor Jane Everett who talks about **Gabrielle Roy's** reflections on the lives of women, 12:30 pm. Coffee. Free admission, but donations invited.

TUESDAY, MARCH 9

- The **Westmount Horticultural Society** presents speaker Ismael Hauteceur on rooftop gardening, 7 to 9 pm at Westmount Library. Cost: \$5 for guests.

Civic Alert

continued from p. 5

plained an adaptation of this technique to a cluster of ambitious composters. He wanted to be rid of the counter-top unit, but had no under-counter space for a second container. So he puts two separate, smaller decomposable liners, bought from Hogg's and Home Depot, in his single container.

When full, they are transferred to either the green bin or the garbage can. Because there are more compostables, that one is renewed more frequently. Hopefully, this proportion will soon become the Westmount norm.

Citizen activist Don Wedge's email address is dwedge@sympatico.ca.

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Peewee A Predators get an edge from tournament; international competition



Off-Sidel

NOAH SIDEL

If training camp is the beginning, and the season, journey and playoffs, the end, then practices and tournaments are truly the glue that binds a team together – from start to finish.

The last few weeks have been extra special in terms of bonding opportunities for the Peewee A Westmount Predators, with the team winning an exciting outdoor tourney in Côte St. Luc (CSL) on February 6 to 7 and then hosting a squad from Boston for a couple of games on February 20.

“Without a doubt, the CSL tournament brought everyone on the team together. It was very impressive to watch as many different players scored throughout the tournament, and through the entire thing, we played a team defence that was executed to perfection,” said Preds coach Sean Maislin.

“The players had their first taste of pressure hockey this year and that will benefit us as we go down the stretch. Tournaments help players create a cohesive unit in pursuit of success.”

Predator forward Jonah Goodman enjoyed the CSL tournament.

“Playing outdoors was a cool experience because the ice surface was not as smooth and the sound of the game was different. It was a great feeling to win this tournament and bring back to Westmount a trophy,” he said.

In pursuit of gaining more experience, last year Maislin organized the first of what looks now to be an annual game against the Wellesley Raiders, a team from a town outside of Boston.

Last year’s trip to Wellesley was a huge success for Westmount as the team came home with the grand prize, the Golden Stick, which now hangs proudly in the Westmount Recreation office.

This year’s contest was equally successful, with the home team defending its title in an 8-0 win.

“Playing kids from different locations – especially different countries – is good for the kids because they get exposure to different styles of play and hopefully challenges they haven’t seen thus far that will help them develop as players,” the coach said.

“I hope the players will cherish every opportunity afforded to them and con-

tinue to develop as players, teammates, and people. Playing the kids from the US is always fun as we have created a great camaraderie with them.”

Raider forward Nicholas Churchill had a great time on the trip.

“Playing hockey in Montreal is a privilege because of the great hockey tradition there. I look forward to trips with my teammates. Playing hockey in Canada is really exciting – this is my first time travelling out of the [United States] to play any sport,” Churchill said.

You can always reach me at
noahsidel@gmail.com.



Westmount player Nadav Sarid, number 9, keeps one of the visiting Raiders on his toes during the Predators’ 8-0 Golden Stick victory on February 20.

Photo: Eric Bindman

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ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

La galerie du Victoria Hall

La galerie du Victoria Hall est fière de présenter les œuvres des photographes Diana Bruno, Richard Lock et Jaroslava Miler jusqu'au 13 mars. Info : 514 989-5521.

Galerie : appel de dossiers

La galerie du Victoria Hall lance un appel de dossiers pour sa programmation de la saison 2010-2011 (septembre 2010 à août 2011). Ce concours s'adresse aux artistes émergents ou professionnels qui habitent Westmount. Les propositions doivent inclure 10 photographies ou images électroniques d'œuvres récentes; une liste des titres et description, un court curriculum vitae, un exposé portant sur la démarche artistique ainsi qu'une enveloppe préaffranchie pour le retour du dossier. Les artistes sont également invités à proposer jusqu'à cinq œuvres pour une exposition de groupe.

