

Accelerated tax collection in transition

Council set to grant one-year reprieve for unpaid 2016 taxes

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In an unexpected move, the city's Finance & Administration (F&A) committee was to be recommending to council November 21 that the city delay for a year a new accelerated tax collection procedure. This calls for starting the sale process for properties with unpaid taxes within the same calendar year.

The new process was to kick in for 2016 tax bills with an intended sale of properties in January 2017 but was subsequently extended to March.

News of a year-long reprieve was an-

nounced to the *Independent* November 16 by city director general Mike Deegan, immediately following an F&A meeting.

The city's previous practice had been to wait a year or more before resorting to a property sale by public auction. But letters sent out by the Finance department September 27 to 335 taxpayers with overdue accounts – most for 2016 – told them to pay in full by November 4.

People require a longer grace period, however, when "a new policy" is implemented, longtime property owner Mike Diperno told the city council meeting November 7. "I can pay my taxes, but there are other families who can't."

Mayor Peter Trent said he agreed that the matter *continued on p. 7*

Hodgins & Associates celebrates 30



Hodgins & Associates landscape architects marked the beginning of their fourth decade in business on October 20 with a reception at their St. Catherine St. offices. "We're celebrating 30 years of developing beautiful landscaping projects," said Myke Hodgins, principal partner at the firm. "At 30 years, we're already looking forward to the next 30 years," he said. From left: Westmounters Donald Christopher, Linda Lenczner, Myke Hodgins, Barbara Stutman, Nelson Fernandes, Marvin Stutman and Eric Lenczner.

Photo: Martin C. Barry

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Social Notes BY V. REDGRAVE p. 18

Tree pruning to launch 3-year plan to restore Westmount Park

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Tree pruning will gradually take place in the coming months in Westmount Park as a first step in a three-year plan to restore the iconic park "to its previous grandeur," according to Councillor Cynthia Lulham, who announced the refurbishment November 7 during the meeting to adopt the capital works budget.

The work will start with removal of the

majority of declining ash trees.

An amount of \$165,000 has been set aside for the first phase of work in 2017. This is to focus on an inspection and analysis of the park's infrastructure. This will lead to a plan and schedule for the start of work on the underground network as required for pipes, sewers and re-wiring.

Following infrastructure upgrades, work in 2018 and 2019 will take place as required to redo *continued on p. 19*



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Concern expressed for traffic congestion

St. Catherine redo on hold for Turcot, Provigo projects

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Traffic congestion and the future of St. Catherine St. were among concerns raised by residents at the city council meeting November 7.

Plans for rebuilding St. Catherine and its concrete median south and east of Claremont and de Maisonneuve were conspicuously absent from the city's major road projects for 2017, Burton Ave. resident Denis Biro stated.

As well, "what is the long-term plan for development on de Maisonneuve between

Claremont and Decarie?" he asked. While this strip is in NDG, it could have a major impact on traffic congestion in Westmount.

Biro called the concrete median "an eyesore" and said he was asking about St. Catherine because of a proposed 10-storey development by Provigo and Groupe Maurice at the intersection of Claremont, de Maisonneuve and St. Catherine. Its garage entry points would be off St. Catherine (see story March 3, 2015, p. 1). This project is currently under review by Montreal city council. (See story below.)

The entry points are why the city hasn't planned to redo St. Catherine yet, Councillor Cynthia Lulham replied. While this project could have major impact on Westmount, "it could be an opportunity" for redesigning the street's configuration.

Traffic generated by work to dismantle and rebuild the Ville Marie expressway is also projected to cause drivers to use Westmount streets as alternate routes. These include de Maisonneuve/St. Catherine as well as Côte St. Antoine and Westmount Ave.

Kirk Polymenakos of Claremont asked

what the city planned to do about mounting traffic congestion. He referred to Section 12 of the Highway Safety Code on powers given to municipalities to improve traffic congestion.

"Will there be some improvement in how we get around?" he asked.

"We won't redo St. Catherine while Turcot is going on," explained Benoit Hurtubise, the city's assistant director general for engineering and infrastructure and Hydro Westmount director.

NDG mayor Copeman: Provigo project continuing down alternative avenue to approval

BY ISAAC OLSON

Le Groupe Maurice, working in tandem with Loblaws, is still pushing forward with a supermarket/senior housing project on the Westmount/NDG border that was rejected by NDG residents in January.

Their intention to keep trying for the project was originally reported in the March 22 edition of the *Free Press*, the *Independent's* sister paper.

The project, slated for the corner of de Maisonneuve, St. Catherine and Claremont is continuing to clear the necessary hurdles for centre city's approval – essentially by-passing the NDG-Côte des Neiges borough's urban planning process thanks to Montreal's charter.

Specifically, article 89.3 allows the realization of projects of an "exceptional nature." Developers can seek approval from centre city's council if, explained borough mayor Russell Copeman, the project includes 25,000 square meters or more of floor space. In this case, the project calls

for a Provigo supermarket on the ground floor, a 250-spot underground parking garage and eight storeys of residences.

The borough council voted down the project after a referendum was called by citizens on the zoning change's approval last year, but that may vote did not thwart the project completely. The city council, over a series of votes, has the ability to override the decision and approve the project.

That series of votes, said Copeman, includes a mandatory consultation by Montreal's public consultation office (OCPM).

"It takes the decision of the borough council and transfers the decision to all 65 members of city council," said Copeman, noting the project must also go through the urban planning Comité Jacques-Viger. "We're not even at a position where the borough services are prepared to recommend to city council a vote on the project based on article 89.3."

Once the civil services analysis is complete, a recommendation will be made to

centre city as to whether or not to go forward with article 89.3, he said. Then a vote will be held. If it passes, it will go to the OCPM "for a mandatory consultation." The office issues a report, and then it goes back to council for final approval and "all that process will take four to six months," he said.

The OCPM is an independent public consultation organization that will give neighbours an opportunity to share their opposition to the project.

When asked if he has any predictions as to where this project is going, Copeman said, "It's too early. I haven't seen the definitive" *continued on p. 6*

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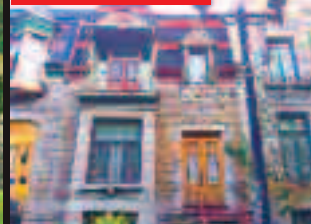
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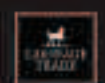
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PSOs arrest break-in suspect after pursuit into neighbouring Shaughnessy village

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Public safety officers pursued a break-in suspect into Shaughnessy village, where they arrested him in the early hours of the morning in a lane at 2100 Chomedey St. November 13, Public Security officials said.

