

Design-build contract targetted for year-end Greenhouse risk analysis reveals many challenges to overcome

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

If all goes according to plan, the city is aiming to award a design-build contract by the end of this year to rebuild Westmount's iconic greenhouse complex, the *Independent* learned last week. The start of work would not be known until that time when a consortium is chosen for the work.

The complexity of the project was

brought to light at a risk analysis workshop January 11 for members of the city council, staff and others who will be involved in the process, said Benoit Hurtubise, the city's assistant director general for infrastructure and engineering.

"The existing greenhouses were built around the needs of the 1920s," Hurtubise told the *Independent* last week. "It's a whole different ballgame now."

The next steps include an ongoing needs analysis, the technical preparation of tenders, evaluation of the bids and creation of the design before construction can even start. continued on p. 12

Letters p. 6

Bought & Sold BY A. DODGE p. 17

Social Notes BY V. REDGRAVE p. 21

Sweet!



Photo: Ralph Thompson

Five-year-old Olivia Laberge can't wait to get her hands on a maple taffy stick offered at King George (Murray) Park as one of the city's winter carnival events February 4. More photos, p. 20.

February 15 deadline coming up

Sports department looks to community to design medals

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The number of entries received so far to the city's "Design Your Medal" contest is being kept secret until the deadline Wednesday, February 15, city officials said last week. The contest is aimed at finding a new design for the hockey, baseball and soccer awards presented to teams at the

city's semi-annual sports banquets. The hockey one takes place April 19.

Andrew Maislin, operations manager for Sports and Recreation, said the current medals depict generic players of each sport. These have been bought in bulk "but we thought it would be fun and interesting for the community to create its own de- continued on p. 3

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Ville-Marie – 50, rue des Soeurs-Grises,
apt. 209 – \$2,700/m

Online accounts due for renewal

Spring on the way? Sports & Rec registration Feb. 14

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

On the approach of registration opening February 14, a Tuesday, for the spring and summer session of Sports and Recreation programs, Westmount residents have been receiving notices rather than the customary activity brochure.

“We’re going green this year and printing only a limited number,” said Claude Danis, program and community services director. The brochure is accessible on the Sports and Recreation webpage at Westmount.org.

Also because of the new calendar year, she said, “we’re reminding people that their online accounts have been “suspended” and can be reactivated only by

presenting proof of current residency at the office in the Westmount recreation centre.

This applies to any Westmount resident registering for the new sessions. Fee increases are also in effect for many activities. These range mostly from 6 percent to 13 percent (see story below).

New youth programs offered

Among the activities for youth, adults and seniors are a number of new offerings at the youth level.

These include the introduction of fencing to the spring session as well as spring hockey for Novice through Bantam from April 28 to June 23 and three weekly sessions of intensive summer skating lessons

in July and August for ages 5 to 17. Also new is a week of hockey camp from August 21 to 25.

Changes in summer camp weeks

Another major change involves the summer day camps. These previously took place in two-week sessions but will now be held instead as eight separate weeks. “What we saw was that a lot of kids attended only one of the two weeks,” Danis explained.

While the change is expected to make the scheduling of counsellors more diffi-

cult at the management level, “it should make it easier for the community,” said Andrew Maislin, operations manager for the Sports and Recreation department. “This is what we’re aiming for.”

Jazz dance will also be introduced to the youth spring line-up as well as “Chanson Magique” in two separate classes for one- to two-years olds, and another for three- to four-year-olds.

Registration for swimming activities opens April 25 online or in person at the pool desk starting May 23.

Fee hikes range from 6% to 13%; some rates unchanged

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

An increase in sports and recreation fees for the spring and summer season’s registration period opening this month range from about 6 percent to 13 percent for many of the programs and activities, according to tariffs By-law 1505 adopted by city council December 5. Some remain unchanged.

The price of the annual facility access card as well as youth swimming and tennis lessons for example, are among those remaining at last year’s level.

“While there is typically less of an increase in the youth programs than the adult ones,” said department director Dave Lapointe, “we haven’t raised the fees much in 10 years while our costs for instructors, for example, have increased. We’re still much lower than most municipalities we studied.”

A city table of comparisons with other municipalities (Côte St. Luc, Town of

Mount Royal, Montreal West, Hampstead, LaSalle, Verdun and Dorval) shows the increased Westmount charges to be lower by some 40 to 90 percent than an average of the others sampled.

In general, many of the youth activities that cost \$50 or even \$65 or \$85 last year have been raised by \$5. While weekly youth swimming classes remain unchanged at \$55, the adult master’s swim fee goes from \$75 to \$85 for the swim season. Pilates for adults rises from \$70 to \$75.

Increases in some of the fall and winter programs will kick in with the June registration period. This will see 10-percent increases in adult hockey, in particular. Participation in the Senior hockey league, for example, goes from \$400 to \$440. Again in 2018, these are expected to go to \$480.

By contrast, Lapointe said he knows of some places where the comparable fees are triple those amounts.

Medals cont’d. from p. 1

signs,” he said.

“We always try to be on the cutting edge,” he added. “This is meant to be a community effort. Anyone of any age can participate, not only people involved in the sporting programs.”

How many entries had been received by

PSO assists woman locked out on Windsor

A public safety officer remained with a locked-out resident of Windsor Ave. January 31 until a locksmith arrived to open the door, Public Security officials said. The officer had answered the call to assist the woman at 8:18 pm but was unable to find any way to access the home and help her inside. She was unsure whether she had left the keys inside or had lost them. The locksmith was reported on the scene at 9:03 pm.

last week? That won’t be known until the three entry boxes are opened, Maislin said. These are located at the Westmount recreation centre (WRC), Westmount Public Library and Victoria Hall. “I want it to be a surprise,” he said. “No one has seen the entries. People just drop them into the boxes.”

He said he had “peeked inside” the box at the WRC using a flashlight and judged there to be about 25 entries. He’s assured there will be designs in each category because he knows of families planning to submit them for all three sports.

The winners should be known about a week after the deadline, Maislin said.

The designs are to be drawn or painted to fit a 6-cm square box on the entry form. This can be obtained at the three municipal buildings or downloaded from the Sports and Recreation page on the city’s website.

