

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly. Vol. 13 No. 12a

We are Westmount

December 3, 2019

Mayor: 'Somewhat' good news for 2020

City faces 2.6% aggro hike but decries process used

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Westmount's share of Montreal agglomeration services for 2020 based on property valuation is expected to rise 2.6 percent for 2020, Mayor Christina Smith announced last week. The cost to the city – and taxpayers – of \$59.9 million compares to \$58.4 million in 2019.

In announcing the city's share, or *quote-part* as it is called, after the draft budget was tabled, she said she was anticipating Westmount would still be able to bring in its total operating budget December 16 at

the rate of inflation, as planned. This includes local expenses and agglomeration services.

"It's somewhat good news," she said of the local aggro increase. "I'm glad it's not higher but we continue to be against the process used to determine the *quote-part* and what we receive (in return) in shared services."

The city's 2.6-percent increase despite the rise in the new property valuation role for 2020-2022 compares with 2019's increase of 3.6 percent and the 2018 hike of 6.7 per- *continued on p. 11*

Window broken at Flore



The window of the Flore florist shop looking out on Grosvenor at Sherbrooke was broken late last week. It was photographed November 28.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT

Both arrested, charged

Overnight Public Security patrols find 2 impaired drivers

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Public safety officers on patrol overnight November 22 spotted two car drivers less than an hour apart on Sherbrooke who appeared to be asleep at the wheel. Both ended up being arrested and charged with driving under the influence, and one was also charged with being in possession of drugs, Public Security officials said.

In the first incident, a patroller pulled up behind a grey Audi stopped at a red light on Sherbrooke at Lansdowne at 1:46 am.

When the car failed to move after the light changed, the officer signalled for it to advance, but to no avail. He then pulled up beside it, noticed it was in gear and that the driver appeared to be either asleep or in need of *continued on p. 11*



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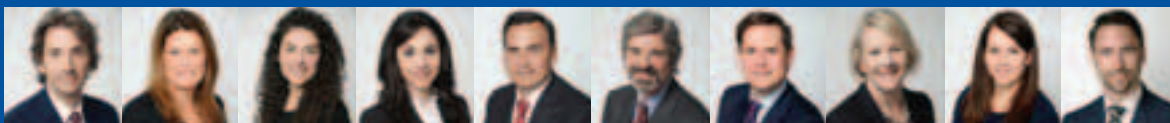


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Paper bags used once can be worse: Cllr. Brzeski

Will Westmount ban single-use plastic bags?



A shopper with a traditional plastic bag, left, and a re-usable one, right, at Victoria and Sherbrooke on November 28.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

What plans does Westmount have for meeting targets set for the Montreal agglomeration to divert 70 percent of its garbage from landfill by 2025 and 85 percent by 2030? And will the city ban the use of plastic bags?

These were questions asked by two residents at the council meeting November 4 after the targets were reported by Councillor Marina Brzeski. While the targets were “ambitious,” she said she was encouraged that Westmount had diverted 54.4 percent of all garbage in 2018 compared to 53.5 percent the year before (see story November 5, p. 1).

To meet the targets, explained Brzeski, commissioner of sustainability and accessibility, Westmount would have to “ramp up” ways to reduce garbage at source, encourage greater use of the city’s

composting and recycling programs, engage residents and encourage retailers to shift packaging habits.

An action program regarding this would be worked into the city’s 2020 operating budget that would include extending recycling and composting programs in parks to “separate at source.”

But would Westmount follow IGA’s ban to eliminate plastic bags?

Engaging retailers

Mayor Christina Smith said “we know we have to move away from the use of plastic bags,” but that Westmount wanted to work with retailers to get them onside rather than levying heavy fines and other ways various municipalities were using.

Citing a recent study by Recyc-Québec evaluating the life cycling of packaging, Brzeski said, “If you were to use a paper bag once and throw it away, it would be

more costly to the environment than a plastic one,” all things considered. The report’s conclusion was that if using bags, re-use them.

When told the city was developing an action plan for 2020, Victoria Ave. resident Russ Brown, a climatologist who worked many years for Environment Canada and is a member of the Healthy City Project, said the city could count on the organization for help.

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Liaise For Children Whose Parents
Are Transitioning Into a Residence

Meeting takes place for Districts 1 and 2

Traffic and safety main concerns voiced by residents

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A combined meeting for residents of Districts 1 and 2 took place on November 20 with Mayor Christina Smith and their respective councillors working to provide those attending with an opportunity to raise concerns that turned out to be mainly traffic related, according to the mayor.

Roughly speaking, District 1 is the area north of The Boulevard and Cedar (including the south sides of those streets); and District 2 is north of Côte St. Antoine, and west of Church Hill and Aberdeen.

20 attended

The 20 residents attending were equally divided between the two districts, said District 1 councillor Anitra Bostock, who hosted the meeting along with District 2 councillor Philip Cutler and Mayor Smith. They were accompanied by city director general Benoit Hurtubise, Public Security director Greg McBain and five Station 12 police officers including Lieutenant Jonathan Chase.

“What was nice was that people came to the table with an open mind,” said Bostock.

“Three residents of Lansdowne just south of The Boulevard told us they were concerned about safety from traffic speeding in their block, so it was handy to have police there who would follow up,” Bostock explained.

Monitoring sidewalk safety

Pedestrian safety was also raised about contractors parking partially on the sidewalk as well as cars in driveways sticking out over the sidewalk. McBain told the *Independent* last week that so far this year, the department had issued 172 tickets for parking that obstructed pedestrian passage or contractors parking with two wheels on the sidewalk.

Other attendees asked for north-south connector bike lanes between The Boulevard and Westmount Ave., and for more electric charging stations.

Garbage missed

A resident of Sunnyside also said his garbage was missed regularly by the city contractor despite his calls to the city. As a result, the city has since fined the company, Bostock said, so hopefully his address won’t be missed again.

“This was the first time we have undertaken this initiative,” she said of the event, “so I didn’t know what to expect. But it was something that we would certainly like to do again. We came out of the evening with a list of follow-ups and are appreciative that residents took the time to come out and meet us.”

Notice cards inviting residents to the meeting at Westmount Park Church had been mailed out to some 4,000 addresses in the two districts, she said.

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Police Report

Police beat quiet, except for car thefts and stolen identity

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Officers at the Montreal police’s Station 12 on Stanton St. had a relatively quiet week, with the exception of two stolen cars and a case of identity theft.