The man was turned over to police who later released him on a promise to appear in court on charges related to breaking into a car near Atwater and Lincoln, and possibly one on Mount Pleasant. He was identified as a 19-year-old resident of Verdun.

The incident began with a call to Public Security at 12:25 am about a man breaking into a car or looking suspiciously into it outside 499 Mount Pleasant, said Public Security director Greg McBain.

In an attempt to hunt down the suspect, a patroller was driving north on Atwater between de Maisonneuve and Lincoln when he was flagged down by a car owner pointing to his Audi and saying someone was inside it trying to steal something.

As the officer approached the car, the suspect began running east along Lincoln

into Montreal. The officer informed others, and police were called.

The officer continued pursuing the suspect along Lincoln, where a second person seemed to be waiting for the suspect. As the officer approached, he heard the suspect talking on a phone saying that Public Security was after him.

The suspect ran south on Lambert Closse and east into a laneway, where he was caught, told he was under arrest and ordered to get down on his knees.

Caught again

Suddenly the suspect got up and began running along the lane, with the officer again in pursuit until he managed to nab him in front of 2100 Chomedey, where he was ordered to lie flat on the ground, handcuffed and read his rights.

When turned over to police, the suspect was found to be without his phone, which he had lost in the pursuit. Public safety officers managed to retrieve it and take back to the scene.

The phone was reported to contain a “theft remote,” described as a device that

can track alarms on cars and unlock doors.

It was not immediately known whether anything had been stolen from either of the two parked cars but the suspect had actually been seen inside one of them by its owner, McBain said. “What’s good is that the citizen flagged down our officer to say there was a man in his car.”

Sherbrooke St. work winds up

A three-month project to replace the water main on Sherbrooke St. between Kensington and Strathcona was completed November 17, “a week ahead of schedule,” according to city director general Mike Deegan. “I can see the traffic moving smoothly again,” he said shortly after the north side was reopened to traffic at 3 pm. “It was a very clean job.”

The roadway had been narrowed to one lane in each direction, using the eastbound side for the duration of the work, which began the week of August 22.

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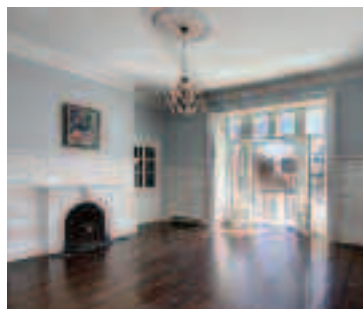
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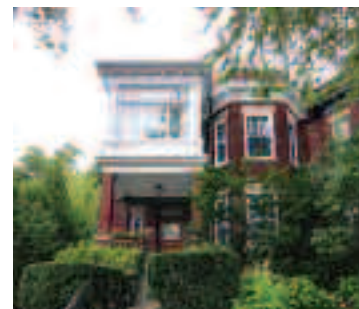
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Tax collection cont'd. from p. 3

project after the input of the Comité Jacques-Viger.”

It wants the borough to look at de Maisonneuve Blvd. from Westmount to Decarie Blvd. as a whole, he said, rather than approach it piecemeal. This is something “our services agreed with,” said Copeman.

Borough services is now looking at how to approach the entire sector and “that process is ongoing,” he said. At the same time, the commission has suggested some changes to the project, such as increased setbacks.

“We are many months away from any possible approval by Montreal city council for such a project,” said Copeman. “Everyone will get a chance to put in their two cents’ worth, the Vendôme Village Association, the residents around, the entire borough. Anyone interested in this will be able to make their opinion known in the most transparent manner possible.” *See related story above.*

Porsche trunk found open at 4 am

Public Security patrollers found the trunk of a car wide open on Metcalfe Ave. at 4 am November 12, department officials said. The doors were also unlocked. The owner of the black Porsche stated he had

State of trees reported on Upper Lansdowne

Bunches of branches aroused the suspicions of a patroller October 31 on Upper Lansdowne, according to Public Security officials. Signs that trees had been cut on the property, and that interior house renovations were under way without evidence of a permit were to be reported to Urban Planning. A dead tree nearby was believed to constitute a hazard.

Loose dog on Gordon

A dog resembling a Shih Tsu was found running loose November 14 in front of 74 Gordon Cresc. according to Public Security officials. While the dog was in the patroller’s arms, a woman appeared carrying its collar with licence and stated the dog belonged to her boss on Summit Cresc. The dog must have escaped through an opening in the garden fence, she explained.

been home all night after leaving the car secured and suggested his wife might have used it in the meantime. He would ask her if anything had been stolen.

Jumps railway fence

Public safety officers and police searched the railway tracks around Columbia Ave. October 30 after reports a man acting suspiciously had hopped the fence at the foot of the street. Public Security officials said they had received a call at 10:37 pm for the man and advised police units, which assisted in the search, which extended into St. Henri. No one was found.

Caught hiding beer behind tree

A man was ticketed \$77 for alcohol possession in Westmount Park November 9 after he was seen hiding a can of beer behind a tree, Public Security officials said. He had been spotted during a routine patrol of the park and subsequently found at 4:35 pm with the open can. He was identified as a 40-year-old resident of Prud’homme Ave. in NDG.

Four break curfew at 4:37 am

Four men were discovered in Sunnyside Park during a routine patrol of the area at 4:37 am, Public Security officials said. All were issued \$77 tickets on the spot for

Kids warned against soliciting

Following a complaint from a resident of Wood Ave., a group of five kids was warned November 12 against door-to-door soliciting, according to Public Security officials. Aged 5 to 13, the group told officers at 7:49 pm they had been dropped off by their parents to collect money for an end-of-year activity at school. Their parents would be picking them up. No one had arrived yet when patrollers left and the name of the school was not recorded.

Branch cutting checked out

Public Security officials said a call about trees being cut without a permit October 29 on Grosvenor was checked out and found to involve branches that did not exceed the 10-cm diameter size that require a permit. Large piles of the branches were found on the property near Sunnyside around 11 am.

breaking the midnight curfew. They were identified as two residents of Montreal, one of Longueuil and a student from Geneva, Switzerland.

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Both these youngsters are rescue kittens brought in from the cold by neighbours and now placed in a foster family for Gerdy's Rescue until forever families adopt them.

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Tax collection cont'd. from p. 1

could have been handled in a better way.

Diperno said he was caught by surprise when he received the city letter informing him he would be subject to the sale process if he was not paid up by November 4. He asked why the city's practice had been changed.