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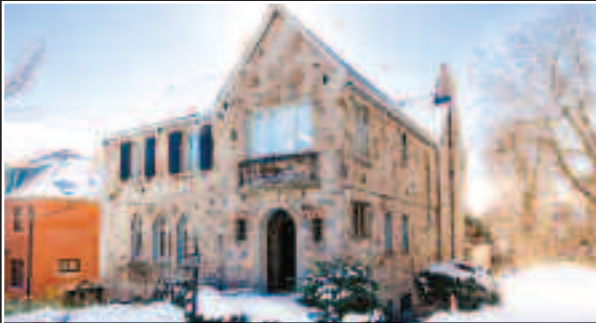
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CITY SHOULD MOVE FAST ON SOUND WALL

Ever since its completion in 1972, residents living close to the Ville Marie expressway (Highway 720) have been asking their elected officials for relief from the constant noise emanating from the highway. After many studies and delays over the years, we now have a window of opportunity.

With the reconstruction of the highway, action must quickly be taken by our elected officials to ensure that a solution is found to finally solve the problem.

At the last MTQ Bon Voisinage meeting

on January 30, a plan was unveiled showing the positioning of sound barriers along the new Route 136 that is under construction to replace Highway 720. Although there will be barriers positioned to protect those living in Montreal just south of Route 136, I was appalled to learn that, as of yet, no such barriers are planned for Westmount residents living north and south of Route 136. This, despite the fact that at an MTQ information meeting held in July 2015, residents and city officials demanded that the MTQ work on an on-highway sound barrier solution.

According to the MTQ, they are “in talks with the city of Westmount.”

After over a year and a half, residents are concerned that the MTQ is dragging its feet and that unless the city moves fast and decisively to get results, we just may see the opportunity slip by.

As a resident who deals with the ever increasing highway noise, I call on our city officials to do their utmost in pressuring the MTQ to finally bring noise relief to our neighbourhood.

PATRICIA DUMAIS, GREENE AVE.

Editor’s note: Please see our news story on the January 30 meeting, p. 7. – KM

ON THE SURFACE, OKAY, BUT WHAT ABOUT UNDER?

I agree with Mr. Bolland that Prince Albert doesn’t look the way it did a couple of years ago. (“At mercy of rain,” January 31, p. 6.)

It now boasts new asphalt, no bumps; new sidewalks, not cracked; and interesting bump-outs that will add greenery to the street, all the while emphasizing pedestrian safety.

Unseen by all of us is the work done underground, from new water services to updated hydro infrastructure.

Yes, unfortunately parts of residents’ front gardens were dug up, and perennials, shrubs and flowers were removed.

The Public Works department regrets that parts of gardens had to be removed for the construction of the new sidewalks and in some cases to allow for new water entries into homes.

Included in the notices sent to residents about the work done on the street was the information on how to contact city project coordinators for any issues, especially damage to property. Issues brought to their attention were addressed and brought to the contractor’s attention.

At this time, Public Works cannot evaluate the state of grasses that were planted in the summer. But they have assured me that this spring, any grass that doesn’t survive the winter will be replaced.

As with all infrastructure projects, the city retains a percentage of the contract amount due to the contractor TGA until all work is completed to the satisfaction of the city. It is also important to note that a five-year guarantee period is in effect for this project.

Public Works has learned from this project and was able to reduce the problems with residents’ gardens when TGA worked on Wood Ave. this fall.

Going forward, more care will be taken to ensure that perennials, heirloom plants or those of sentimental value are moved before work starts on a street.

I understand that the gardens on Prince Albert won’t look the same for sometime, and look forward to watching their transformation.

COUNCILLOR ROSALIND DAVIS, DISTRICT 4

but still some way to go to help the shivering masses.

BARRY PLESS, LANSDOWNE AVE.

THANKS FOR CHECKING IN

I would like to thank Greg McBain, his staff at Westmount Public Security and Jerome Beaudoin and Ghislain Laporte from Station 12 in Westmount for the outstanding care they took of my staff in my store during my absence from Montreal.

Public Security and police officers came every day to check on their safety, made sure the cameras were on and the suspicious man had not returned.

My sincerest gratitude.

SHARYN SCOTT,
OWNER OF SHARYN SCOTT (SHOP)

BLAME IT ON CANADA FOR SLOW METERS

The slow response time of Westmount’s parking meters is very likely due to the limited power-generating capabilities of a relatively small solar panel operating in Canada’s unfavourable winter-operating conditions, with light from the sun coming in at a low angle, short daylight hours and many overcast days.

This design limitation would probably dictate the use of low powered, relatively slow computer circuitry.

JOHN DOREY, VICTORIA AVE.

STONE OR CONCRETE? MAKES A DIFFERENCE

I very much appreciated Mark London’s observations regarding the plans for Dorchester Blvd. in his recent letter (“Left Dorchester area, but still have views,” January 17, p. 6) from his perspective as a former chair of the Westmount Architectural and Planning Commission.

Like Mr. London, I think that most current residents wish that the north side could return to its original splendour before the Victorian homes were demolished in the 1960s. I particularly agree with his comment that “I hope that the city and citizens are vigilant in ensuring the highest quality public realm and new buildings, which should reflect the character of those on the south side in terms of design and materials, continued on p. 14

Correction

Some names were linked to the wrong grades in “Local students fly onward at St. George’s-hosted Scholar’s Cup,” (January 31, p. 15). St. George’s students Emily MacDonald and Jessica Marshall are in grade 11, and Lillian Simons is in grade 10.

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Noise levels will be well above predicted levels

Sound barrier still not in Turcot plans

By ISAAC OLSON

It appears the Ministry of Transport (MTQ) erroneously forecasted the level of noise that will emanate from the incoming Route 136, which is under construction on Westmount's border with the Southwest borough.

In the past, MTQ officials have claimed that Westmount will be better protected from the noise because Route 136 will be lower on the escarpment than the current Route 720. However, as it turns out, the sound reduction will be minimal, with average decibel levels hovering between 65 and 72 dBAs, MTQ officials such as Line Gamache and Sandra Sultra announced January 30 during its NDG-Westmount Neighbourhood Committee meeting held in city hall.