Période d'inscription : du 15 février au 15 avril de chaque année. Les dossiers doivent être envoyés au soin du Comité de sélection, Victoria Hall, 4333, rue Sherbrooke Ouest, Westmount, H3Z 1E2 ou déposés au 4626, rue Sherbrooke Ouest. Info : 514 989-5521.

Défilé de la Saint-Patrick

Joignez-vous à nous le dimanche 14 mars à midi pour le 186^e défilé de la Saint-Patrick. Les laissez-passer pour monter à bord du char de Westmount sont disponibles au Victoria Hall seulement. Vous pouvez aussi vous joindre à notre groupe de marcheurs. Un autobus partira du Victoria Hall à 11 h 15 pour se rendre au site de départ. Info : 514 989-5226. 🌿



SPORTS ET LOISIRS

Cartes d'accès - installations sportives 2010

Les cartes d'accès pour l'année 2010 sont maintenant en vente au bureau des Sports et loisirs à l'Aréna de Westmount. Veuillez noter qu'une carte d'accès valide est requise pour les périodes de patinage libre et toute partie de hockey improvisée à l'Aréna. 🌿

DATES À RETENIR

Le 1^{er} mars – 20 h

Séance du conseil
Hôtel de ville

Le 5 mars – 14 h

Club d'échecs et de Scrabble
Bibliothèque

Le 10 mars – 14 h

Conférences de 14 heures
How He Lied to Her Husband
Bibliothèque

Le 15 mars – 18 h 30

Club de lecture française
Bibliothèque

Le 16 mars – 19 h

Club de lecture anglaise
Bibliothèque



BIBLIOTHÈQUE

**Conférences de 14 heures –
*How He Lied to Her Husband***

Venez assister à une lecture sur scène de *How He Lied to Her Husband* présentée par les Golden Stagers le mercredi 10 mars à 14 h. Info : 514 989-5386.

Conférences culturelles –***Dossier mode : La maison Dior***

Joignez-vous à l'historienne Pamela Grimaud le mercredi 24 mars à 19h pour un diaporama sur le couturier français Christian Dior. Info : 514 989-5386.

Conférences sur la santé –***Ce que toute femme devrait savoir: détection du cancer des ovaires***

Joignez-vous à la docteure Lucy Gilbert, directrice de l'équipe multidisciplinaire du groupe de gynéco-oncologie du CUSM qui parlera du projet DOVE et de la découverte d'une méthode permettant de poser un diagnostic précoce du cancer de l'ovaire. Cette présentation aura lieu le mercredi 17 mars à 19 h. Info: 514-989-5386. 🌿



COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Gallery at Victoria Hall

The Gallery at Victoria Hall is pleased to present the works of photographers Diana Bruno, Richard Lock and Jaroslava Miler until March 13. Info: 514 989-5521.

Gallery call for projects

The Gallery at Victoria Hall announces a call for projects for its 2010-2011 exhibition season (September 2010 to August 2011). Emerging or professional artists who are residents of Westmount are invited to apply. Submissions should include 10 photographs or electronic images of recent works; an accompanying list of titles with descriptive information; a short résumé, an artist's statement and a self-addressed stamped envelope for the return of the dossier. Artists may also apply to participate in a group exhibition (maximum 5 images).

Registration period: February 15 to April 15 of each year. Please forward your project to: Gallery Selection Committee, Victoria Hall, 4333 Sherbrooke St. West, Westmount, H3Z 1E2 or deliver it to 4626 Sherbrooke St. West. Info: 514 989-5521.

St. Patrick's Parade

Join us for the 186th St. Patrick's Parade on Sunday, March 14! Board the Westmount Float or join the walking contingent. Passes are available at Victoria Hall only. A bus will transport participants from Victoria Hall to the float on Sunday at 11:15 a.m. Info: 514 989-5226. 🌿



SPORTS & RECREATION

2010 Facility Membership Cards

Sports Facility Membership Cards for the 2010 calendar year are now on sale at the Sports and Recreation office at the Westmount Arena. Please note that a valid Sports Facility Membership Card is required for general skating and pick-up hockey at the Westmount Arena. 🌿

DATEBOOK

March 1st – 8 p.m.