This year, Deegan replied, the city had been advised by its treasurer and city clerk that it should be collecting unpaid taxes within six months and putting properties up for sale for unpaid taxes within the time as per the Cities and Towns Act.

Diperno questioned the decision given a 14-percent rate already charged by the city in penalties and interest on late tax payments. “It's the best money the city ever makes because it is secure.”

Not only were some taxpayers caught by surprise by the sudden implementation of the new process but council members had not been informed either until a general committee meeting October 17, after the tax letters had gone out. This led to council initially delaying the intended sale from January to March as later posted on the city's website before the recent news of a reprieve.

But still angered after the council meeting, Diperno told the *Independent* that even an extension of a couple of months “is not

the way to do it. You can't make a change in policy without giving a one-year notice. I don't get it. It's not as if the city needs the money.

“This is not how things are done in Westmount,” he added.

According to Trent, the city's previous lengthy collection delays had never been formally adopted by council as a “policy” but had slipped into becoming a practice. “As far as I have determined, we are the only city that did this.”

While the city had sent out 335 letters to collect \$3 million for outstanding taxes for 2014-2016, most related to 2016, according to Deegan. People began paying up almost immediately and in less than two months, the amount owing by 230 taxpayers was down to \$1.9 million, he said.

Despite the sale reprieve for 2016 unpaid taxes, those outstanding for 2014 and 2015 tax years will still be subject to the sale by auction planned for March 15, he explained. This is to protect the city's three-year proscription period.

On all overdue tax accounts, the city this year charges 9 percent interest a year plus a penalty of 0.5 percent a month, up to a maximum of 5 percent, according to the city's website.

This is a combined total of 14 percent.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INJUSTICE TO HAVE ‘STREET FOLKS’ ON GREENE AVE.

In response to Loy Denis’ “Don’t chase people away” letter (November 15, p. 6), I must respectfully disagree with this individual’s sense of caring, generosity and benevolence about the street folks who position themselves on Greene Ave.* asking for change.

The several commercial establishments along this street deserve the respect of having their entrances free of people begging or making remarks as customers enter their stores to do their shopping.

And in the case of the 5 Saisons, it was unnatural all summer to have to step over a man who had propped himself up at the building, his legs sprawled onto the sidewalk, making it hazardous for older people to walk by safely.

Westmount was, at one point, the richest community in Canada. We take pride in our community, pay our taxes and together work hard in order to keep things pristine and proud.

Having people living on the street, congregating on the corners, settling on our sidewalks like it’s their personal condo and relieving themselves in public against our

buildings is an injustice to the residents of this community.

ARLEEN ROTCHIN, CLARKE AVE.

** Editor’s note: Loy Dennis was writing about people who are on Sherbrooke St. in Victoria village. – KM*

STORY OF SIDEWALK MARKS RAISES MORE QUESTIONS

I would like to make a comment on the November 8 article “Markings on new Prince Albert sidewalks expected to disappear,” (p. 6).

I live on Prince Albert, and I know for sure that the newly done sidewalks needed to be pressure washed to get rid of the “grey patches and scribbles” on the sidewalks. It was not the other way around: They were not formed after washing. The marks on the sidewalk right in front of our house were so raised that thinking I needed to take up the cleaning, I tried to break off the cement of the highest ones with a small hammer. The pressure washing applied at a later date left white marks of its own.

The marks on the sidewalks are not the only aspects of the poor workmanship. The lamp posts are not flush with their ce-



A sidewalk on Prince Albert Ave. north of Sherbrooke, November 16. Photo courtesy of B. Barki

ment bases as they are on Prince Albert below Sherbrooke, which was repaired a year earlier.

On the sidewalks, the expansion joints made of wood are coated by tar below Sherbrooke but not on the expanse above Sherbrooke.

Let’s hope that one winter is not capable [of wreaking] havoc with the cement and the asphalt used for the work.

BESTE BARKI, PRINCE ALBERT AVE.

OPEN LETTER TO GARNEAU ON TRANSPORTATION

At the Westmount Municipal Association evening on transportation, Marc Garneau, our MP and minister for that portfolio, waffled on any commitment to have the cycle paths on the Jacques Cartier and new Champlain bridges as four-season paths.

The federal government has committed over a billion dollars to all-season use by suburban vehicles of the new Champlain bridge, over a billion dollars to the expansion of the suburbs to the west with the Réseau Électrique Métropolitain, thus investing in increasing our greenhouse gas output.

As the minister realizes, urban cycling is the most sustainable and least expensive means of urban transport, bar none, and it is healthy and at the human scale. Also, it is on the positive side of the ledger as regards to greenhouse gas emissions.

Will our MP and minister of Transport restore the good faith of his government in terms of active transport and intervene so that the simple action of maintaining the Lachine canal cycle path as a four-season path is put into effect? As he is an urban cyclist, we know that he has a good understanding of the importance and the

beauty of this urban cycling path.
ROGER JOCHYM, LEWIS AVE.

MAINTAIN FLAGS ALWAYS

I noticed the pristine flags (municipal, provincial and federal) located at the cenotaph on Sherbrooke across the street from École Internationale de Montréal just in time for Remembrance Day [November 11].

Would it be too much to ask our city, government officials and building owners to ensure that any and all flags hoisted remain pristine at all times out of respect for the fallen soldiers, as well as the city’s citizens?

For some it may seem unimportant, but I believe by recognizing this gesture it reinforces the pride and honour that we should all have to live in this free and democratic society.

NATHALIE ALLARD, PRINCE ALBERT AVE.

AT 11 ON THE 11TH

Feasting on rose hips in Westmount Park at 11 am on Remembrance Day [November 11].

JOAN MCCORDICK, ABBOTT AVE.



Photo courtesy of J. McCordick

GOOD FINANCIAL NEWS, WHY ARE TAXES UP?

Re: “Taxes forecast to rise less than inflation for local services,” November 15, p. 1), the *Independent’s* headline of May 3 was “City reports \$2.6M surplus for 2015, now debt free: Trent,” and in that issue, the mayor is quoted as saying the city is “debt free.” That was indeed great news.

Fast forward to the *Independent’s* issue of November 8, where mayor and council report that the city’s [accumulated] surplus at the end of September was \$34.2 million (“City to spend ‘historic’ \$16M on capital works – and more to redo greenhouses,” p. 1).

Oh boy. More great news.
So: no debt + huge accumulated surplus = an increase in property taxes.

Huh?
THOMAS LAPIERRE, CHESTERFIELD AVE.

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LETTERS & COMMENTS:

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. Please check your letter carefully as we may be unable to make subsequently submitted changes. E-mail any letter or comments to indie@westmountindependent.com.

