

Turcot work to close public access to Public Works yard

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The KPH-Turcot consortium building the new Highway 136 at the foot of Westmount will be moving workers and machinery into the city's Public Works yard "tentatively" in mid-March, city director general Benoit Hurtubise announced last week. This will close off public access to the area for an unknown number of months.

"I wouldn't say a year but several months," he said. "We don't know how long."

The work involves rebuilding and pinning up the retaining wall to the new high-

way and is presenting untold challenges to the Public Works operations, he said.

Information is hard to obtain from the consortium, but at least one of the garages will be difficult to access. The city has work to do around the gas tanks and space for employees on the parking lot will be reduced.

The area will also be "completely off limits" to residents and contractors using the usual containers along the retaining wall for dropping off recyclables, branches and dumping other material. "It's a matter of safety," Hurtubise said.

As a result, people will be directed to use the two nearest eco-centres in Côte des Neiges and LaSalle.

He said the city would find another location for its distribution of spring compost to residents.

One of the main chal-

Astronaut Thirsk visits Roslyn



Former Canadian astronaut Robert Thirsk enthralled students at Roslyn School on February 28 with anecdotes about the space missions he took part in. See p. 6 for story. PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY.

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Former bank processing centre at 1100 Atwater/4010 Tupper  
Public to hear SCAOPI zoning request for added retail use

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A public meeting of the city's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) is set for Tuesday, March 12 to hear a request for non-conforming zoning changes to the large seven-storey office building undergoing transformation at 1100 Atwater. It takes place at 8:30 am at city hall.

This is the building on the west side of

Atwater bordering Tupper, Dorchester and the city's Tupper parking lots that was occupied for many years as a bank data and processing centre and known by its other address of 4010 Tupper, south of the former Reddy Memorial Hospital and the Atwater Library.

The building, which has vested rights for office-type commercial use in the residential zone

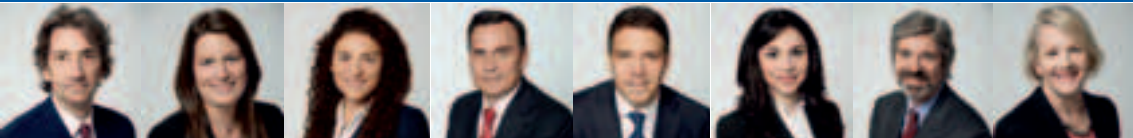


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## Websites, branding of commercial districts

# Steps to improve viability moving into high gear

Letters and photos  
to the editor, p. 6

Dodge on real estate, p. 17

Classifieds, p. 22

Social Notes (JDRF), p. 24

Comin' Up, p. 26

St. Catherine  
zoning meeting, p. 18

meeting February 4 especially in light of recent closings of the North Face and Swiss Chocolatier boutiques adding to others still vacant after many months including the former Gascogne and Pier I.

Denis Biro of Burton told council members that “no matter how we build up the area, we still have a problem,” if high rents continue at buildings owned by the same company. He suggested a strategy such as Vancouver’s vacancy tax.



Greene Ave. and Victoria street signs on March 1.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Pop-up stores and improvements in vacancy rates on Greene Ave. continue while concerns are switching to Victoria village as the city and merchant associations work to develop websites, branding and street “totems” in the coming months, Councilor Cynthia Lulham said last week.

“The websites will include pages for locations for rent,” she explained following a presentation on efforts to stimulate economic activity to the general committee of council meeting February 18. The city is providing someone to help with the websites.

Mayor Christina Smith also told the *Independent* after the meeting that an “entrepreneurial night” would take place later in the spring to examine how the city might provide further help to the commercial districts. “It’s a tough market and rents are high.”

“The vacancies, especially along Sherbrooke, are a concern and we’re looking at different strategies,” explained Lulham,

urban planning commissioner for zoning, economic development and parks. “Last year, the major concern was the vacancy issue on Greene, but this has been improving.”

The city is “moving forward” with the creation of destination shopping in conjunction with PME Montreal, she said. This is a network of experts in financing and planning that supports entrepreneurs and businesses, and receives financial support from the agglomeration of Montreal.

Lulham also said she was planning to meet in a couple of weeks with Pierre Boudreault of Artères, the city’s consultant on the economic development to discuss the street totems. These are markers to designate commercial districts as shopping destinations.

The city’s 2019 budgets have allocated some \$200,000 to help with the districts’ economic development and another \$17,500 toward promotional branding (see story November 20, p. 5).