Sometime between November 24 at 9 pm and November 25 at 7 am, a sports utility vehicle was stolen from the driveway of a home on Ramezay Rd. near St. Sulpice Rd.

“When the owner went to his vehicle in the morning, the vehicle was gone,” said community relations officer Adalbert Pimentel, adding that there was no evidence of a forced entry.

Although a security camera, which might have provided images of the perpetrator, was found nearby by the investigators, it was not operational at the time of the offence, Pimentel added.

SUV stolen on Renfrew

A General Motors-branded SUV belonging to a resident of Westmount’s Renfrew Ave. was stolen around 7:30 pm on Nov. 25.

After the owner reported the theft, neither he nor the investigators were able

to locate it with GM’s on-board OnStar vehicle-tracking system as someone appeared to have deactivated it, Pimentel said.

As with the previous stolen car case, there was no evidence of forced entry, such as broken window glass in the driveway where the vehicle had been parked, he continued.

Identity theft, police advice

A Westmount resident filed a complaint at Station 12, alleging that an identity theft had been perpetrated against her.

In the police report of the incident, she said she had recently received a call from a debt collection agent claiming she owed money from an unpaid bill issued under her name by a cable company.

After contacting the cable company, the woman was able to determine that an unknown suspect had used her identity to open the account for which an outstanding amount was now due.

With identity theft becoming an increasingly common crime, Pimentel said one of the best responses by victims is to open a surveillance account at credit

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agencies Equifax or TransUnion.

The identity theft problem has taken on such magnitude that the Montreal Police Department has been providing special training in cybercrime to some of its staff – including Cst. Pimentel who took part in one such seminar.

Among the issues Pimentel said were discussed during the training session on Nov. 26 were the abuse of IRC Chat and social networks by hackers, online fraud artists and vendors of child pornography.

“The darknet is where you find a lot of suspicious activity,” he said, referring to a type of activity on the world wide web where encryption allows crime, including gun-running and drug-dealing, to take place undetected.

A new frontier of illicit cyberactivity, he added, is the Internet of Things (IoT). This involves a growing number of Internet-connected appliances and devices, including household thermostats, security monitors and “smart speakers” like Siri and Alexa, which are coming under cyberattack as they contain personal information which can be used for identity theft.

“It’s good to be conscious that the trade-off for using these things is privacy,” said Pimentel, noting that, for example, smart speakers are programmed to listen and can pick up personal information that comes up during conversations that are private.

Suspect followed, fined \$1,938 for graffiti

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A 28-year-old Montreal man was issued three tickets at \$646 each for graffiti painted at three locations November 10, Public Security officials said. Arousing suspicions, he had been followed by public safety officers after he left Westmount Park at 9:34 pm, headed toward Westmount High School and wound his way south to the Greene/Prospect tunnel.

Described as slipping along in mud at the new highway wall, he was seen dropping a can of white spray paint. Boxed in by patrol cars, he surrendered, according Public Security director Greg McBain.

The same white tag in fresh white paint was found at three locations: in the tunnel

Winter parking restrictions kick in Dec. 1

Westmount residents are reminded of the winter parking restrictions on some streets starting December 1. “Be careful to watch for signs where parking is reduced to one side, especially on a lot of streets in lower Westmount,” said Public Security director Greg McBain. Parkers should also watch out for snow removal signs in the event of clearing operations.

just south of Centre Greene, a communications box in a lane behind Columbia and a concrete block at 4200 Dorchester.

Police were called and it was decided to fine the man for graffiti under the municipal by-law rather than charge him criminally. He was reported to have apologized and had no record of “similar” offences. The file was submitted to the city’s Legal Services department for possible collection of clean-up costs.

Crane gets ticket for \$1,291

A crane set up outside 377 Metcalfe Ave. November 22 was found in violation of its city permit to occupy public space, according to Public Security officials. One condition it had not met was the creation of a safe pedestrian passage; another, that the feet of the stabilizer legs not be placed on the sidewalk unless a deposit had been made against damage to the concrete. It was reported to be the second time this equipment’s operator had violated conditions since June 14. It was described as being close to a school (Akiva) where a safety campaign has been under way. No warning signs were posted.



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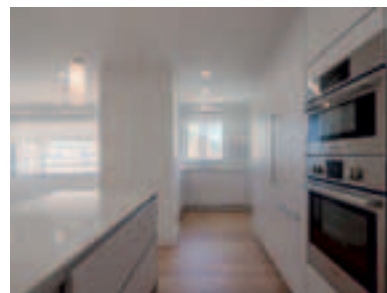
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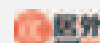
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LET THE PATH MEANDER

I have to disagree with your editorial of November 19 (p. 6) about making Westmount Park traversable by pedestrians.

I am a walker and frequently walk through the park on my way to Greene (or farther) and back. It is the fact that the path meanders slightly that makes it pleasing. If I want straight lines, I can walk on any street. A park is not a throughway. The path opens to delights each season – the snow-covered gazebo, dogs cavorting in the dog run, people just enjoying a sunny day in the “Shakespeare in the Park” dell, the blossoms in spring and the ever-changing colours of the leaves in the autumn. A slight detour around the dog run and the gazebo only add to the walk’s charm. I don’t need to slow my pace, yet it is a relief from the rest of the walk through city streets, where cars and bicycles make walking more challenging.

Sometimes we need a break from efficiency!

Where I do agree with you is that the path needs to be safe. The section that collects water – and, in winter, ice – needs to be levelled. Snow clearance needs to be done, though I was surprised this year to see how quickly and well the path had been cleared after our first snowfall. We don’t need another highway through the park. There are enough straight paths elsewhere!

SUSAN BLOOM, LANSDOWNE AVE.

Editor’s reply: I am all for meandering paths too, but I think we can make one exception for such an important case, and I am skeptical

that a meandering path will be well cleared of snow in the long term, even if the quality improves for a season or two. Good design makes things easy for users, and for maintenance and maintenance staff, and increases usage, which – in the case of walking – is a goal of many people in Westmount. Everyone pays for poor design, over and over again until the project in question is demolished. – DP.

STRAIGHTEN THE PATH, MOVE THE DOGS COMPLETELY

I am fully in agreement with the need to straighten the east-west footpath through Westmount Park at de Maisonneuve (as expressed in your editorial of November 19, p. 6). But moving the dog run “north towards Sherbrooke a bit”? So, in addition to dogs *en route* to the run occasionally harassing (or at minimum sniffing at) third parties, and the peace of the lagoon being disturbed by yapping in the run, are you suggesting we might have the dogs splashing about in the water?! (There is simply no land leeway available.) Much better to move the dog run back to its original location, at the corner of St. Catherine and Lansdowne, which is presently a rarely used part of the park. and would minimize disturbance since it is across many paths from it.