Council Meeting
City Hall

March 5 – 2 p.m.

Chess and Scrabble Club
Library

March 10 – 2 p.m.

2 O'Clock Series
How He Lied to Her Husband
Library

March 15 – 6:30 p.m.

French Book Club
Library

March 16 – 7 p.m.

English Book Club
Library



LIBRARY

2 O'Clock Series –***How He Lied to Her Husband***

Join us for a staged reading of *How He Lied to Her Husband* with The Golden Stagers on Wednesday, March 10 at 2 p.m. Info: 514 989-5386.

Cultural Lecture Series –***Fashion Files: The House of Dior***

Join Pamela Grimaud for this visual presentation on iconic French fashion designer Christian Dior on Wednesday, March 24 at 7 p.m. Info: 514 989-5386.

Health Lecture Series - *What Every Woman Should Know:****Detecting Ovarian Cancer Early***

Dr. Lucy Gilbert, Chief of the Oncology Division and the Director of the Multidisciplinary Gynecologic Oncology Team at the MUHC will discuss the DOVE program for early detection of ovarian cancer on Wednesday, March 17 at 7 p.m. Info: 514 989-5386. 🌿

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WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Using your Tool Box to cope with chronic disease

By MARTIN C. BARRY

A program of workshops being offered by the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) for people with chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, heart ailments, asthma, arthritis and chronic pain is teaching them practical self-management skills, along with coping strategies.

The “My Tool Box” program is a free weekly workshop designed to help patients develop the skills needed to better manage the day-to-day challenges of living with chronic health conditions. Led by trained volunteers, each class has 10 to 12 participants. Care-givers are also welcome to attend.

The MUHC, Montreal Neurological Institute and Hospital, McGill University and private donations provide the financial backing for the program.

“Empowerment is one of the main objectives,” says Deborah Radcliffe-Branch, a former Westmount resident who is director of the MUHC’s Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. According to Radcliffe-Branch, My Tool Box tries to provide support, structure and “tools” to live the best possible quality of life to persons who often have more than one chronic illness.

ness.

The six-week, two-and-a-half-hour workshops are offered at various times, including morning, afternoon, evening and weekends in various locations all over Montreal, including downtown, the West Island and NDG near Westmount. The program was initially developed at Stanford University and is now offered in nine languages throughout the world.

The workshop topics include goal-setting and problem-solving, managing pain and fatigue, dealing with difficult emotions like frustration and fear, and techniques for reducing stress and anxiety.

Radcliffe maintains that because Quebec’s health care system is based on an acute care model, which she describes as a sort of “find it, fix it,” and because most visits to the health care system today are due to chronic illness, “the system doesn’t really meet the needs of the patients with chronic health conditions. So this is really an alternate model to provide the support. It’s trying to teach patients how to partner with their caregiver.”

In the past, she pointed out, the health care professional was the embodiment of knowledge and the patient’s role was to comply. However, with chronic diseases

that many people have for the rest of their lives, they can become partners with the health care professional and can potentially become experts in managing their own illness.

Westmounter Rita Hebert decided to take on the role as Toolbox program leader after first completing the workshop. She was born with a heart/lung malformation and had already been using some of the techniques being taught, like proper diet and exercise.

“It’s helping each other, but it’s also a self-management program,” she explained. “It’s very beneficial in that way.”

Persons can enroll in the program and

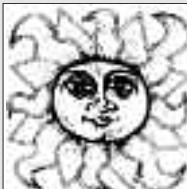
can also become volunteer leaders by completing a four-day leadership training course.

The group is hoping to find a Westmount location in which to hold future classes, but for now the closest site is at the MUHC building at 1255 Guy St. The next session of My Tool Box, in English and in French, begins the first week of March. The summer session begins in May.

To register or for complete course information, contact program coordinator Jessica Vitulano at 514.934.1934, ext. 71585, or visit mytoolbox.mcgill.ca.



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Among those pictured above are several Westmounters who are involved in the program, including Marie Josée Brust and Rita Hebert.

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Fibre – The ins and outs



Health round-up

BARRY NASHEN

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition's recent release of study results of fibre and teenagers suggest that the greater the fibre intake, the less chance of diabetes and heart problems.