The issue of empty store fronts along Sherbrooke was raised at the city council



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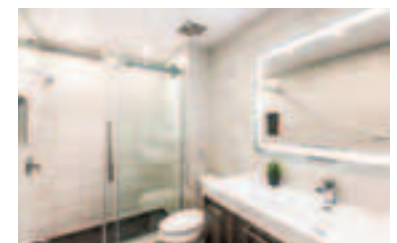
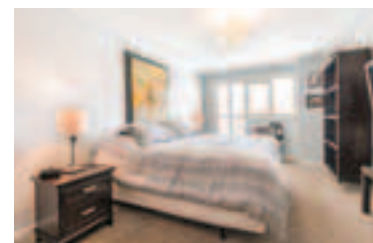
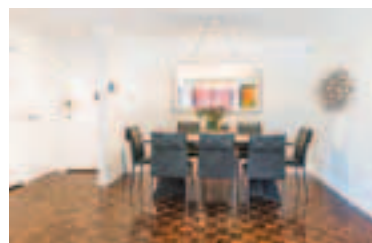
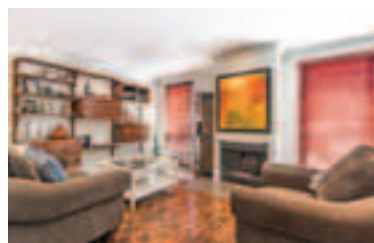


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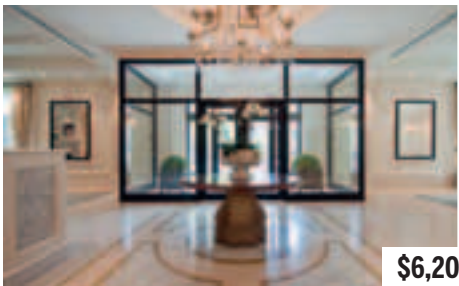
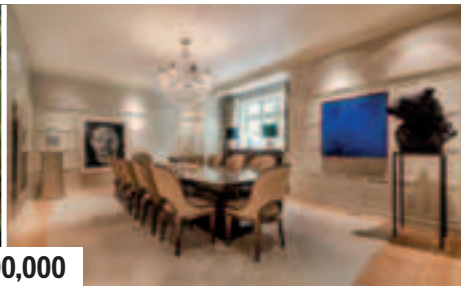
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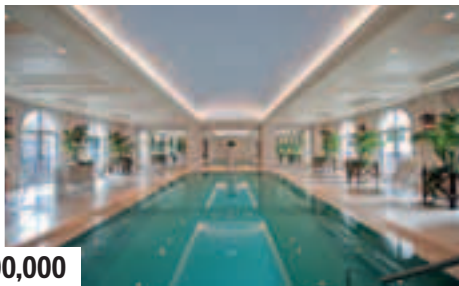
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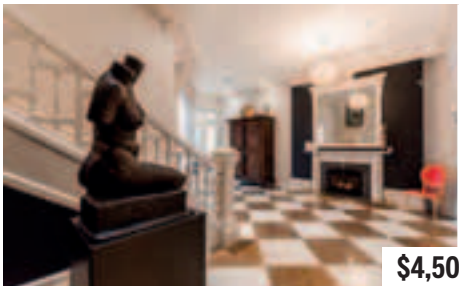
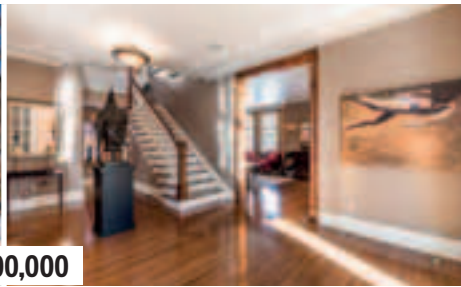
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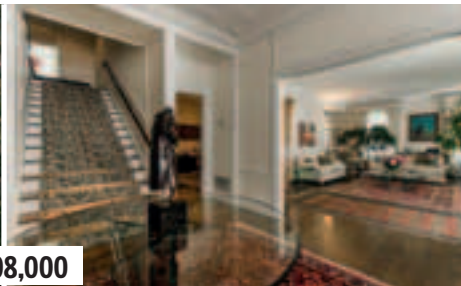
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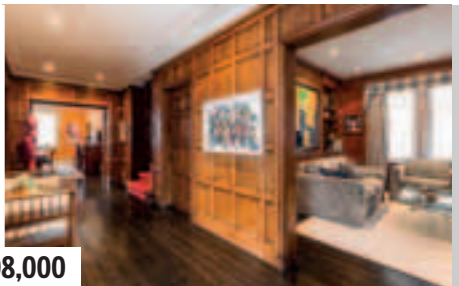
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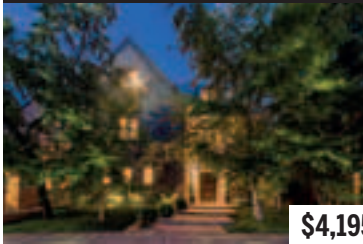