CHRIS LYLE, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

Editor’s reply: To your first point: if the first meandering path that one encounters as one goes north from the dog run (area “A” in accompanying photo) were moved to the south side of the dog run (i.e. right next to

the bike path), and the dog run were moved north to cover only where that path is now, the dog run would still be well south of the lagoon.

In addition, the second meandering path that one encounters as one goes north (area “B”) would not have been moved at all and would still be between the lagoon

and the dog run.

As to your second point, it is my guess that the rough location of the dog run is a *res judicata*, but what did I say about council opening up Pandora’s box? Lobby hard enough and you might get your wish. This is interest-group politics. Almost anything can happen! – DP



Looking west in Westmount Park towards Lansdowne and de Maisonneuve on November 27, with the dog run’s fence to the left/south. The lagoon is to the right/north.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Comin’ Up

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

Pop-up art event with fabulous new works of art for sale by Peggy Curran, Susan Semenak, Diane Labelle O’Neill and novel *Out for Stars* by Colleen Curran. Refreshments and vernissage. Atwater Library auditorium, 1200 Atwater Ave. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7

A People’s Soundtrack, a film about Montreal’s cantorial music. Wine & film: \$20; film only: \$10. Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, 4100 Sherbrooke St. 6 pm wine/Havdalah/conversation; film: 7 pm.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12

► The Westmount Historical Association’s December social: Photographs of prominent Westmounters from the Aline Gubbay photo archives will be shown. In the Gallery at Victoria Hall. 7 to 9 pm.

► Dramatis Personae presents *Fowl Plays*, an evening of four short plays. Lodge Room of Victoria Hall, 4626 Sherbrooke. 7:30 pm

Also Saturday, December 14 (2 pm); and Monday, December 16 and Tuesday, December 17 (7:30 pm).

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15

Christmas lessons and carols service – traditional with a twist! St. Matthias’ Anglican Church, 131 Côte St. Antoine Rd. 5 pm.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16

Presentation of city’s 2020 operating budget. City hall. 5 pm

Mid-month council meeting. City hall. 5:30 pm.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18

Public consultation meeting on changes to zoning by-laws regarding landscape design. 7 pm.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23

Hanukah candle lighting by Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom, Congregation Shaar Hashomayim and the city of Westmount. Free. City hall. 5 pm.

ONGOING

Parenthood drop-in. Free. Two Doulas is partnering with Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom to offer a weekly drop-in for coffee, cookies, and company with your babies (one year and younger). Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom. Wednesday mornings from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon.

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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Sherbrooke-Valois Inc. 310 Victoria Ave., #105, Westmount, QC H3Z 2M9

Bankruptcies and harsh winter**City writes off \$61K in unpaid hydro bills for 2016**

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council November 4 wrote off a total of \$61,419 in unpaid Hydro Westmount bills for 2016, most relating to clients described as “moved out,” according to accompanying documents.

The bad debts compared with a total of \$10,676 written off last year for 2015 as is the city’s custom of writing off uncollected debts that are three years behind. While the smaller amount written off last year had been described at the time as “much improved” over the previous year, this year’s list went without comment.

City director general Benoit Hurtubise later told the *Independent* that this year’s higher total was related to “a few bankruptcies on Greene Ave.” and a harsh

winter in 2016 that had led to higher bills.

As well, “it was Year 1 of our new billing system ... and the bad debt process was not optimized.” While the bad debts fluctuate over the years, he explained, “our average has been around \$45,000.”

The amount written off was listed by a collection agency as ranging from \$5.79 (attributed to an apartment dweller on Clarke) to \$5,738 for a food outlet that was very much in business last week under a modified name on a nearby street.

Of some 139 account numbers listed by the agency, some 107 had residential addresses – many at apartment buildings – while the others appeared to be commercial accounts.

Hydro Westmount’s headquarters on Glen Rd., just south of Lansdowne and St. Catherine, on November 28.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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Westmount Historical lecture focused on artist Marian Dale Scott

By Martin C. Barry

Canadian artist Marian Dale Scott, who lived for years with her husband, the poet and constitutional lawyer F.R. Scott, on Clarke Ave., posted bail for students arrested during the “computer” riots at Sir George Williams University in 1969, an art historian revealed to the Westmount Historical Association.

While Marian Dale Scott appears quite conservative in most photographs taken of her during her 60-year career, “looks are deceiving,” Gwendolyn Owens, director of



Gwendolyn Owens with a projected photo of a work from Marian Dale Scott’s abstract period which is owned by the city of Westmount and hangs on the main floor of city hall.

PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY

the Visual Arts Collection at McGill University, told the WHA at the Westmount Public Library on Nov. 21.

‘Left-leaning’

She was “very involved in left-leaning groups that were against the Vietnam War in the sixties,” Owens said, noting that Scott’s husband was also ideologically left-leaning.

F. R. Scott was a co-founder of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), the forerunner of the New Democratic Party (NDP). The Scotts’ circle of

close friends included Dr. Norman Bethune, who is revered today as a communist hero in the People’s Republic of China.

In an interview with the *Independent*, Owens, a Westmounter, said she hasn’t yet found a written source linking Marian Dale Scott to the events at Sir George Williams, although she’s working on it.

“It is something that I would obviously like to verify,” she said. “But it would be consistent with who she was.”

In her presentation on Scott, subtitled “A Studio of Her Own,” Owens argued that Marian Dale Scott struggled to establish

her identity while married to a man whose sterling reputation in Canadian legal and literary circles cast a shadow over her.

While acknowledging that the title of her lecture paid homage to Virginia Woolf’s extended essay *A Room of One’s Own*, which explored feminist ideals, Owens said she wasn’t able to establish for certain whether Scott ever read Woolf.

What is clear, though, according to Owens, as well as others who spoke up during the evening, was that throughout her career, Marian Dale Scott kept a studio that was off limits to anyone who wasn’t invited.

No one – not even her husband – was allowed in without her permission.

“You only got in there by invitation,” Owens said. “I think it was a way – and this is where Virginia Woolf comes in – of demonstrating to the world *I’m serious about what I do.*”

Throughout her long career, Marian Dale Scott was “on a lifelong adventure – she never stopped exploring,” Owens continued.