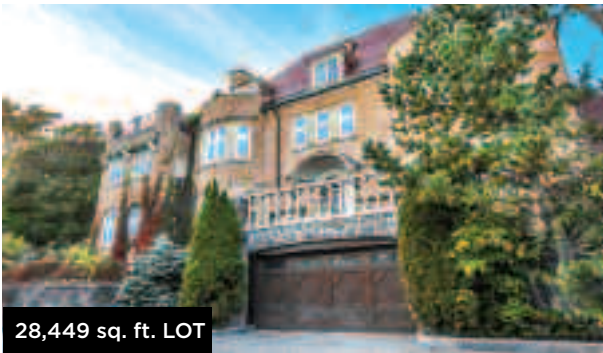
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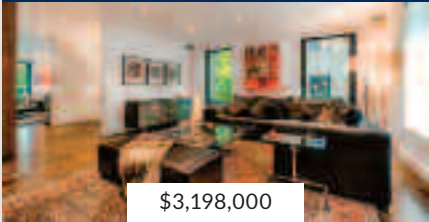


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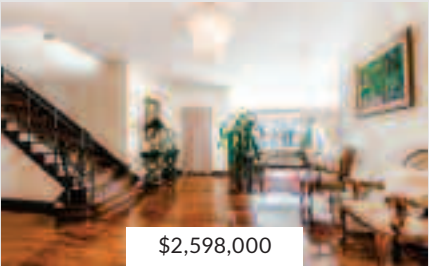
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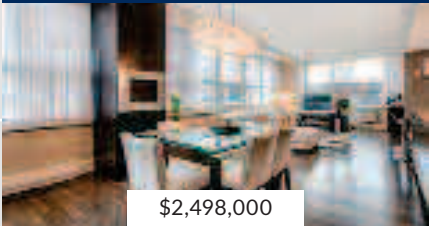


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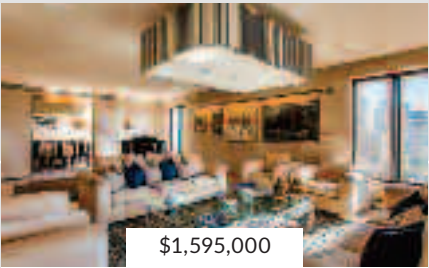
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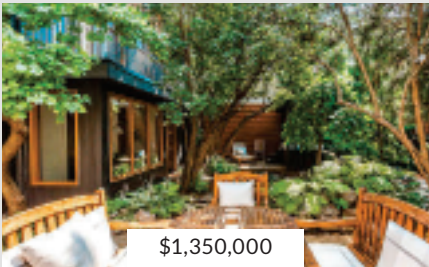
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Hidden talents in Westmount: Artistic photo project

Watching the world go by



Westmounter Barry Nashen. "I was traveling in Andalucia in June 2016. This photo was taken in Sevilla around dinnertime when the suburban streets are empty as families are all inside eating. The scene struck me as odd. I wasn't sure if the bars were installed to keep me from getting in or the dog from getting out. Nonetheless, like the old folks who sit outside on their front stoops on their hard, wooden chairs watching the world pass by, it occurred to me that this must be an old dog doing exactly the same."

Photo courtesy of B. Nashen

We're trying out a new idea. We believe there is hidden talent amongst Westmounters. Please submit your recent artistic photos to indie@westmountindependent.com, including what struck you about the scene and the date you took the photo. We'll run the best ones. Stay tuned for more.

– Kristin McNeill, editor, Westmount Independent

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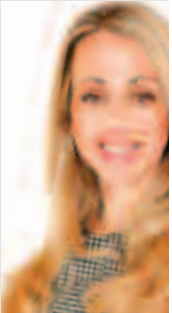


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Police Report

Break-ins done at back

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The following news story is based on information from police reports provided by a Station 12 constable in an interview with the reporter.

Police at Station 12 say the *modus operandi* in at least three recent break-ins in Westmount involves robbers using back doors or windows to gain access.

Sometime during the afternoon or early evening of November 11, a home in upper Westmount was broken into, and several thousand dollars worth of valuables were stolen.

“The suspect or suspects had to force open a rear gate,” said Station 12 community relations officer Stéphan Laperrière. “They probably also had to use a ladder to get up to the second level, where a window was opened up. They got in and searched the house,” he added. Among the items stolen was jewelry.

According to Laperrière, the owner of the house noticed upon returning at the end of a work day that a rear gate giving access to the grounds was broken open, and that a rear window on the second floor had also been forced.

In a second recent break-and-entering case, a home that a police official would only identify as being above Sherbrooke St. in Westmount was entered on October 28 between 6:30 and 8:45 pm by thieves using a rear door.

According to Laperrière, the way they

gained entry was the same as in a break-and-enter incident that took place on Côte St. Antoine Rd. on October 21, which was previously reported by the *Independent*.

“They searched the house,” he said. “In this case, they stole jewelry, the value of which is not known for now. An investigation is ongoing.”

On November 11 around 9:15 am, the driver of a motor scooter who was east-bound along Sherbrooke St. during a downpour of rain lost control and struck his head against a car near the corner of Kensington Ave. after braking suddenly on the wet pavement.

On November 6 around 2:15 am, the impaired driver of a vehicle that was being followed along Sherbrooke St. by an Urgences Santé ambulance was finally intercepted and taken into custody by the police after he passed out at the wheel near the intersection of Sherbrooke and Wood Ave.

“The ambulance called 911 to report what was going on, and the police arrived and they arrested him,” Laperrière said.

According to a report filed by the arresting officers, the suspect, a 27-year-old male who was not from Westmount, was found to have more than double the .08 legal limit of alcohol in him after taking an alcohol impairment test.

“He was read his rights and he was brought to the station to blow in the breathalyzer,” Laperrière said.