Over the two-year study period, about half of the participants had decreased their consumption of fibre by an average of about 6 grams per day, while the remainder increased their fibre intake by a simi-

lar amount. The investigators were looking at belly fat, which is the most dangerous type of fat; fatter waistlines increase the risk of diabetes and heart disease. Belly fat increased 21 percent for the study participants who were eating less fibre, but the adolescents who upped their fibre intake had a 4 percent reduction in belly fat.

Separately, it was earlier reported by the University of Leeds that pre-menopausal women who eat 30 grams or more of fibre a day cut their risk of breast cancer by 52 percent.

I found these conclusions outstanding! So what's going on with fibre and our health? Exactly what is fibre anyway? What are the best sources of fibre and what are its health benefits?

Officially, fibre is a type of carbohydrate that the body can't digest. Great sources are whole fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads and breakfast cereals, and all manner of beans. The daily amount of fibre that is currently recommended depends on the number of calories that you consume each day. Most adult women should aim for over 20 grams of fibre a day; teens and men should aim for over 30.

Before discussing fibre's health benefits, let's first bust two myths:

1. All fibre is created equal. Not true. There are two basic types of fibre, each with different functions. Insoluble fibre is found in wheat bran, nuts and many vegetables. Its structure is thick and rough, and it won't dissolve in water, so it zips through your digestive tract. Conversely, soluble fibre is found in oats, beans, barley and some fruits. It dissolves in water to form a gel-like material in your digestive tract. This allows it to slow the absorption of sugar into your bloodstream.

2. Fibre has no calories. Not true. Your small intestine can't break down soluble or insoluble fibre; both types just go right through you. That's why some experts say fibre doesn't provide any calories. However, this claim isn't entirely accurate. In your large intestine, soluble fibre's molecules are converted into short-chain fatty acids, which do provide four calories per gram, as with all carbohydrates. (Insoluble fibre has essentially zero calories.)

Finally, let's review a short list of fibre's health benefits.

- Avoiding and relieving constipation:

Fibre can absorb large amounts of water in the bowels, and this makes stools softer and easier to pass.

- Heart disease: Soluble fibre can have a positive influence on cholesterol, triglycerides, and other particles that affect heart disease.
- Gallstones and kidney stones: Rapid digestion leads to a rapid release of glucose (sugar) into the bloodstream. To cope with this, the body has to release large amounts of insulin into the bloodstream, and this can make a person more likely to develop gallstones and kidney stones (in addition to diabetes and high cholesterol).
- Weight control: Foods containing plenty of fibre have more bulk than low-fibre foods. Therefore, fibre can sometimes slow the onset of hunger because the contents of the stomach are bulkier. Here's a tip: avoid foods that have been made easier to eat by the removal of fibre, such as fruit juices. You would be far better off to eat an apple and then drink a glass of water, rather than having a glass of apple juice (which contains no fibre).

The list of the health benefits of dietary fibre is much longer. It is safe to conclude that paying more attention to fibre may go a long way to improving your health.

Barry Nashen is a Westmount IT consultant who is interested in health issues and shares his personal experiences in this column. He is not a health professional and his comments should be read in that light. Medical problems should be discussed with a doctor or appropriate health professional.

For comments: barry@nashen.com, or <http://goodhealthguru.blogspot.com/>

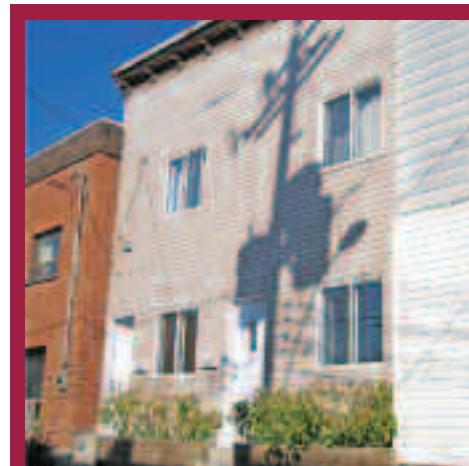
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If you are not in a position to adopt, and you would prefer to help Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions with Raven's veterinary care costs, we are currently fundraising to offset her medical expenses. All donations will go directly to Raven's care.