Her style ranged from precisely rendered industrial landscapes around the beginning, to abstracts with thick swirls of paint applied by hand towards the close of her life in 1993.

“Someone who’s seen a painting by Marian Scott from one decade may not even guess that a work from another period in her career is by the same artist,” said Owens. The city of Westmount owns two of Marian Dale Scott’s paintings from the 1960s.

Memories on Clarke

During question period, Susan Stromberg of Wood Ave. recalled encountering Marian Dale Scott at Scott’s home at 451 Clarke Ave. during the 1980s.

continued on p. 16

Normal edition continues
on p.11, after GG-4



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Victoria Ave. on December 1.

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Lanyi spins, to dance and give

From left, Cory Garfinkle, event manager of the Just for Kids Foundation, and Westmounters and Dancing with the Stars supporters Ines Linares (past participant), Arabella Decker (creative director), Susan Lanyi (2020 participant) and Amanda Eaman (past participant).

PHOTO COURTESY OF S. LANYI.

Westmounter and 2020 Dancing with the Stars participant Susan Lanyi hosted a “spinning” fundraiser in conjunction with B.Cycle in Alexis Nihon on November 24. Her goal is to raise \$10,000, of which \$2,350 was raised at this fundraiser.

The dancing event, co-chaired by Westmounters Arabella Decker and Allyson

Kassie, takes place on February 3 at the Windsor ballroom and benefits the Just for Kids Foundation, which raises funds to purchase high-priority medical equipment and to support initiatives that improve the quality of care for patients of the Montreal Children’s Hospital.

From left, Arabella Decker; Yan Pellerin, instructor at B.Cycle; Susan Lanyi and Westmounter Tina Leber, co-owner of B.Cycle.

T'is the season, for buying trees



Christmas trees are for sale at the Metro grocery store on Victoria (top), as seen on November 24, and at 5 Saisons on Greene, as seen on November 28.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.



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St. Matthias Christmas bazaar raises funds for the needy

By Martin C. Barry

Bargain seekers got a jump start on the upcoming holiday season on November 23 when organizers and volunteers at St. Matthias’ Anglican Church on Côte St. Antoine Rd. held their annual Christmas bazaar.

“We have linens, we have attic treasures, jams, jellies, baked goods, plum puddings,” said St. Matthias people’s warden Heather Barwick, who has coordinated the bazaar for the past five years.

Some real and unique bargains were available to any takers, including a large handcrafted dollhouse complete with furniture and tiny accessories, which sold for \$50.

One generous patron had just bought up the entire contents of the bazaar’s “bottle table” – including jars of vinegar, olives, wine and other products – just before the *Independent* arrived during the early afternoon.

“At \$5 a bottle, they probably decided it was worth buying up the whole lot,” Barwick said.

Tables were staffed by church regulars, as well as their friends and family members.

The noon-hour lunch was very popular and seating was at a premium.



Seen here seated an enjoying lunch during St. Matthias’ Anglican Church’s annual Christmas bazaar on November 23 are, from left, Anne Baxter, Brian Davies, Francie Montgomery and Stephen Quinn. Serving table in reindeer gear is volunteer Christina Johnson.

According to Barwick, proceeds from the day’s sales would be divided between St. Matthias’ Church’s needs, as well as a

number of charitable organizations. They included Chez Doris, Auberge Madeleine, the Manna Food Bank and St.

Michael’s Mission. St. Matthias also holds two rummage sales each year.



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Agglo, cont'd. from p. 1

cent.

While the total overall share for the 15 demerged municipalities is reported to be up in the area of some 2.1 percent, some of the *quotes-parts* are above, others below.

These municipalities pay Montreal for what they claim is really more than their share of an array of island-wide services and over which they have no say. These include police, fire, transit, water supply and purification as well as a portion allocated to them for specific projects and costs related to the downtown area designated “centre ville.”

Not expected to change

While Westmount's new *quote-part* was provided in the city of Montreal's draft budget tabled November 25, it is unlikely to change in the final budget to be adopted

Friday, December 13, Mayor Smith said.

This will follow two weeks of on-going scrutiny by the Montreal/agglo Finance and Administration committee, of which she is a representative of the Association of Suburban Municipalities. This will involve much of her time until the budget is approved, she said.

It is part of the budget process once referred to by former mayor Peter Trent as “a charade” (see story October 4, 2016, p. 3).

While the current Montreal administration is being “more open,” Smith said, in informing the demerged municipalities in advance of tabling the budget that had already been prepared by Montreal, there is little consultation with the suburbs. “It hasn't changed anything because it's the formula from Quebec based on property valuation that needs to be changed.”

Westmount's aggro share comparisons*

	2020	2019	\$ increase	% increase
General & specific projects	\$58,685,300	\$57,234,363	\$1,450,937	2.5
Contribution to centre-ville	1,189,600	1,130,400	59,200	5.2
Total aggro	\$59,874,900	\$58,364,763	\$1,510,137	2.6

*Source: City of Westmount



Sherbrooke at Lansdowne, left, and Greene, on November 28.



PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

Impaired, cont'd. from p. 1

medical attention.

The officer called for police and Urgences Santé, and then moved the patrol vehicle in front of the car to block a sudden departure should the driver awaken.

After police arrived, the driver was woken up and arrested. He was believed to be around 45 years of age.

Second one on Sherbrooke

Within an hour, at 2:14 am, and further east at Greene, an officer heading west noticed a car stopped at the light but, once

again, failing to move when it turned green. The driver's head was slumped forward, the car was in drive and he was described as shoeless.

The public safety officer flagged down a police car on the way to another call and the “sleeping” driver was arrested. He was charged with driving under the influence and also with being in possession of drugs related to pills in plastic bags on the seat next to him.

“This was a good job of patrolling overnight,” said Public Security director Greg McBain of both incidents.