"Currently in the Turcot project plan, there is no screen planned for the north side, the side of Westmount," Gamache said in French, noting there is no ministry funding allocated for this expense currently. Studies also show, she added, that there are tight spaces like that around Hallowell Ave. that will make it difficult to install a sound-deflecting screen. However, Gamache said this issue is still open for discussion and nothing is final. Sultra added it is normal to add elements to a project of this magnitude as it progresses. There are currently some 20 changes in discussion at the moment, she said, bringing up examples from the Champlain bridge and Turcot projects.

Now, unless city and provincial officials can find a solution quickly, the new highway will open in 2018 with no sound wall between Westmount and the 136's west-bound traffic. Though one may be retrofitted in later, officials said.

Route 136 is replacing Route 720 – com-



Virginia Elliott, left, listens while Jill Prescesky addresses the NDG-Westmount Neighbourhood Committee meeting on the Turcot project held in Westmount city hall on January 30.

monly called the Ville Marie expressway. It was built in 1972 and over the years has drawn its fair share of noise complaints from Westmount and Southwest borough residents.

During the January 30 meeting, the MTQ released data that revealed dBAs before and after construction of Route 136. Irvine Ave., south of St. Catherine St., was reportedly experiencing noise that, every 24 hours, averaged in the 70- to 74-decibel range. Hallowell and Greene avenues weren't much different. Sound walls are generally installed when decibel levels exceed 55.

Once the new highway *continued on p. 10*

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City hall flags lowered over Quebec City slayings

Flags on Westmount city hall were lowered Monday, January 30 over the shooting of worshippers at a mosque in Quebec City that led to six reported fatalities and additional injured persons.

Mayors in the province received a “mis-sive” the next day from the Quebec ministry of Municipal Affairs and Regions saying that Philippe Couillard required all government buildings, schools, hospitals and municipal governments to lower flags until further notice, Mayor Peter Trent said.

“In the event there [is] more than one flag...it’s the Quebec flag that must be lowered first,” the email was “careful to point out,” he added. “It’s interesting that Quebec can be so punctilious in assuring ‘Quebec first’ at such a time of mourning.”

Cabbie sets off alarm

An alarm was accidentally set off at Victoria Hall January 31 when a taxi driver pulled open a side door, Public Security officials said. An employee was inside the building at the time when the alarm was sounded at 5: 21pm.

STM repositions new Grosvenor bus shelter

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A new bus shelter installed January 25 at the southwest corner of Sherbrooke and Grosvenor to replace one removed last summer was repositioned January 30, Public Works director Patrick Raggio said last week. The work in all instances had been carried out by the Société de transport de Montréal (STM), he explained.

The first positioning of the replacement shelter “was not what we had approved,” Raggio said. “From what I understand, there was a mistake. It was not put on the concrete slab (that had been poured for it). It was corrected January 30.”

The workers, he explained, had installed the replacement shelter more or less in the same position as an original one that had been there many years but had been removed last summer when found to intrude on private property by two inches (see story August 16, p. 11).

Raggio noted the style of the new shelter conforms to the city’s criteria that such structures in Westmount not display advertising.

Trunks of infected ash trees left visible for snow cleaning



A tall stump with fresh shavings as seen January 20 on Victoria Ave., just north of Somerville.

Photo: Staff

Two trees cut down recently on Victoria Ave. near the Metro store parking lot and across the street near Somerville were “infested” with the emerald ash borer, according to Public Works director Patrick Raggio.

While the remaining portions appear to passers-by to suggest the trees had been in good condition, “the trees were completely infected by hundreds of beetles and because of that were unsound,” he said. “It was best to remove them as a preventive measure.”

The trunks of the ash trees have been left standing about three feet off the ground. This is to facilitate snow removal over the winter, he explained. To have cut them down to stumps would have posed a danger to city sidewalk cleaning crews who might not have seen them. They are to be removed in the spring.

The trees will not be replaced since the existing tree pit would not provide adequate space for a new tree to grow to maturity, said urban forester Robert Liveanu.

– LS

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No barrier planned for north of highway: meeting hears

cont'd. from p. 7

is in full use, the MTQ is now showing a predicted drop in decibels by a mere one to five points. This news drew an angry outcry from Westmount residents, who were reacting to what they perceived as a broken promise by provincial officials that the roadway's new positioning would dampen noise.

Route 136 is, for the most part, lower than the outgoing 720, and it includes a bus lane running between the two east-and west-bound structures. A sound wall is to be constructed between the lanes, and on the south side of the highway between Lenoir and Rose de Lima streets.

However, there is nothing planned for directly north of the highway, where West-mountainers have long been fighting for more noise protection. Currently there is a prototype, transparent wall near Abbott Ave., but it is not enough, people like Councillor Theodora Samiotis have argued. As it was, she noted, that wall took years to get installed.

According to the MTQ, there have been sound wall discussions with Westmount dating back to 2012 and, according to the

provincial policy on road noise, the costs of such a construction would be a 50/50 split between the city and Quebec.

Samiotis, representing District 8, took to the microphone to say she was "shocked" by these revelations. Discussions of a sound wall date back to the 80s, she noted, and, more recently, it was understood that those streets west of Hollowell Ave. would be better protected by the lowered roadway.

"Today we are finding out that this may not be the case," said Samiotis, noting the MTQ "refuses" to incorporate the sound wall into the Turcot project because it is supposedly "a different circumstance" than other, similar situations. "But I would argue, especially after this evening, that the circumstances have to be treated the same."

Samiotis added, "It is obviously a political problem. I'm registering my complaint, my disapproval and frustration with this."

In a post-meeting phone interview, Samiotis said the noise "will be slightly better, but we abandoned any discussions with the minister of transportation" because the city was told the area west of Hollowell Ave. would not qualify for a wall because it was supposed to fall under the

55-decibel range. Decibel levels, she noted, are averaged over a period of 24 hours, meaning neighbours of Route 136 are going to hear the roadway around the clock. The noise is reportedly worse on the second floor of homes, adding two to three decibels.

Samiotis said it makes much more sense to integrate a sound wall into construction of Route 136 westbound rather than retrofitting the highway after it is completed, which is the likely scenario.