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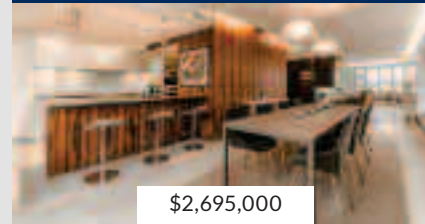
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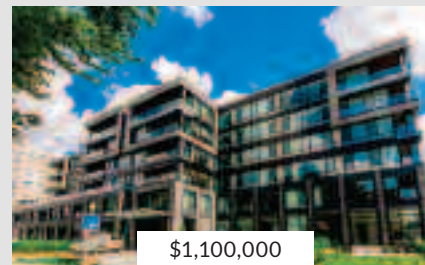
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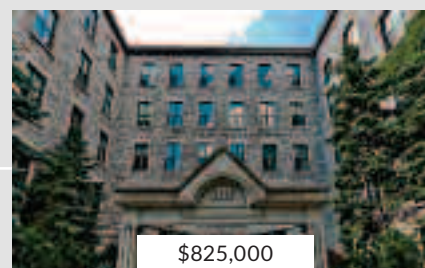
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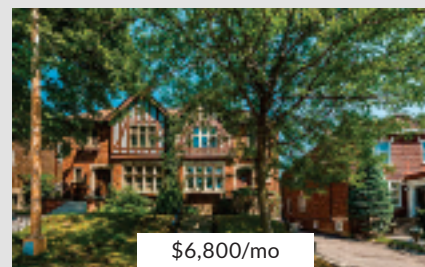
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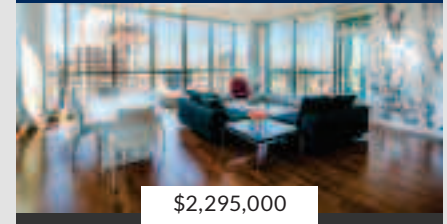


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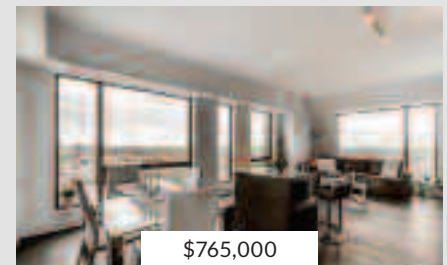
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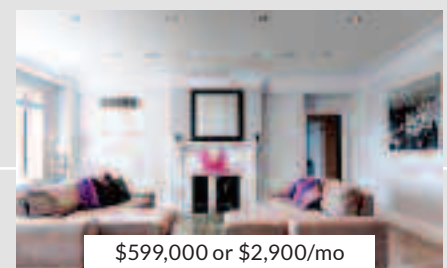
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WMA hosts panel discussion on transportation issues

By RALPH THOMPSON

Some 80 people assembled to listen to a “transportation roundtable” organized by the Westmount Municipal Association (WMA) November 10 at Victoria Hall.

WMA president Paul Marriott opened the evening meeting and introduced the moderator, Professor Ahmed El Geneidy, who was assisted by a number of his students from McGill’s School of Urban Planning. The panel was composed of Marc Garneau, member of parliament for NDG-

Westmount and federal Transport minister; Marvin Rotrand, Snowdon city councillor and vice chair of the STM; city councillor Peter McQueen, city councillor for NDG; Marc-André Gadoury, responsible for active transportation for the city of Montreal; and Catherine Blanchette-Dallaire, founder of OnRoule.org.

Panelists detailed their priorities, with Garneau stating the federal Liberals’ main long-term transportation themes including “the traveller experience,” safety, automated and connected zero emissions vehicles, transportation corridors focused on trade routes and the recently announced coastlines and marine safety initiatives.

Dallaire-Blanchet talked about her personal experience following an accident that badly injured her ankles, which focused her efforts to improve accessibility and public transportation for the handicapped and those pushing strollers.

McQueen talked about the projects to improve access to the new MUHC facilities, saying that these would take four years to implement. He also discussed the challenges of improving rail access to the airport.

Gadoury spoke about how excited he was to be designated responsible for cycling in Montreal, and Montreal mayor



About 80 people gathered at Victoria Hall November 10 to listen to a panel organized by the Westmount Municipal Association to discuss transportation issues. Sitting at the presenters’ table, from left: Marvin Rotrand, Marc-André Gadoury, Peter McQueen, Marc Garneau and Catherine Dallaire-Blanchet. At the podium was moderator Ahmed El Geneidy.

Denis Coderre’s commitment to “Vision Zero,” measures to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians.

Rotrand was welcomed with a cheer as he explained his desire to integrate transportation across party lines. He also spoke about the importance of integrating transportation technologies across borders and that Montreal would host a global public

transport summit in May 2017. Rotrand talked about his enthusiasm for the extension eastwards of the Metro’s blue line and the importance of Quebec investing more money in the Société de Transports de Montréal.

Westmount mayor Peter Trent and a number of council members attended.



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Comin’ Up

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29

The **Westmount Healthy City Project** and the Westmount Public Library present *The Human Scale* by filmmaker Andreas Dalsgaard, 7 pm at the library. Free.

NDG Food Depot, located just west of Westmount, celebrates its 30th anniversary with an open house event, including food and music, 12 pm to 7 pm at 2146 Marlowe Ave. Info: 514.483.4680 or depot-ndg.org.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

The Temple Art Hive is a drop-in program, 4 to 7 pm on Thursdays twice a month at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, 4100 Sherbrooke St. Info: 514.937.3575, ext. 210 or rachel@templemontreal.ca.

For the Atwater Library Lunchtime Series, Jenny Bruce gives an illustrated presentation on the “**Scottish Diaspora Tapestry**,” 12:30 pm. Free.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2

Dramatis Personae’s new production *Smoke and Mirrors* in the lodge room of Victoria Hall, 7:30 pm. Also, Saturday, December 3 at 7:30 pm; Sunday, December 4 at 2 pm; and Monday, December 5 at 8 pm. Admission is by suggested \$10 donation. Reserve: www.theatrewestmount.com.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

City council meeting, 8 pm.



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Artgold leaving

Artgold (Antiquités) at 4937 Sherbrooke St. had a “for rent” sign in the window. Owner Sam Gabbay mentioned two main reasons that “merchants are having difficulty in Westmount: high rents and finding parking spaces.”

Bye bye Lou Goldberg Jeweller

Greene Ave. will be missing one of its jewels soon with the announcement that Lou Goldberg Jeweller, the beautiful go-to bijoux boutique on that tony street since 1976, is closing after 70 years of business. “We have been on this street for 40 years, and in this current space [2015 Greene Ave.] since 1993,” explained Eric Goldberg, co-owner with his brother Joel. “Before that, we were on University St. But it’s time. We are closing at the end of the year.” The firm was named after his father Lou, who passed away in 2015.

New fitness place opens

A new business, Lagree Fitness, was to be launched on the corner of Greene and St. Catherine November 12. For those who want “calorie-burning, muscle-quivering, shirt-drenching total body conditioning

and lots of sweat,” according to the website, the workout is positioned as one of a kind. An evolution of the traditional Pilates reformer, the re-designed machines are another way to work off holiday calories. It is conveniently located near Bagels on Greene, where I can chomp on my bagel, go and work out, and then go back to Bagels to grab a chocolate brownie!