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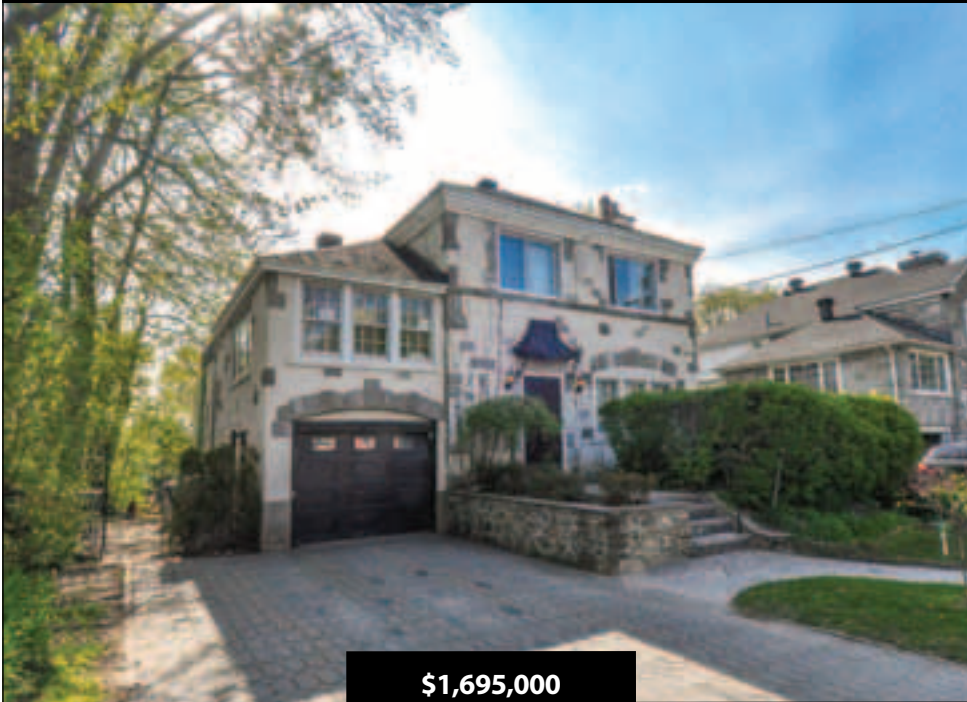
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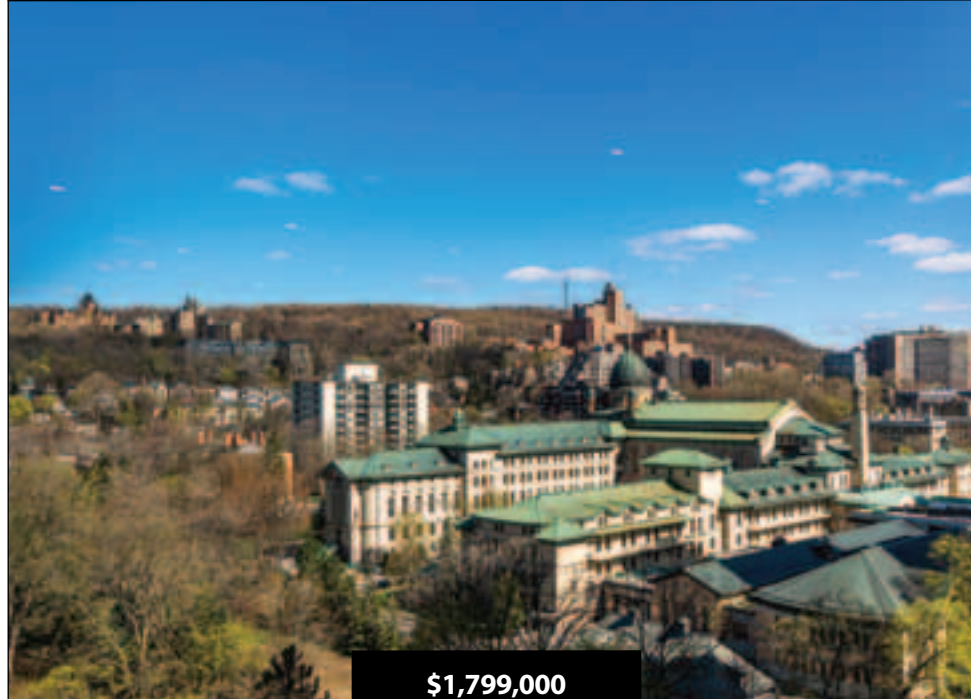


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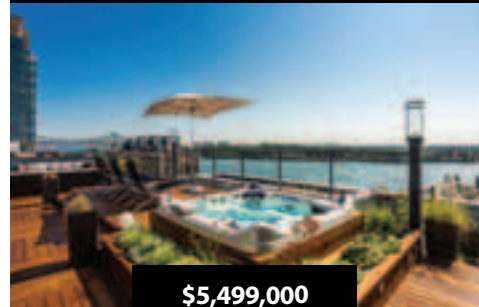
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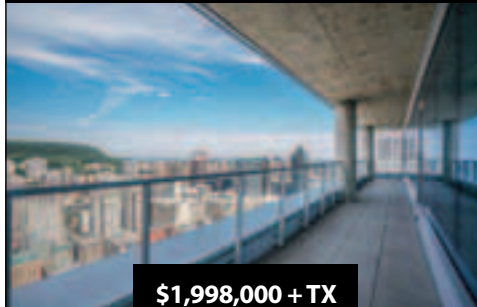
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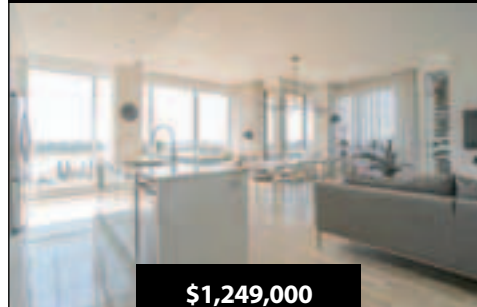
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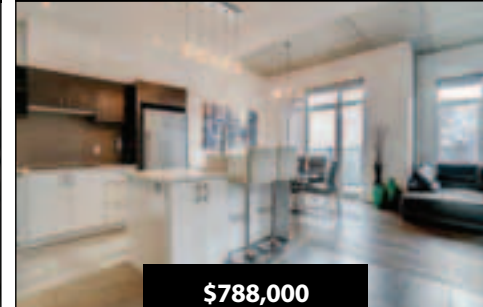
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Safdie’s *Colour Blind* at Infinithéâtre

Former Westmounter Oren Safdie’s play *Colour Blind* is being read on December 7 for Infinithéâtre’s Pipeline at the Rialto. The play is about an ultra-Orthodox Jewish woman whose abusive husband refuses to grant her a religious divorce.

According to the group’s press release, “she must choose between her freedom and her faith – that is until a ‘gangster’ rabbi offers his services to help ‘change her husband’s mind.’”

In the same release, Safdie says: “*Colour Blind* ... deals with issues of racial identity



Oren Safdie.
PHOTO COURTESY OF JANIS KIRSHNER
FOR INFINITHÉÂTRE.

that have recently flared up in the United States and Canada. ... As we saw recently with Robert Lepage [the author of *SLAV*, which was cancelled after complaints and protests about white actors singing the songs of black people], there are those who would disapprove of any-

one addressing issues in a culture other than their own.