Your neighbour, Lyzanne.

I received an urgent phone call from one of my friendly volunteer contacts from Gerdy's Rescue and Adoptions the other day. She was making arrangements for Raven to be removed from a shelter, where she had been dumped, and into immediate veterinary care.

This is when we hate the truth and lose faith in humanity: someone had put a plastic bag over Raven's head and tied it around her neck, resulting in a pressure so severe, one of her eyes came out of the socket.

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Westmount Profile: Mary Baxter

Olympics and Habs: an insider's view

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

For someone who thrives on being in the hub of things, Mary Baxter has a way of finding herself right on the front lines.

She ushered for Canadiens' hockey games for 25 years starting with the dynasty era of the 1950s, while working full-time. She worked as an observer at the Innsbruck Winter Olympics in 1976 as part of four years' employment with the Montreal summer games held the same year. Baxter also volunteered at the Paralympics in St. Paul, Minnesota in 1984, attached to the wrestling team.

"I've been so lucky," she says. "I've met so many people."

She recalls her stint with the Alouettes, a long career with Air Canada, work for former Westmount MP Don Johnston and 33 years as a volunteer fitness instructor with the downtown YMCA, from which she recently retired.

Add to this the many friends she has made on cycling trips through Europe and training to complete the Ottawa marathon at age 73. And it's easy to understand how contact with people is what this longtime Westmounter is all about.

Now in retirement, Baxter works one day a week for the Rotary Club of Westmount to help in the kitchen, serve and clean up at the weekly luncheon meetings. "She's really considered one of the gang," says Ted Sancton, a past president. "She turns up to help out as a volunteer at many of our activities."

And the feeling seems to be mutual. "I just love those guys," she says.

A few years ago, Baxter filled in as a Rotary guest speaker, delighting members with her anecdotes about the Habs when she worked at the "old" Forum from 1952 to 1977.

Worked during the riot

She was on duty the night of the 1955 hockey riot. She worked with hockey greats from Rocket Richard and Jean Béliveau to Ken Dryden and Bob Gainey. Her many albums of souvenirs bulge with letters of thanks from NHL notables, clippings and photos.

At her retirement party from the organization, a senior club executive related how he had introduced himself to a group of Quebecers at a southern resort. He expected to be asked about one of the superstars. Instead, someone said: "Do you know Mary Baxter?"

Describing herself as somewhat of a daredevil and definitely a mischievous convent girl, Baxter grew up in LaSalle playing pickup hockey with the boys and competition softball with the girls.

But it was on a day in 1952 while listening to hockey on the radio that she heard an interview with an usherette, as they were then called. "Right away, I knew that was the job for me," she says. She was almost 20 and working days at Imperial Tobacco.

She went to the Forum the next day and was hired on the spot by Frank Selke, Sr., the general manager. The job paid \$1.25 an hour. She wore a tailored uniform, hat, white gloves and heels. "When I became head usherette, we were 21 steady workers and 12 substitutes. We were like a family."

In one of Baxter's albums, she runs across a story from the *Star Weekly* in 1962. The sweeping headline reads: "The girl who gets paid to watch hockey."

Recruited for the Games

Baxter was also making a name for herself in the TV interview room at ice level. One day, the producer of the French version of *Hockey Night in Canada* asked her to join the Radio Canada team he was putting together for ORTO (the Olympic Radio Television Organization) to work for the Montreal games.

Seeing it as an experience of a lifetime, Baxter signed on for the next four years and left her secretarial position of 16 years at W.R. Grace, a chemical company.

As an accreditation officer for worldwide electronic media covering the Montreal event, she worked in liaison with the RCMP and personnel from city hall. She even learned German – which she still likes to practice – to benefit from the Innsbruck experience.

Baxter subsequently joined Don Johnston's law firm and then moved with him to his campaign office on Greene Ave.

Working at Air Canada until her retirement in 1996, she became part of the launch team for the En Route Gold Card, winning the award of excellence for employees demonstrating "consistently exceptional performance."