4164 St. Catherine St.

Open every day, 8:30 am to 5:30-6 pm.

Pop-up luxury brands on Greene

I have noticed Lysa Lash on Greene for the past five months. Elegant black-and-white stripes cover the top window of the space and a mysterious black curtain is drawn across the bottom. A discreet logo – LL – tells the story. It is the pop-up shop of owner Lysa Lash, who offers a secret source for luxury brands. Shoppers sign up on her website and are then invited to her in-store private events. Lash is the great-granddaughter of famed Montreal furrier Samuel Grossman, so perhaps style is in her genes. I was interested in the fact that in a fashionista world where brands shout – nay, yell – for attention, she has decided to brand so quietly – and, it seems, successfully. She hosts similar pop-up events in other cities.

1358 Greene Ave.

Party shop opens on St. Catherine

It seems that one cannot blink in Westmount without a store opening, closing or fêteing a special anniversary. I just noticed a brand new shop called Z Décor. Opened November 3, it is perfect for upcoming celebrations. Not only does it sell a huge selection of candle sticks, cake/sandwich stands, glasses, cushions and tablecloths, but those wonderful charger plates one sees in design magazines. They go under the main dinner plate, and owner Zehava Ohayon said she carries “60 different

colours and styles to mix and match, and 20 different table centre pieces,” which she is renting as well as selling. I loved the glass ones that allowed the main plate to “float” on top. I also looked longingly at the old-fashion parfait glasses to fill with water, ice cream, berries, your choice! Oh, and the gold-dusted pansietta bring a little sparkle into holiday season!

Open Monday through Saturday, 9 to 5

pm.

4152A St. Catherine St.

Where will Orthosport go?

Unfortunately, I know Orthosport all too well. Fortunately, they carry efficient and effective tennis elbow bands, as well as hand-strengthening rubber balls, so my court game carries on.
The store is known for *continued on p. 15*

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Mood of the Market

September-October sales: Breaking 1998, 2005 records



Real Estate

ANDY DODGE, CRA

The following article relates to offers to purchase Westmount residential dwellings that were reported by local real estate agents as having been accepted in September-October, 2016. Because they are not final registered sales, the addresses cannot be made public but give a good idea of current trends in local real estate activity. The graph offers a picture of these trends over time.

All the talk about Americans moving to Canada because of the political situation south of the border might be just rumour for the time being, but suddenly several high-priced sales in Westmount started appearing on the local ledger. While we had reported only two sales over \$2 million in September (see column, October 18, p. 9) that month now shows seven such sales, including one in the \$5-million range and one in the \$8-million range, apparently

negotiated in September but now with conditions removed.

Those late-reported September sales – an extra seven following our mid-month report last month – brought the average one- and two-family dwelling price for the month to more than \$2.3 million in 18 sales, the highest volume for a September since 2005; that volume helped boost the total sales for the year to 161, the highest year-to-date since 1998.

With such a robust September, things apparently settled back again in October with a more modest (by Westmount standards) average price just under \$1.5 million in 14 sales, including one which sold for a 46-percent mark-down from valuation. That sale brought the total outlay below the 2014 municipal value for the properties. The month recorded only two sales below \$1 million and two more at \$2 million or more.

Condos

A condominium at Château Westmount Square, 4175 St. Catherine St., sold in October for \$1,950,000, the highest resale price for a condo since June 2014 (though some at 1250 Greene Ave. and 215 Redfern Ave. have higher prices). That brought the average price of four condo sales in October to \$980,000, giving them a boost with an average 18-percent mark-up over valuation.

After a very busy September, with 14 sales distributed to the north, east and west of Westmount, only two more one- and two-family house sales – both in the area to the north on Circle Rd. and Roslyn Ave. – were posted in October.

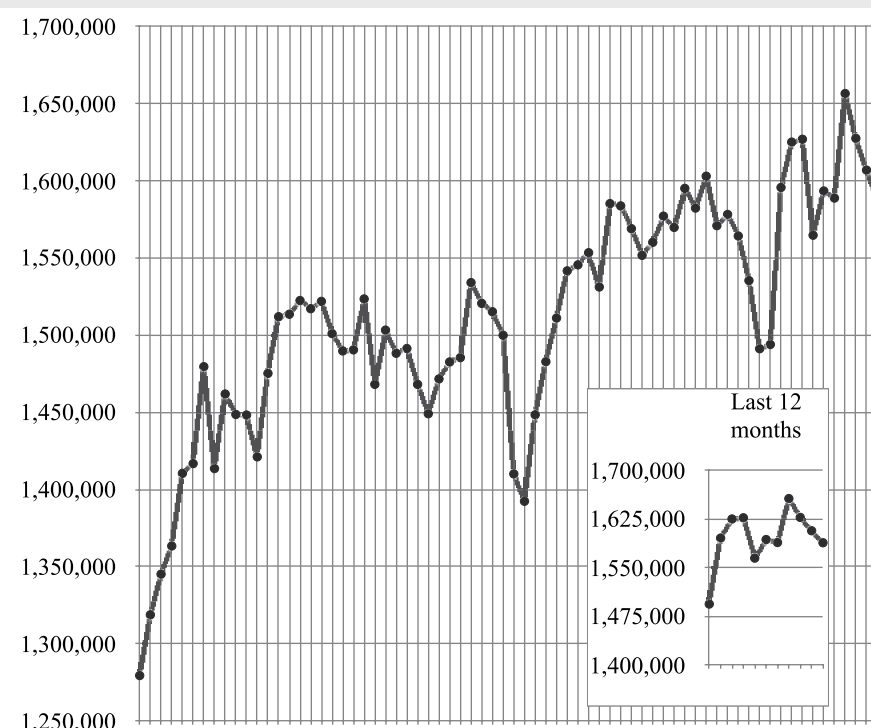
The high volume this year has certainly taken a bite out of available listings, which as of mid-November had dropped to 103 from 128 in mid-July, or 151 at the same time a year ago. The main drop is in the

\$1-million to \$2-million range, though there are fewer in every category except the over-\$4-million asking prices.

Rentals are up to 33 houses this year in

Westmount, compared to 29 for the entire year last year. Of 17 houses now listed for rent in Westmount, four of them are asking more than \$10,000 monthly.

Average adjusted price for 'typical' Westmount house, by month, Jan. 2011 to Oct. 2016, based on accepted offer dates



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New dog needs licence

A foot patroller in Prince Albert Park November 11 ran across a woman walking a dog that did not have a valid licence tag, Public Security officials said. The woman said she had just acquired the dog and hadn't had time to obtain one. She was warned to get the licence.