"I get that plans evolve and things change," said Samiotis over the phone. "But it's not the place of a city councillor to, at a public meeting, find out about a significant change. It's up to the MTQ to notify the municipality particularly because we, at the municipality, have been trying to meet with the minister about the incorporation of this sound wall into the Turcot project for many weeks now without success. That was my frustration."

The day after the public meeting, Samiotis said that she spoke with the mayor, and that the next step will be to push even harder for a meeting with the Transport minister. She said she will be complaining to the Transport minister about how this

has evolved.

The next NDG-Westmount Neighbourhood Committee meeting, according to the MTQ website, is Monday, March 27 from 7 pm to 9 pm in the Centre communautaire St. Raymond on Upper Lachine Rd. in NDG.



Councillor Theodora Samiotis addresses the NDG-Westmount Neighbourhood Committee January 30.

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Can greenhouses be ready in 2018?

cont'd. from p. 1

While it has been reported as being a three-year project, there is a possibility the new complex could open at some time during 2018, Hurtubise suggested.

Preliminary estimates of \$3 million were included over three years in the city capital works plan for 2017-2019, but the city has applied for a federal/provincial government infrastructure grant.

New design?

The list of challenges identified at the risk analysis workshop included various footprints for the new structure, how to design one that can be well maintained for the next 100 years, meets current building codes, has a sustainable heating system and provides universal accessibility.

Maintenance is an important factor, Hurtubise explained. The 1920s design of the existing domed-glass structure cannot be maintained from the top, which has led to its deterioration. On the other hand, newer greenhouse designs provide places for walking on the roof.

Among other concerns raised were: how to build the new structure while mitigating construction impact on library users; where to position the staging area; what to do about the production greenhouses (where plants are grown); and how feasible is a geothermal heating system.

The greenhouses are currently heated by boilers from Victoria Hall. This is an old system that will have to be changed in the near future, Hurtubise said.

Looking beyond

The risk analysis workshop was conducted by a consultant who specializes in this aspect. It also included members of the city's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), he said. "It was interesting because we looked beyond what we do every day."

As part of the process, "We're going to reach out to people intending to bid on the project. That will likely include broadcasting it outside the province to find the expertise and resources needed," Hurtubise explained. This is expected to result in a design-build consortium similar to the one used for the Westmount recreation centre.

The plan, he said, is to demolish the iconic glass structure and its production greenhouses at the same time and rebuild the complex all at once rather than splitting the project into two phases, as had previously been an option considered.

The greenhouses were closed to the public by Quebec's workplace safety board and the city in September 2015 when a pane of glass fell from the top. This led to the discovery of other loose ones and a general unsafe condition of the buildings (see story October 20, 2015, p. 1).

An overhead inspection of the complex required the use of a drone with a camera, which took numerous photos of the structure and led to a decision to redo it completely rather than carry out a "superficial intervention" (see story August 16, p. 1).

The current style of the conservatory is reported to be only one of two examples of cascading greenhouses surviving in Canada today.



These plants are all that can be seen looking inside the conservatory portion of the greenhouse complex February 3.



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Comin' Up

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9 AND THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Westmount Public Library's two-part teen writing workshops (for 12 years and older), 4 to 5 pm. The first session will deal with academic and personal essays, and the second with fiction and poetry.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10

"Music Across the Seas: Exploring the Sephardic Musical Heritage," led by Rona Nadler, music director, 7:45 pm at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, 4100 Sherbrooke St. Free.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Westmount Horticultural Society presents "Gardening for Mental Health" with Kelley O'Rourke, 7 to 9 pm at the Westmount Public Library. Doors open 6:30 pm for tea, coffee, cookies. Free for members; guests \$5.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Westmount Historical Association's monthly meeting "Life-story interviews with Westmounters" with speaker Sharon Gubbay Helfer, 7 to 9 pm at the Westmount Public Library. Doors open 6:30 pm. Free for members; \$5 non-members. Info: info@www.westmounthistorical.org.

The Atwater Library Lunchtime Series, presents writer and photographer Gabriel Safdie on "The China Challenge: 33 years of work and travel in the Middle Kingdom," 12:30 pm at the Atwater Library, 1200 Atwater. Free.

Until Friday, February 24

An exhibition "The Works of Ann McCall" at The Gallery at Victoria Hall. Gallery hours: Monday to Friday, 10 am to 9 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 10 am to 5 pm. Info: 514.989.5521.