When she filled in for two months as a flight attendant on the Vancouver route during a strike in 1985, her first passengers to board were two police officers and a handcuffed prisoner.

Life member of Y

Overwhelmed, she says, by the life-time



Mary Baxter holds photo of herself as an usherette at the Forum.

membership she was given on retiring at the Y in December, she is also looking forward to the end of winter so she can resume cycling along the Lachine bike path.

She also plans to write about her recollections, including one embarrassing moment recorded in a press clipping. In it the columnist describes a hockey game the night before when two New York Rangers were slated for TV interviews between pe-

riods. Their busy trainer reached under the bench and handed Baxter their dentures in separate paper cups to distribute. Unknowingly, she mixed up the cups.

"After the interviews, one of the players told me it was first time he had been interviewed without his teeth," she says laughing, then adds, "Oh well, laughter is what it's all about, isn't it?"



Mary Baxter at work during Montreal's summer Olympics in 1976. She is wearing her CBC uniform, which she has saved as a souvenir. See photo p. 1.

Children's Library celebrates past, looks to future

By ERIN STROPES

The Montreal Children's Library, fresh off of its 80th anniversary celebrations, held its annual general meeting February 18 at its branch in the basement of the Atwater Library.

The library board heard fundraising and investment reports from treasurer Nadia Craig, Marielle Wertheimer of the fundraising campaign, and investment counsellor David Stenason.

Although the reports were positive and the library posted a surplus for the year, Craig expressed a concern that there has been a decline in long-term corporate and foundation commitments. These donors allow the library to plan for the future and provide stability in its programming. Replacing expired multi-year commitments was stated as a priority for 2010.

Newly-minted head librarian Adrienne Connelly expressed her appreciation for the library's volunteers, "without whose dedication we wouldn't be able to offer such a variety of activities."

She also acknowledged Atwater branch librarian Elizabeth Macdonnell, who is celebrating her 30th year with the library.

The variety of programming offered by the Children's Library was an area of focus. The three branch librarians delivered reports detailing activities from comic book drawing to meeting a python to learning about Andy Warhol with animators from the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Rachel Wagner Lemblé, coordinator of Mother Goose Rhyme Time, the library's pre-reading program, reported that the program enjoyed record attendance levels and expansion this year, and actually struggled with being over capacity, something Lemblé called "a wonderful problem."

Several long-time board members have retired this year and were recognized, including Rosemarie Asch, a former Olympic skier (Oslo 1952), who served on the board for more than 20 years.

Near the end of the meeting, Julie Frankel took over from Cheryl Stenason as president of the board. Stenason has served as president for the past three years. Frankel, formerly the board's vice president, is continuing a family tradition: her mother, Pam Frankel, was a board member herself.



Outgoing Children's Library board president Cheryl Stenason (left), Head Librarian Adrienne Connelly, Atwater branch librarian Elizabeth Macdonnell (with the library's mascot Patrick the Bear) and incoming board president Julie Frankel.



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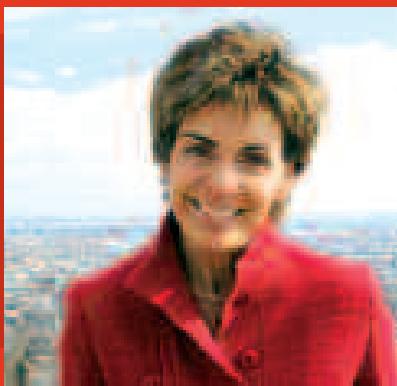
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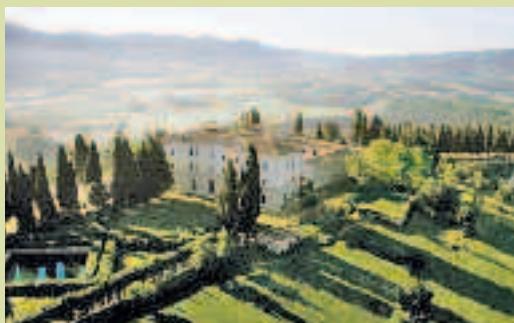


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