“I actually believe there can be value in getting an outsider’s point of view. If done properly.

“If not, let the writer pay the price. But it’s important to remember that it’s called ‘play-writing’ for a reason. If writers are restricted from imagining, society will pay the price.”

Assembly line demolition



Debris was being removed from the basement of this building on Claremont near Somerville on November 22 using a rolling carpet device more often seen for mining or factory work. The building is in NDG, but the street is in Westmount – and subject to Westmount’s parking rules.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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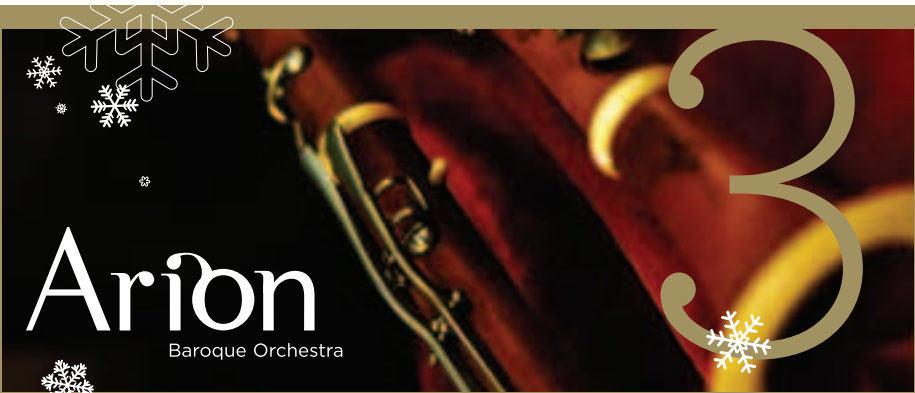
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PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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‘Way of giving back’ Handknits go fast at Manoir Westmount Christmas bazaar

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Hand-knit hats, scarves and sweaters were some of the more popular items for sale during a pre-Christmas bazaar held at the Manoir Westmount seniors’ retirement residence on November 27.

The Christmas bazaar has been an annual tradition at Manoir Westmount almost since the residence first opened in 1979, according to Manoir Westmount leisure supervisor Simona Buth.

“All of the residents get involved in

some capacity,” she said. “All of the money goes to local charities. We don’t keep anything. It’s the residents’ way of giving back to the community.”

On average, Manoir Westmount’s Christmas bazaar raises up to \$4,000 for charities, she added.

Besides knitwear, there was also jewelry, baked goods made by Manoir Westmount staff, as well as donated merchandise to be raffled off, including several household plants.

See photo next page.

Retail Review addendum: Kwai

By VERONICA REDGRAVE

Antonio Park has opened a new space in Westmount. Hooray! Like a phoenix, his former Lavanderia restaurant has risen: it is now Kwai.

Offering Thai food, Kwai is open for lunch and dinner, except Mondays. Week-

ends have brunch. Trust this fabulous – and famous – foodie, to open with such a perfect menu. The sensual scent of spices when one walks in the door are mouth-watering. No more bland tuna sandwiches for lunch at my desk.

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Seen here at the knitwear table during Manoir Westmount's Christmas bazaar are, from left, Rachel Levy, Pauline Tylko, Poh Tan, Christine Charlton and Irene Peritz.

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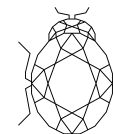
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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Centaur's 'Party in Paradise' a heavenly hit



Eda Holmes, Michael Baratta and Anna Giampà.



Cookie Rossy and Susan Dizgun.

The Centaur Theatre's Party in Paradise event was, well, heavenly. The theme was tied to the Centaur's upcoming modern take on *Paradise Lost*.

Local res **Roberto Menegati's** diabolical designs included an underworld speak-easy, vines dripping from every column, and "raffle apples."

All were recyclable – made of paper – as were the finely-cut white butterflies forming a gateway and wall installation.

The stage backdrop of gorgeous celestial wings was created by artist **Daniel Barkley**. Guests arrived via a green (not red) carpet to enjoy gourmet decadence by LiOLà, whose lobster ravioli (amazing!) and Quebec lamb were topped by divine desserts by Brasserie 701.



Vincent Prager and Robert Menegati.

Guests signed up for "Temptation," a private performance about good and evil performed by **Nadia Verruci**, as well as a visit to Satan's Speakeasy, a basement lair brimming with red devil cocktails prepared by Centaur head prop guy **Normand Hamel** and **Rick Brown**.

Co-chairs of the innovative night were **Michael Baratta**, Centaur board chair, partner, KPMG LLP, and **Anna Giampà**, chair of the gala committee and Centaur board member, attending with her husband, **Matteo Fiorilli** of LiOLà.

They were ably assisted by committee members **Elisa Desoer**, **Toni Bessner**, **Susan Da Sie**, **Haleema Mini**, **Vincent Prager**, **Charlene Todaschuk** and **Silvia Galeone**.

The evening was hosted by **Eda**

Holmes, Centaur's artistic/executive director, there with husband **Tim Southam**. Media celebs supporting the cause were CTV's **Lori Graham**, Treasure Chest ambassador, and **Aaron Rand**, of CJAD's *The Aaron Rand Show*. Rand's renowned wit

drove the amusing auction for chef-tenor **Davide Bazzali**.

The evening's honorees were former Centaur board chairs **Fergus Keyes**, attending with wife **Peggie Hopkins**, and **Hartland Pater-** continued on p. 22

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Peter and Susan Varadi, and Magdy and Monica Mekhael.



Cutting down, trimming trees



Private and public entities were at work late last month taking down and trimming trees. According to Westmount director general Benoit Hurtubise and his office, these private trees at St. Catherine near Irvine (left) and behind Westmount Park Church (centre) were cut down and trimmed, respectively, by their owners, as seen on November 21. This tree, right, at Claremont near Somerville was cut down by the city, as seen on November 22.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

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Overheard

In a loud voice: “Mucho grande! Los perros de Espana! [Very large! The dogs of Spain!]”
– Walker of four dogs to his dogs, Westmount Park dog run, November 28, 11:15 am. The *Independent* did not enquire if the dogs were indeed from Spain.