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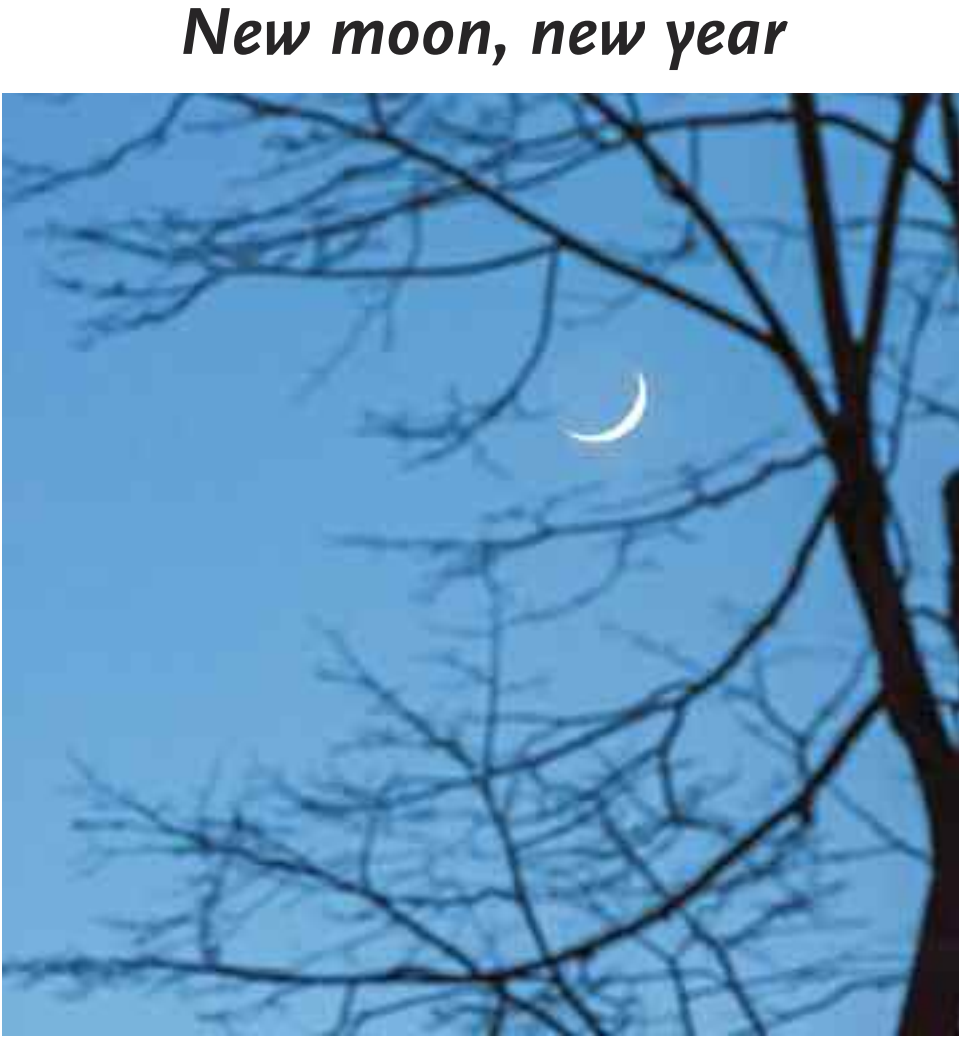
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A new moon was born January 27. The three-day-old moon was photographed January 30 on a cold, clear evening at 5 pm. The Chinese new year and Year of the Rooster started on January 28. The faint light disk above the moon crescent is caused by the sun's light hitting the earth, reflecting back to the moon and then being reflected back to earth.

Photo: Ralph Thompson

Letters cont'd. from p. 6

such as having homes with individual doors facing the street, largely stone facades and windows of similar shape and size."

Unfortunately, of the five examples of possible building styles shown on slide 31 presented by the city at the public meeting on June 14, 2016, three are completely out

of character with the street: one is all brick with no stone; and one might be a combination of brick and stone but might be brick and concrete – it is difficult to tell from the photograph.

I encourage all residents of the southeast to familiarize themselves with what the city is proposing as it does not appear to be meeting Mr. London's criteria.

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McCall and Schmitz-Schmelzer: Eloquent design

Art Scene

HEATHER BLACK



Prints and collages by Westmounter Ann McCall at The Gallery at Victoria Hall and resin sculptures or paintings by German artist Harald Schmitz-Schmelzer at Galerie de Bellefeuille are not to be missed. Both carefully conceived and thought-provoking, McCall's work celebrates nature and natural habitats, while Schmitz-Schmelzer's abstract creations mesmerize with linear colour.

Nature revisited

In the exhibition *C'est l'hiver*, McCall's graphic prints and paintings of ice flows, forests, foxes or wolves immerse viewers in the cool grandeur of Canada's North. Intricate in design and textures, ice-blue,

turquoise and black dominate the series. Often composite images, printed forms or textures are superimposed on or adjacent to larger images. Suggesting a situation or story, complex and ambiguous forms add to the work's appeal.

In the collagraph print "Convergence," a majestic pine tree floats over turquoise landscapes. Positioned beneath bare branches, the silhouette of a sole conifer is both unique and universal. A Canadian icon, its presentation as a black form within a muted and subtle landscapes also evokes Asian art.

In the mixed-media collage, "Winter Fragments #3," a deciduous tree and a radiating sun similarly suggest an Eastern aesthetic.

For the silkscreen print "Porc-épic," a detailed portrait of a porcupine, stick in mouth, is combined with treetops and woodland scenes. Framed separately within a white mat, the composition evokes episodes of life within habitats. Reminding viewers of nature's delicate balance, McCall's compositions invite commentary.

C'est l'hiver continues until Friday, February 24 at The Gallery at Victoria Hall, 4626 Sherbrooke St.

Colour vibration

Schmitz-Schmelzer's colourful wall sculptures of toned and textured resin layers are elegant in their simplicity. Constructed in horizontal and vertical compositions, the artist relies on the dynamic quality of colour against colour rather than brushwork. Carefully conceived and mounted onto or next to wood, the contrast of shiny colour with patterned veneer creates visual interest.

For the small, free-standing sculpture "Hibiscus," Schmitz-Schmelzer depicts imagery as colour. A palette of rose, red, yellow, brown and blue suggests blossoms, fresh earth and blue skies. Presented as horizontal coloured bands next to toned wood grain, the contrast between the man-made and the natural evokes dialogue.

In another horizontal composition "63 Farben," blue bands vibrate against orange and red. Creating an illusion of movement, the effect is mesmerizing.

Schmitz-Schmelzer's unique skill with molded and polished colour resin is most evident in the circular "Krakatau." Relying on colour associations, the composition's reflective purple centre, not unlike a fish-eye mirror, evokes Jan van Eyck's well-known masterpiece "The Arnolfini Wedding."

Always interesting, Schmitz-Schmelzer's work is displayed at Galerie de Bellefeuille, 1367 Greene Ave.



"Krakatau"
Harald Schmitz-Schmelzer

Form as content

With cool blues and elaborate textures, McCall conjures up harmony within nature, while Schmitz-Schmelzer contrasts the natural and the man-made in three-dimensional art.

Reminding viewers of both the winter and nature, McCall and Schmitz-Schmelzer merge creative process and meaning within elegant and eloquent design.