Fire on Sunnyside

A fire in a construction container was doused by firefighters November 11 outside 51 Sunnyside, Public Security officials said. Officers were called at 3:10 pm to assist with traffic control since the street had to be blocked off. The incident was reported over by 3:40 pm.

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Retail Watch *cont'd. from p. 13*

offering merchandise that helps heal sports injuries, as well a range of equipment. Wandering by, I noticed a “for rent/sale” sign on the window. Store owner Luc Benoît also owns the building and “although service to our customers will continue as ever,” he said he was looking for a buyer or renter through Cushman and Wakefield. When it sells, the company will move elsewhere, he said. Orthosport carries my favorite European foot balms. From wearing boots during dry winter days, cracked-heel season is arriving soon. 4051 St. Catherine St.

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New clinic opens on Dorchester

EspaceMD, a “medical aesthetics” clinic was launched by plastic surgeons Sandra McGill and Karl Schwarz on October 21 with a celebratory cocktail reception. The party attracted a bevy of beauties, who enjoyed bubbly while learning about Botox and other enhancing procedures. It “focuses on non-surgical options: CoolSculpting, Thermage, laser skin resurfacing, photo rejuvenation, botox and fillers and laser hair removal,” according to the clinic. 4200 Dorchester Blvd.

Budget meeting switched to Dec. 19

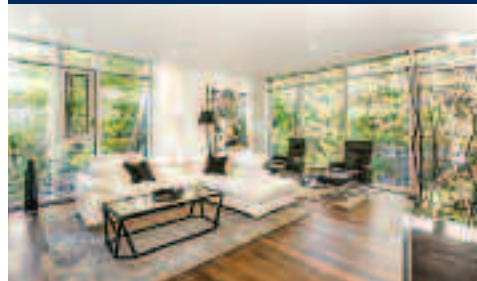
The date of a meeting to present the city's 2017 operating budget has been changed to Monday, December 19 at 7:30 pm, director general Mike Deegan announced last week. It had originally been set for December 12, as previously reported.

The meeting will be followed at 8 pm by the mid-month council meeting to approve building permits. This usually takes place at 5 pm.



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Dawson College's *Skén:nen*: the art of empowerment



Art Scene

HEATHER BLACK

Skén:nen, which means “in peace” in Mohawk, is a powerful exhibition of work by 12 indigenous artists. Held at the Warren G. Flowers Gallery, the exhibition includes themes of decolonization, nature and feminism with digital imagery by singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie, leaf compositions by Daphne Boyer and beaded leather helmets by Dayna Danger.

Vibrant culture

Sainte-Marie combines photorealism and computer-generated imagery in the colourful and exotic “Neon Hula.” Here, three dancers outlined in fluid, luminescent lines gyrate against a pixelated background. A second pixelated image depicts a warrior’s head floating sphinx-like above a tepee-strewn landscape. Entitled “Pink Village,” the magenta, yellow and lime background enliven the traditional scene to suggest a vibrant and creative culture.

Sainte-Marie also created the exhibition’s title work, the brown duotone “Wesakechak the Trickster.” To depict the Cree teacher and hero, the artist mirrored and manipulated an image of a warrior’s head to create a featureless face. An interesting and unusual technique, the message of both benevolent spirit and trickster is conveyed in this strong image.

Nature reclaimed

Inspired by nature, Montreal digital artist Boyer creates graphic leaf patterns on textured papers. For “Smoke Leaf #1,” the centres of imaged leafs are replaced with smaller circles to create a dynamic dance between positive and negative space. For

“Ginkgo,” beautiful yellow leafs in a circular pattern create a mandala emphasizing the visual rhythms of nature and biodiversity.

In “Mullein,” a red pattern of leaf veins is repeated against a black background. Depicting the plant used by indigenous peoples as a lantern, Boyer’s attractive yet disquieting image also suggests habitat destruction. In the 3D composition, “Thorn Box,” thorns sewn on a diamond-shape image of tree branches reminds viewers of nature’s protective-destructive duality.

Near the entrance to the gallery, a mobile of three black-beaded leather helmets swings at eye level. Created by Montreal artist Danger, intricate patterns of black beads and beautiful traditional craftsmanship suggest a fashion accessory. Yet eye holes reminiscent of an executioner’s helmet or of dominatrix’s mask convey both power and abuse.

Behind the mobile, larger-than-life photographs of three models, each clad in a beaded helmet, line the wall. Entitled “Adrienne,” “Georgia” and “Kandace,” Danger uses the language of fashion to address issues of power, gender and objectification. Yet, as each mixed-ancestry model is attractive, the artist also challenges perceptions of beauty and mixed identity.

The exhibition *Skén:nen* reveals the use and ownership of cultural symbols within contemporary indigenous art, from Sainte-Marie’s depiction of a legendary spirit to Boyer’s warning of lost habitats or Danger’s use of a traditional craft to challenge gender roles. Curated by Olivier Forgues of the Warren G. Flowers Gallery, Orenda Boucher-Curotte of the college’s First Peoples’ Centre, and Diana Rice of the Dawson College Peace Centre, this powerful exhibition continues until Monday, November 28 at 4001 de Maisonneuve Blvd.



“*Skén:nen*,” Dawson College’s exhibition of indigenous art, with helmets and photographs by Dayna Danger and title photograph by Buffy Sainte-Marie.

Public Security checks on oxygen user during blackout

A resident of the large apartment complex at 4300 de Maisonneuve who needed the use of oxygen was reported to have been checked on by public safety officers during a lengthy electrical outage November 10. Public Security officials said that patrollers had initially stopped by to call on another known user who turned out not to live there anymore. Instead, they were asked on the scene to add someone else to the list, which they did. Both Hydro Westmount and the fire department maintain a record of people on oxygen who might require help in emergency situations.

Planters moved again to accommodate dumpster

A construction container was found outside a house on Bellevue November 11, where city planters had been moved to position it, Public Security officials said. No permit had been obtained to occupy the street. The name of the contractor involved did not appear in the city data base as having been warned previously for a similar offence. The patroller, however, remembered another similar incident May 12 also at the top of Arygle, but it involved another contractor (see story May 31, p. 14). The recent incident was referred to Urban Planning for follow-up.

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Guzzo's Notte in Bianco features Wilson Phillips

Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

No AR (augmented reality) was needed on September 8 when the Guzzos held their ninth annual "Notte in Bianco." Everything was picture-perfect. Except for the tropical rain! Undaunted, the elegant couple welcomed guests to their rural residence with valet parkers sporting massive black-and-white umbrellas.