Two Social Notes this issue

Centaur’s ‘Party in Paradise,’ p. 15
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts’ ball, p. 20

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WHA, cont’d. from p. 10

Stromberg would go to interview F. R. Scott for her master’s thesis on Canadian poet Louis Dudek (which would eventually be published as Dudek’s official biography).
“One day, I turned around and in the room across the hall was Marian Scott – thin and frail – tiny I would describe her – painting, quiet,” said Stromberg.
“I never knew she was there any time I ever went to see Frank,” she added, noting that the studio door was left only slightly ajar. “But she was there and she was painting in that room. And she was teeny tiny and quiet.”

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Westmount A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Dragonne is such a kindhearted and elegant German shepherd, she should be lounging on a comfy sofa and looking forward for her walkies around the block.

Yet, by no fault of her own, she is at the Montreal SPCA in the kennel and she needs a home as soon as possible. She is a healthy and affectionate senior doggie at 13 years of age, and it would be a kindness to choose her and not a puppy.

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Regal Dragonne

In memory of an older dog that was beloved and is no longer with us, please give Dragonne the family, the love, the dog bowls and the dog bed that have been waiting.

Dragonne's reference number at the Montreal SPCA is 431432208 and the shelter is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. They are open seven days a week, weekdays from 12 noon to 8 pm and weekends from 11 am to 5 pm. Their telephone number is 514.735.2711 for more information.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



Hercule – the cat, not the detective



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Hercule is quite the character, a most memorable white-mustache dandy with a twinkle in his golden eyes. He reminds me of detective Hercule Poirot of the Agatha Christie novels, with his upturned mustache, formal white shirt and white-shoed feet ...

Hercule has hints of the Belgian sleuth's style and more of the classic hefty British shorthair with an easygoing disposition. As he was found abandoned and brought to the veterinary clinic for care and boarding, he is forgetting his sad period of survival and now enjoying a restful period of boarding at the clinic after receiving all his vetting (inoculations, treatments, neutered). He is bonding quite well, having developed a fondness for a veterinarian and being most interested in meeting dogs, so we hope and expect that he will easily transfer all this affection and playfulness



to a family environment.

If you would like more information on Hercule, please do not hesitate to contact the reception staff at the Hôpital Vétérinaire Général MB at 514.935.1888 for an update and to make an appointment to visit. The clinic is located at 3400 St. Antoine St., corner Greene Ave., and it is open seven days a week.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

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July transfers: Volume down, prices up



Real Estate
ANDY DODGE

Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in July 2019, gleaned from non-city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 19.

Five house sales over \$2 million in July helped pull up the average price of Westmount real estate to \$1,918,627 from \$1,686,761 in June, though the number of sales dropped from 19 in June to 13 in July. The highest price was slightly over \$3 million for 425 Roslyn Ave., just north of Sherbrooke St., and the other four were much lower in the \$2-million range, below which prices went down to \$1,055,000 for a row-house in need of renovation at 24 Springfield Ave.

As it turns out, the latter sale represented the biggest mark-up of the month, since it was only evaluated at \$636,300, while the 425 Roslyn sale represented the lowest mark-up of the month, at 12.5 percent (note that the comparisons are still with the 2017 valuations, which remain in



425 Roslyn Ave.



24 Springfield Ave.



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effect until the beginning of 2020).

The 13 sales in July had an average mark-up of 40.5 percent, the highest in the past three years (February was 40.4 percent) and moved the average mark-up for the year so far to 33.1 percent, up from 26.6 percent for all of 2018. Thus it is clear that the hot market continued into the summer and shows no signs of letting up. There were 85 sales in the first seven months of 2019, just about the same as in 2018 but well below the average volume of 108 sales year-to-date in the past decade. The average house price during that time is \$2,049,583, while in 2018 the average was \$1,934,309. Prices have almost doubled since 2006 on an annualized basis.

Condos

Westmount's condominium market does not appear to have been quite as healthy, if the July figures are any indication. Only four condo sales were registered in July, with prices ranging from \$470,000 to \$890,000, two very low mark-ups including an apartment that the Bank of Montreal had seized a year ago and the other from an estate, but in fact the average mark-up of 23.7 percent is higher than for the previous three months, when 15 condos sold for an average 18.2 percent. So far this year, volume is way off in the condo market, a total of 26 compared to 43 in the first seven months of 2018, average price \$735,519 compared to \$1,079,087 last year.

Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in July 2019

ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2017 VAL	RATIO (%)
123 Aberdeen	Yves Colpron	\$1,968,650	\$1,559,500	26.24%
3275 Cedar	Nancy Ellen Maklan	\$2,300,000	\$1,525,100	50.81%
461 Clarke	Alexandre Sakiz	\$2,250,000	\$1,488,400	51.17%
115 Côte St. Antoine	Pierre Wilkie & Sylvie Trottier	\$2,590,000	\$1,705,500	51.86%
4475 de Maisonneuve	Manon Gagné	\$1,378,000	\$1,054,500	30.68%
532 Grosvenor	Andrew Paul Marriott & Cynthia Doris Grahame	\$1,385,000	\$876,200	58.07%
540 Grosvenor	Gordon & Paula Hensley	\$1,800,000	\$1,089,400	65.23%
639 Grosvenor	Vedat Verter	\$1,360,000	\$1,083,200	25.55%
493 Lansdowne	Sandra Page Botthoff Schlemm	\$2,361,000	\$1,680,000	40.54%
371 Metcalfe	Jacques Gaubil	\$1,930,000	\$1,290,200	49.59%
425 Roslyn	Isabelle Landry	\$3,059,500	\$2,719,400	12.51%
24 Springfield	Carol Leslie Garling	\$1,055,000	\$636,300	65.80%
4892 Westmount Ave.	Zhi Meng Zhu	\$1,505,000	\$1,039,600	44.77%
CONDOMINIUMS				
399 Clarke #6A	estate Yolande Boivin	\$653,000	\$594,600	9.82%
175 Metcalfe #308	Bank of Montreal	\$470,000	\$433,900	8.32%
3171 St. Antoine	Jin Young Park	\$486,500	\$359,900	35.18%
4175 St. Catherine # 306	Gary Paul Malunis & Elena Bergonzi	\$890,000	\$632,100	40.80%

Information published here was researched by columnist Andy Dodge.

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Social Notes
VERONICA REDGRAVE

After the worst of times, it was the best of times – with apologies to Charles Dickens. The whirling tree-felling winds ceased in time for the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) ball.

Once again, the annual gala – a veritable chronicle of cultural chic – was amazing. Themed “Harmonie,” the black-tie eve inaugurated the Stephan Crétier and Stéphanie Maillery Wing. Crétier is the founder and president of Gardaworld.