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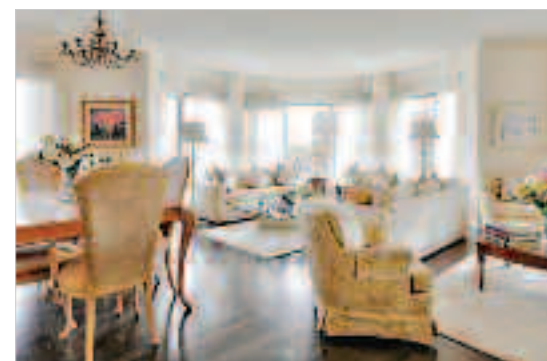
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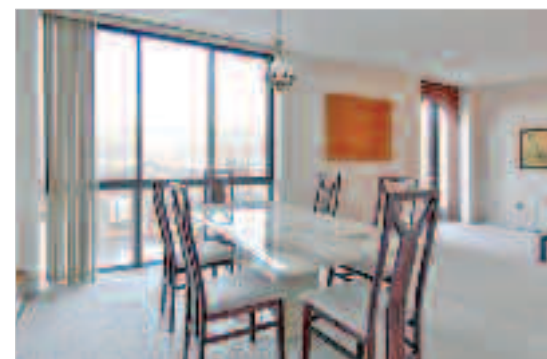
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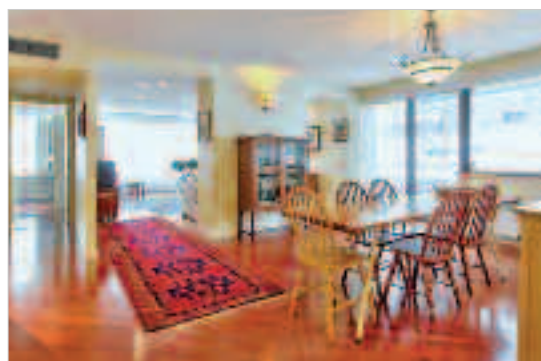
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For Andy Dodge's analysis, see p. 18.



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Westmount's smiley face



Can you guess what common household object made these smiley faces, photographed on January 31 in lower Westmount? See p. 22 for answer.

Photo: Westmount Independent

Dog left tied up

A man was issued a \$77 ticket for leaving his dog tied to a city pole on Sherbrooke St. near Claremont January 26, Public Security officials said. The large dog was spotted unattended at 10:50 am by a patroller who saw it still there 10 minutes later. The officer found the owner having a haircut inside a nearby hair salon. He lived in NDG.

Sales analysis

October '16 transfers: Significant mark-downs



Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in October 2016, gleaned from non-city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 17. For statistical purposes, sales in 2016 are being compared to the 2014 municipal evaluation since the new valuation roll did not come into force until January 1, 2017.

Several high-priced mark-downs last October helped bring the average ratio in Westmount below parity. A large home at 718 Upper Lansdowne Ave. sold for just over half its municipal valuation of \$3,517,500 while another at 30 Forden Ave. went for \$2 million while evaluated at \$3,734,600.

Five of 12 sales registered in October sold for an average mark-down of 8.8 percent compared to their 2014 municipal valuations, and in fact 12 percent below the new 2017 municipal valuations.

On the other hand, a bungalow at 4862 Westmount Ave. sold for a mark-up of almost 40 percent, while another at 632 Belmont Ave. went for 31.5 percent more than its 2014 tax value. Four single-family dwellings topped the \$2-million mark while three of the 12 sold for less than \$1 million; the lowest price saw 139 Abbott Ave. go for \$725,000.

Oct. condo sales

Two condominiums rounded out the list of October sales, including 60 percent of

the large duplex at 202 Côte St. Antoine Rd., corner Mount Stephen Ave., for \$1,475,000, the highest price for a duplex-type condo in Westmount's history. The other October sale was for a small apartment at 10 York St. Both sold slightly higher than their municipal valuations, with an average mark-up between the two of 5.6 percent.

Addition of a dozen single-family sales in October brings the total for the first 10 months of 2016 to 157 registrations, the highest pace since 2010. Of that number, 94 had prices between \$1 million and \$2 million, while another 28 were above the \$2-million mark.

Highest price so far in 2016 is the \$5,780,000 sale of 61 Aberdeen Ave. in June.

Car crash at Greene sends one to hospital

The driver of a car was taken to hospital after a two-car collision at Dorchester and Greene January 31, Public Security officials said. A patroller came across the accident at 4:02 pm and stopped to relieve two tow truck drivers who were controlling traffic while Urgences Santé personnel awaited police before transporting the victim. The collision reportedly occurred when a Toyota Prius travelling north up Greene on the green light was hit in the intersection by an eastbound Hyundai Santa Fe going through the red light. The drivers' identities were not recorded, and police were left in charge.

Woman hit by taxi as light changed

A woman was hit by a taxi at Sherbrooke and Claremont January 26 but refused to be taken to hospital, Public Security officials said. The accident was reported by a city parking inspector at 6:46 am. The woman had apparently been crossing the intersection diagonally but backtracked because of snow removal vehicles. By that time, the traffic lights had changed. She suffered slight pain in the left elbow and stated she had banged her head on the ground but had not lost consciousness. The accident was described as minor. The 48-year-old lived on Sherbrooke in NDG. Police and Urgences Santé also attended.

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Retail Watch



VERONICA REDGRAVE

Blink in Westmount, and there is a new shop or restaurant – and also, sadly, a closing – some just for the holidays and others for all seasons. Walking the streets, the *Indie* keeps you up to date.

Bistro on the Avenue opens under new owners

The much-beloved and once-beleaguered neighbourhood watering hole and restaurant has re-opened with new owners. One partner is head chef. Launched 27 years ago, it is fabulous once again. A snappy new black awning has welcoming twilight twinkling lights. As I lunched there with friends, we sampled the duck confit (port reduction/maple syrup sauce), black cod from Greece and mussels (with a tinge of Sambuca), served in a simple white tagine. Their subtle flavours explained why the establishment was already full – again. Word-of-mouth is the *People* magazine grapevine in Westmount, so before you could say “holiday season,” it re-opened December 3. Explained owner En-cion Obana, the restaurant has “all new personnel – five chefs and 25 wait staff from some of Quebec’s top restaurants.” The newly-refurbished space is simple and elegant; the chandelier and light sconces come from France. The food is fusion French-Italian, including “hand-cut tartares,” the lunch menu ranges from salad to sirloin. Today the bar, where friends once met in crowds of four deep, has a gorgeous granite counter, and we “still serves our famed martini,” said Obana.