Evening attire was once again all white, with a touch of blue. **Vincenzo** (aka Vince) **Guzzo**, executive VP and COO Cinémas Guzzo, was resplendent in a bespoke suit and trousers "dipinto di blu."

His wife **Maria**, author of *How to Train your Dreams* and VP, community affairs at Cinémas Guzzo, looked fabulous in a short, white lace vintage Gucci dress.

The eve's co-presidents of honour were Westmounters **Rosemary** and **Mel Hoppenheim**, who attended with their children **Mel Jr.** and **Caroline**.

Emcees were **Orla Johannes** (with hubby **Chris Konstantopoulos**) and **Sonia Benezra**. They gave a shout-out to **Rosetta** and **Angelo Guzzo**, president Cinémas Guzzo.

Noted amidst the mingling guests were Westmounters **Michaela** and **Michael Penner**, board chair Hydro Quebec; **Lisa** and **Mark Smith**, president of Pandion Investments Ltd.; dental surgeon **Abe Wexler**; **Harry** ("Note my Swatch in white!") and **Nancy Bloomfield** (on trend in an amazing lace pantsuit); **Dr. Marc Afilalo**, director emergency services, JGH, and associate professor, McGill; **Terry** and **Linda Smith**; **Julie Couture** and hubby lawyer **Victor Salvaggio**; **Rosie** and **Sal Parasuco** with daughters **Alanna** and **Alessia**, and **Barry Garber**.

The impresario responsible for the evening entertainment, Garber is now working on an event with **Justin Bieber**.

Also noted in the beautifully lit tent were **Gino Berretta**, chair board of governors, Shriners; **Helen Georgaklis**, founder KWN; and **Danielle Groleau**, associate professor McGill, senior researcher at the Lady Davis Medical Institute (JGH).

Ruinart champagne flowed freely as the



From left: Caroline, Mel, Mel Jr. and Rosemary Hoppenheim.

LBD-clad (little black dress) Buona Notte team served an amazing meal, including wild mushroom pasta. *Delizioso!*

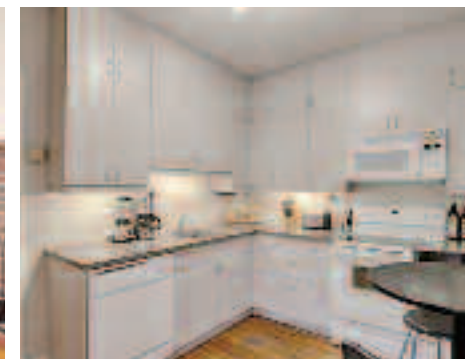
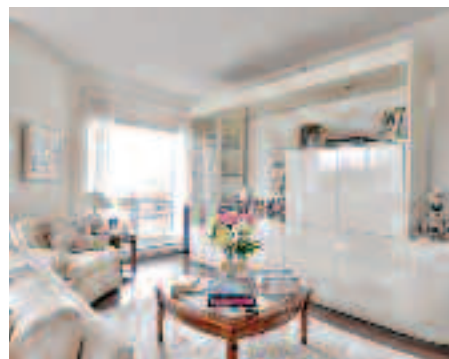
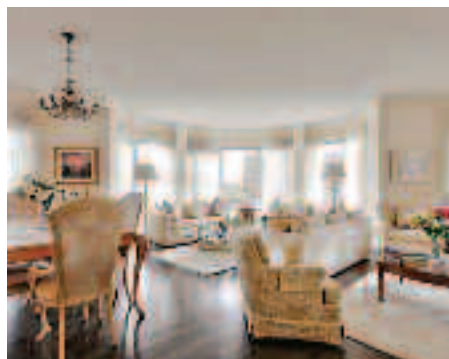
Wines were sponsored by SAQ. Surprise guest was the vocal group Wilson Phillips; *continued on p. 18*

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PSOs check on woman for worried daughter

An 82-year-old Westmount woman was found safe and sound November 10 after her daughter in Toronto called Public Security at 10 pm to check on her well-being. Department officials said the daughter had been unable to reach her mother throughout the day. Patrollers managed to gain entry to the home using a hidden key and found the woman well but that her phone had been off the hook. She was asked to contact her daughter.

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From left: Wendy Wilson, Barry Garber, Carnie Wilson and Chynna Phillips.

Social Notes cont'd. from p. 17

Carnie and Wendy Wilson (daughters of the Beach Boys' Brian Wilson) and Chynna Phillips (daughter of Michelle and John Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas). They rocked the room in tight black

leather pants and great energy.

The eve was in support of children's mental health research and projects. Proceeds are to benefit Shriners Hospitals for Children, the Jewish General Hospital, Kids Write Network (KWN) and McGill University.



Maria and Vince Guzzo.



Harry and Nancy Bloomfield.



Dr. Marc Afilalo and Mark Smith.

Westmount Park cont'd. from p. 1

pathways, the splash pad in Melville "pond," the playground, landscaping and plant beds.

"Do we know how much we will spend on Westmount Park?" asked John Fretz of Lansdowne Ave.

While the capital works program calls for the city to spend \$400,000 in each of the three years on all parks, Mayor Peter Trent explained that "budget items can evolve over the years."

"After this study, we'll have a better idea of how to divide up the work and budget moving forward," Lulham explained.

At present, she told the *Independent* last week, she foresees the replacement of existing pathways that are now in different materials to be done using concrete and crushed stone that would render them more user-friendly to people experiencing mobility issues.

Re-landscaping and the planting of bushes would likely be a final step.

"The goal is not to drastically alter the park but to restore it to its previous grandeur," she explained. "Of course we will be following the master plan for parks."

This was prepared for the city a few years ago by landscape architect Marc Fau-teux.

Woman in crisis helped by responders

A woman described as "in crisis" was assisted at the Hillside entrance to the Westmount Athletic Grounds November 10, Public Security officials said. She was found screaming and talking on her phone at 7:30 pm. Officers intervened in the phone call, which turned out to involve a crisis centre. After attempts to reason with her were unsuccessful and the woman suddenly collapsed and fell off a bench, calls were made to police, firefighter first responders and Urgences Santé, who arrived at 8 pm. She was left in their care.

Motorist and pedestrian told to go home

A patroller was flagged down at Forden and Montrose November 13 over a conflict between a motorist and a pedestrian at 1:53 pm, Public Security officials said. The pedestrian was reported to have been crossing street when almost struck by the car. Police were called and both people were calmed down and persuaded to return home.

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