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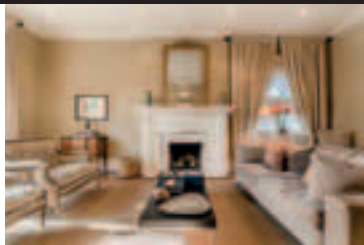


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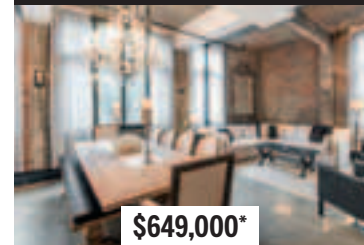
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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING INCREASES TOTAL CHARITY DOLLARS

In reply to editor David Price's note in the Feb. 26 edition (p. 7), I am not "anti Vélo Quebec." I am simply pro charity.

While the cost of staging the event is relatively low to the individual taxpayers of Westmount, I see this as a matter of principle and *quid pro quo*.

Quebec is #64 of 64 provinces, states and territories for charitable giving in Canada and the USA.

Why should Vélo Quebec have optional fundraising, as do pretty much all major athletic events? Why not?

Decades ago, the NYC Marathon told both Vélo Quebec and myself that having an optional charity component was a "win-win." It gave the marathon more prestige than it already had. It gave the sponsors greater benefit, as not only were they sponsoring a major event, but one that helped humanity; and, for those who raised money, it gave greater meaning to their lives.

David Price asked: "Why bother Mayor Smith about this matter?"

As a charity activist, my job is to put Vélo Quebec's self-serving behaviour under a microscope. By "microscope," I mean media attention. If Westmount passed a motion to defund Vélo Quebec until they added on an optional fundraising component, media would cover it!

Mr. Price asked how charity would increase if this were done. That is easy. Peer-to-peer fundraising is very likely the most efficient form of fundraising. The more

personal the request is, the greater the chance is of acquiring a donation. If Mr. Price's five largest advertisers were to meet with him and ask him for a donation, would he contribute?

If they didn't each do the above, and the same charities sent Mr. Price a mailing out of the blue, would he donate, or toss the mailing in the garbage? Leverage works wonders!

I just looked at the website of the NYC Marathon. In 1991, I suggested that they welcome their participants to consider raising funds for any of an infinite number of charities. It took them 21 years before they did. They raised \$27 million for charities that year, a significant increase over the previous year.

I have asked the mayor of New York City to challenge Mayor Valérie Plante. The NYC equivalent of Le Tour de L'Île de Montréal raised \$1 million in 2018. They have 30,000 cyclists, while the events of Vélo Quebec apparently have 50,000 riders.

If all goes well, Mayor Blasio will challenge Montreal's 50,000 cyclists to raise more than NYC's 30,000. Quite frankly, I doubt that Montreal's 50,000 would even raise \$100,000!

MURRAY LEVINE, DORVAL

### Correction

In the list of building permit approvals for February (February 26, p. 17), the listing for 4018 Sherbrooke was wrongly identified as "at the former location of La Canadienne," which in fact was next door at 4920 Sherbrooke.



## Roslyn students learn about space from astronaut Thirsk

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

What do astronauts eat on the International Space Station? And what's it like to experience "g-force" during a space mission launch?

A group of students at Roslyn School got the answers to these and similar questions when former Canadian astronaut Robert Thirsk paid them a visit on February 28.

At the same time, they were also able to take part in a Facebook Live announcement of the Lunar Gateway, a major federal government space project that will see Canadians travelling to the Moon.

Although originally from British Columbia, Thirsk is no stranger to Montreal, having studied medicine at McGill University before becoming a resident physician at the former Queen Elizabeth Hospital in NDG.

It was around that time in 1983, according to his biography posted on the Canadian Space Agency's website, that Thirsk was selected to join the nascent Canadian astronaut program.

He was a crew member on three space missions. In 2008, he spent more than six months in space on the International Space Station as a member of the crew of Expedition 20/21, which was a long-duration mission.

Explaining to the Roslyn students what it was like to go through a space launch, Thirsk said the gravitational force felt like "three people sitting on my chest" and that it became difficult to breathe.

Among other things, he also told the students that he ended up liking space so much he turned down an opportunity to become director of Canada's astronaut program so that he could return.

Thirsk showed the students samples

he'd brought along of freeze-dried and packaged foods typically consumed by astronauts while they are aboard the International Space Station. They included chili made with bison meat, as well as seafood gumbo – the latter being one of his favourites.