1362 Greene Ave.

Open for lunch and dinner, seven days a week.

VAGO: Closed for a moment

Recently, friends visiting from London made a reservation for dinner at Greene Ave.’s popular Vago, only to arrive to see a sign saying “closed for January holidays.” Luckily they still ate well. They wandered around the corner to St. Catherine to its sister establishment, Bacaro Pizzeria Urbaine. Already celebrating three years, the name is inspired by Venice’s “bacari,” the ancient local word for a bar/resto offering a simple quick bite. An array of the thin-crust pizzas is made in front of you in a

special wood-burning oven, to eat there or take home. Being Italian, it also offers some of the best pastas in town. I love the vibe: part families, part stylish Prosecco sippers. Angelo Mercuri, co-owner of both establishments with partner Tomasso Mule, said Vago would “re-open in February,” and has plans to celebrate that location’s 15 years.

1336 Greene Ave.

Blink. It’s gone: PARM

We blinked and almost missed this. A mere few months after the *Indie* announced this resto’s Sherbrooke St. debut (at 4922), owners of Lucille’s Oyster Dive have closed Parm.

Rudsak finally opened

Finally, it opened on December 24, and just in time for the holidays, with its gleaming black flooring, grey and brick walls. Love the leathers.

4879 Sherbrooke St.

Open daily.

Coach House opens downstairs

Husband and wife team Anna Kaufer and Morris Zimelstern are co-partners/owners in Coach House, known to Westmounters as the go-to place for antiques, both to buy and sell. “We have been upstairs on Greene Ave. since 1973,” commented Zimelstern. “I remember when this street had two-way traffic.” In October, they opened what they are calling a “pop-up” space downstairs. One wanders over beautiful Persian carpets and rugs sized for all spaces. (Mine is for the cold tiled kitchen floor!) Full of gleaming, polished furniture, mirrors and art, I loved the wonderful grand piano, waiting for a Glenn Gould or a Keith Jarrett hand – or even better; a child with dreams.

1329 Greene Ave.

Closed Sundays.

Marie Dumas takes over former Living boutique space

One of my favourite “Alladin’s caves” – in that it offers so many treasures – is Greene Ave.’s Marie Dumas boutique. It is about to offer a lot more. The shop is taking over the former Living boutique space just up the street. Managing it are sisters Marie and Stéphanie, partners with their mother Francine. It is a go-to shop for sparkling, shiny baubles, all kinds of gift ideas and fabulous not-fake-feeling fake flowers. Soon, there will be an expanded bridal registry, Stéphanie said. Their store window is renowned for the displays that offer table

setting ideas. I have always loved their china stools, and enjoy blue and white ones in my garden every summer. They are moving just in time. When one enters the shop now, I feel like the proverbial “bull in a china shop” as there are so many things to admire, but so little room as I career around carefully clasping my overflowing briefcase. However, as of February 6, one should be able to ogle with ease in the much-expanded space.

1234 Greene Ave.

Closed Sundays.

Park’s two places back open

Good news! Park Restaurant and Sous Chef, the gourmet grocery shop (a lifesaver for my last minute dinners), are open again after the November 13 fire. Lavan-deria is still closed.

Park Restaurant, 378 Victoria Ave. Closed Sundays.

Sous Chef, 370 Victoria Ave. Closed Sundays.

New pizzeria on Victoria?

After what seems like months of hammering and sawing behind the construction boards hiding the space at 364 Victoria Ave., we have learned that the space will soon be Pizzeria Neuf Cent (900), one of a franchise, already existing throughout Montreal. Watch this space for a March opening.

No alcohol at Summit lookout

Three 20-year-old women were issued \$77 tickets for possessing alcohol at Summit lookout January 19 at 10 pm, Public Security officials report. They were residents of Montreal, Pierrefonds and Kirkland.

‘Suspicious activity’ checked out

A young man trying to climb up onto a balcony of a house on Victoria January 23 turned out to be helping a locked-out resident, Public Security officials said. Partrrollers were answering a call at 1:27 pm for suspicious activity at a house on Victoria south of Somerville to find the man was a friend of a resident who was attempting to discover if a window might provide access to the home. In the end, the resident called her mother to obtain the serial number of the key, and a new one was made by a locksmith who recognized the woman.

Barking dog disturbs apartment neighbours

A dog was heard barking “constantly” inside an apartment building on Sherbrooke January 27 when public safety officers answered a neighbour’s complaint at 11 pm, according to Public Security officials. The dog’s owner could not be reached at his cell number. At 12:26 am, a second complaint was received. A ticket for \$77 was reported to have been mailed to the owner who had already been warned verbally about the barking last month. Officers were to follow up when able to contact the resident.

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Outdoor, indoor events draw winter revellers during carnival

By RALPH THOMPSON

The city of Westmount’s annual winter carnival took place between February 1 and 4 this year. On the Saturday, it took to the outdoors

with a full day of activities in King George (Murray) Park, the location for some “Frosty Fun” events, including a snowman-making competition, the popular toboggan run with large rubber inner tubes, marshmallow-roasting around a large bon-

fire, hot chocolate, cookies and hot dogs. There was also a maple taffy spread (provided by Érable sur Neige), an old fashioned horse-drawn sleigh ride, games, races and a tug-of-war. The day ended in the Westmount recre-

ation centre (WRC) with a youth skating show at 5 pm, followed by a performance by Le Patin Libre, a contemporary skating group supported by Conseil des arts de Montréal. It was a sold-out show.



Marshmallows around a crackling log fire were, as usual, a big hit.

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A resident of de Maisonneuve, Thérèse Charlebois, delights in tasting the maple taffy.

Contractors ticketed \$442 for dumping snow on street

Two snow removal contractors were issued tickets for \$442 January 26 when caught in the act of dumping snow from private property onto a freshly cleaned street, according to Public Security reports. One was working near Edgemoor and Lexington, the other on Forden.



Students in the Westmount Advanced Skating program delivered a nicely choreographed and graceful performance at 5 pm February 4 at the Westmount recreation centre.

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Pierre-Olivier Quirion with his children Casimir, left, and Eloise take a fast run down the toboggan trail on one of the large rubber inner tubes supplied by the city.