The new wing is devoted to the Arts of One World, an ensemble of works from the MMFA collection. World cultures are presented from an intercultural and trans-historical perspective.

Presented by RBC Royal Bank, the ball highlighted the exemplary philanthropy of the couple, the evening’s guests of honour.

Co-chairs were **Marc Parent**, CEO CAE, attending with **Isabelle Bégin**, and **Jean Raby**, CEO, Natixis Investment Managers.

Black was the new black in the stellar sold-out crowd. However, there were ways to stand out amidst the onyx: one satin gown was *continued on p. 21*

MMFA gala gorgeous!



Marc Parent, Isabelle Bégin; Stephan Crétier et Stéphanie Maillery, Jean Raby, Nathalie Bondil, Danielle Champagne and Michel de la Chenelière.

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MMFA, cont'd. from p. 20

brilliant emerald green and sequins sparkled on a Marilyn-Monroe-style body-hugging gown.

Julie Snyder flaunted her inner flamingo in ruffled pink. Others channeled Dolce & Gabbana-inspired fall florals. **Marcus Samuelsson's** snappy black velvet blazer popped with the irrepressible vibrancy of his colorful shirt. Chef at MARCUS Restaurant Four Seasons Hotel Montreal, he designed the gourmet meal prepared by the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth. The Four Seasons Hotel Montreal developer **Andrew Lufty** of Carbonleo was espied nearby, as was the Ritz-Carlton Hotel's CEO **Andrew Torriani** there with his wife **Arlene**.

Seen during the Taittinger-fuelled cocktail were Westmounters **Figi** and **Stuart Elman**, **Meryl** and **Sheldon Elman**, **Leslie MacDonald** and **Eric Klinkoff**, **Dominique Bertrand** and **Jacques Maurice**, and **Michaela Sheaf Penner** and **Michael Penner**.

Admiring the new wing were Quebec ministers **Nathalie Roy** (culture and communications) and **Pierre Fitzgibbon** (economy and innovation) attending with **Anne-Marie Bélanger**, as well as **Valérie Plante**, mayor of Montreal; **Cathy Wong**, chair of the Montreal municipal council; **Mélanie Charbonneau**, vp legal affairs and corporate secretary, Otéra, and **Yves Lalumière**,



Lesley MacDonald and Eric Klinkoff. Dominique Bertrand, Isabelle Marcoux and Jacques Maurice. Sheldon, Meryl, Figi and Stuart Ellman.

CEO, Tourisme Montréal.

Also noted were **Vanessa** and **Mark Mulrone**, **Jean-François Ouellette**, **Kent Monkman**, **Nathalie Roussin** and **Jean-François Mathieu**, **Scott Yetman** and **Jean-Michel Lavoie**, **Emmanuelle Duperré** and **Daniel Lamarre**, **Serge Sassville** and **Banafche Hejazi**, **Pascale Bourbeau** and **Pierre Karl Péladeau**, **Isabelle Marcoux** and **François Olivier**, and the MMFA's director general and chief curator **Nathalie Bondil**, president **Michel de la Chene-**

lière, the Foundation's chair **Sylvie Demers**, and director general **Danielle Champagne**, and the musée's PR guru **Maude Béland**.

Gala steering committee members were **Jessica Chen**, **Habi Gerba**, **Jennifer Nguyen** and **Michaela Sheaf Penner**. The fun night included an after-party where the Young Philanthropists Circle (aged 25-40) joined the black-tie crowd on the dance floor until 3 am.

The fabulous eve raised \$1.6 million, net.



Pascale Bourbeau and Pierre Karl Péladeau.



Michael Penner and Michaela Sheaf Penner.



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Centaur, *cont'd. from p. 15*
son, former executive vp SNC-Lavalin, attending with wife **Beth Noel**.
Noted enjoying the spirited eve were **Anne-Marie Jean**, CEO, Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec; **Elsa Bolam**, wife of Centaur's founder **Maurice Podbrey**; **Jim Haiman**, senior vp KPMG LLP, and his wife **Thao Phan**; **Martin R. Landry**, CCO

VIA Rail Canada, with **Claudia Subiabre**; **Leesa Steinberg**, philanthropist; **Marie-Chantal Savard** of Air Canada; and **Hany Tawfik**, director – Investment Banking, TD Securities.
Westmounters noted included **Meryl** and **Sheldon Elman**, Medisys; **Susan Teicher Varadi** and **Peter Varadi**, owner Groupe Canvar, a patron along with **Susan**

Dizgun, **Cookie Rossy** (The Rossy Foundation) and **Eric Lauzon**, manager community partnerships, Air Canada.
Also espied were Champions Camp co-director **Jessica Roszler**, and **Monica** and **Magdy Mekhael**. The novel night ended with dancing under a disco mirror ball. Take that Studio 54! The entertaining eve raised \$60,000.



Aaron Rand "auctioning off" Davide Bazzali.



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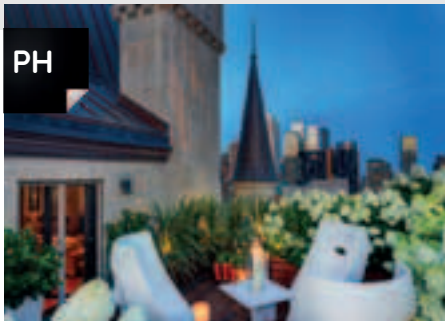


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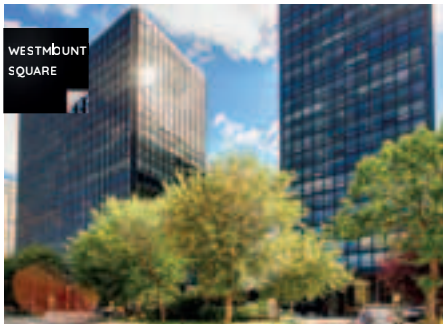


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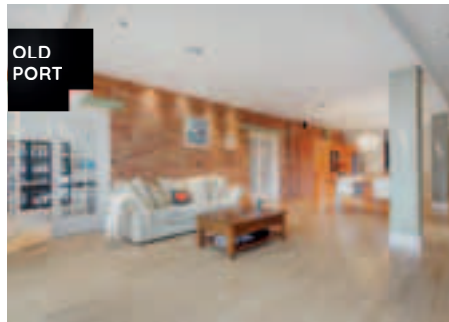


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