Feats of fashion at MMFA

Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

New York has the famed Metropolitan Museum Ball. Montreal has the Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) annual gala. And what a triumph this year was! Gowns were outstanding: style on steroids with sensational statement-making gowns.

On the occasion of the inauguration of the Michal and Renata Hornstein Pavilion for Peace on November 5, the MMFA held "Give Peace a Dance." Under the copresidency of **Michael Penner**, board chair Hydro Québec (there with his wife **Michaela**); **Brian Porter**, president/CEO Scotia Bank (with his wife **Megan Porter**); and **Marie-Hélène Sicard**, senior VP Sodexo (with **Anthony Reed**), the sold-out gala introduced guests to the Pavilion's new space.

MMFA steering committee co-pres were **Johanne Champoux** and **Claire Webster** (with **Stuart**). Webster's cream satin gown



From left: Danielle Champagne, Marie-Hélène Sicard, Nathalie Bondil, Jacques Parisien, Marleen Beaulieu, Roula Rossy, Andrea Daniels Rosenbloom, Sophie Langlois, Heidi Hollinger, Michèle Plourde, Johanne Champoux, Claire Webster, France Caron, Paule Fontaine, Michael Penner, Willamina Leus Martire, Brian Porter and Geneviève Lafaille.

with a design of doves signifying peace was designed by Westmouter **Astri Prugger**.

Committee members included **Danielle**

Champagne (MMFA Foundation director), **Marleen Beaulieu**, **Roula Rossy**, **Andrea Daniels Rosenbloom**, **Sophie Langlois**, **Heidi Hollinger**, **Michèle Plourde**, **France**

Caron, **Paule Fontaine**, **Michael Penner**, **Willamina Leus Martire**, **Brian Porter** and

continued on p. 22

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Social Notes cont'd. from p. 21

Geneviève Lafaille.

Board chair Jacques Parisien addressed the guests at the VIP champagne cocktail, as did the Hornstein's son Norbert Hornstein.

Chic in sequins, Nathalie Bondil, director general and chief curator MMFA, thanked Michel de la Chenelière, whose donation meant that another floor could be added to the pavilion, showcasing 800 works of art.

Noted amidst the über-elegant crowd were Quebec media celebs Julie Snyder and Mitsou (with hubby Iohann Martin); ministers Mélanie Joly (with Félix-Antoine Marzell) and Kathleen Weil (Michael Novak), as well as Paul Maréchal, MMFA's curator Hilliard Goldfarb and former board chair Brian Levitt (with Portia Leggat), Raymond Bachand, Marie Sénécal Tremblay and Bruce McNiven, France Denis-Royer and Raymond Royer, designer Denis Gagnon, Françoise Lyon and Martin Pesant, gallerist Antoine Ertaskiran, Audrey Vallière and Eric Boyko, Jocelyne and Louis Audet, Serge Joyal, Isabelle Marcoux



From left: Raymond Bachand, Marc-André Blanchard, Mélanie Joly and Félix-Antoine Marzell.



From left: Michel de la Chenelière, Marie Senecal and Bruce McNiven.



Jacques Maurice and Dominique Bertrand.



Michael and Michaela Penner.

and François Olivier, Nathalie Goyette and Philippe Lamarre and Marc-André Blanchard, permanent representative of Canada to the UN.

Westmounters present included Mary Daily (MMFA curator modern international art) and Paul Desmarais III, Mary and Siim Vanaselja, Angie and Tony Lofreda, Ellen and David Laidley, Peter and Susan Varadi (striking in ruffled scarlet) Camilla Leigh and Benn Mikula, Joan Ivory and daughter Sarah Ivory with hubby Guthrie Stewart and Jacques Maurice and Dominique Bertrand, whose gray satin feather-accessorized gown had an asymmetric hem.

Montreal artists and singers each designed a gala dining room.

Gold sponsors were CIBC Bank, Scotia Bank, Power Financial Corporation, Groupe Banque TD and Power Corporation of Canada.

The ball raised a record \$1.2 million net, announced Elisabeth-Anne Bütikofer, MMFA press attachée.

Just making snowballs

A young man was followed by an undercover public safety officer January 20, Public Security officials said. He aroused suspicions at 1:35 am as he was seen going onto private property on Côte St. Antoine, Westmount Ave. and Victoria. He was finally intercepted and stated he was only picking up snow to make snowballs. He was described as co-operative and was allowed to continue on his way home to the area of Upper Roslyn.

Answer to p. 18 question

A city-issued composting bin.



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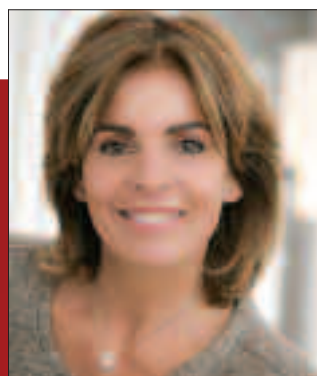
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Westmount, 815 Upper Lansdowne Ave.
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Westmount location! Impressive views.
Extensively renovated, 2 garages 5 bdrms,
3 bthrms, 2 powder rooms. **\$15,000 mo.**



Westmount adj., 5124 Cote St-Antoine
FABULOUS sun filled 5 bedrooms, 3+1
bathrooms, FULLY renovated by owner/
designer. Gorgeous architectural features.
\$7,500 furnished



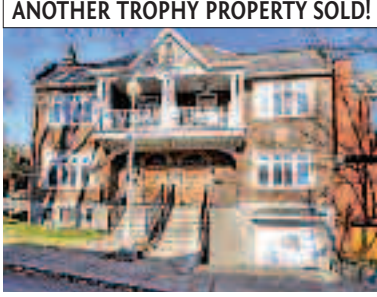
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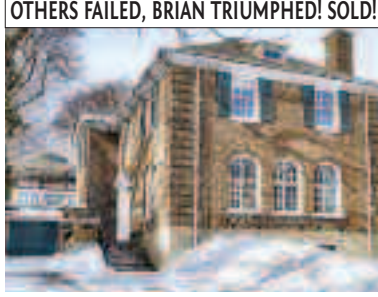
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