There were also vacuum-packed maple leaf cookies as well as M & M candies. "Aboard the space station, there's no fridge, no freezer, there's no washing machine, there's no dryer," Thirsk said, noting that what they eat resembles what campers often take along on treks into the wilderness here on earth.

During the Facebook Live segment hosted by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau with Transport minister and NDG-Westmount MP Marc Garneau at his side, Trudeau explained that the Lunar Gateway will be a Moon outpost that will provide living space for astronauts, a docking station for visiting spacecraft and laboratories for research.

Canada will be developing and contributing a robotic arm system – Canadarm3 – which will repair and maintain the Lunar Gateway. According to a statement from Trudeau's office, the Lunar Gateway will be the cornerstone of Canada's future space strategy. Ottawa plans to allot \$2.05 billion over 24 years for the program.

Trudeau also announced the launch of a junior astronaut recruitment program, which begins this fall. The government is hoping that the initiative will inspire a new generation of astronauts, while encouraging young Canadians to consider careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Top-scoring program participants will be offered the opportunity to train with astronauts at Canadian Space Agency headquarters.

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### Editor

David Price: 514.935.4537  
david.price@westmountindependent.com

### Chief reporter

Laureen Sweeney

### Graphics

Ted Sancton

### Advertising sales

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# Two 'long weekends' of Turcot work coming, first one: Mar. 15-17

BY DAVID PRICE

Demolition work on the Turcot interchange will close important highways in or near Westmount for two “long weekends” this spring. There will be one shut-down in March and one in April, attendees at the Turcot Bon Voisinage committee meeting were told February 26. The meeting took place at the St. Raymond community centre in southeastern NDG.

The provincial ministry of Transport subsequently announced, on March 1, that March 15-17 were the dates of the first such weekend. Autoroute 15 south at the Turcot interchange, the exit from the eastbound 20 to northbound 15 and the exits from the northbound and southbound 15 to westbound 20 will be closed, starting Thursday night, March 14 until Monday morning, March 18.

Panellists from the MTQ and the KPH-Turcot construction consortium compared the upcoming ones to the shutdowns over the November 9-13, 2018 “long weekend.” The work is to destroy the old, raised 15 South/Decarie expressway under and south of the St. Jacques bridge.

No audience member from Westmount took to the mic at the meeting, at which audience members roughly equalled the

15-member panel.

Two Westmount citizen-members of the committee, Mike Mossop and Brigitte Stock, asked questions about a possible sound barrier for Westmounters. It is not in the current plans, and is the subject of litigation and negotiation (see “MTQ could fund 100% of highway sound barrier from Greene to Glen,” October 2, 2018, p. 1).

The MTQ’s Sandra Sultana told Mossop that it is not feasible, at any time, to install a sound barrier on the north side of the highway such as the ones that will be on the south side of the east and west lanes of the new highway 136 (formerly called the 720). There will be follow-up sound testing in 2021, however, to make sure that the situation is not worse than it was before the new highway.

Sultana told Stock that, in the event the city of Westmount and the MTQ agree to a barrier, its look would be subject to public input. Panellists had shown pictures of the planned barriers for St. Henri, which were a mix of opaque and transparent design.

Mossop also asked for resident input on the eventual re-birth of Selby Park near Greene and St. Antoine St., underlining that it now has a western portion due to the expropriation and destruction of a residential building by the MTQ at Selby St., which has since been permanently closed, and Greene Ave.

## NDG, MoWest issues

NDG residents asked questions about snow clearance on the sidewalk of the Upper Lachine bridge over the Decarie expressway, the configuration of the St. Jacques bridge and the St. Jacques/Girouard intersection, and policing the five-way intersection at Decarie and de Maisonneuve.

The St. Jacques bridge over the Decarie has been partially open since December (two lanes westbound, one lane eastbound,

## Public Works yard, cont'd. from p. 1

lenges for the city is the lack of information it is receiving because the Turcot work is proceeding in a “design-build” approach. This means that work and planning take place as the consortium requires. “When they move along, they move along,” Hurtubise explained.

“We’ve been warned for some time about the work, however. They had approached us to have a work servitude and there’s been a lot of discussion with Legal



Greene Ave. at the CP railway tracks on March 1, St. David’s Day. It is the most prominent and uninterrupted part of the Turcot project in Westmount, although the work affects traffic throughout the city. Provincial ministry of Transport spokesman Martin Girard informed the Independent by email the previous day that, at the request of the city of Westmount, the street will remain closed to vehicles at that point until the opening of the 136 westbound at the end of 2019. It is currently open to pedestrians (inset).

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

north-side sidewalk) and is scheduled to be fully open in June of this year.

A Montreal West resident took to the mic to bemoan the loss of the CN rail tunnel in the Brock South area, a perennial theme of his neighbours and him. Citizen-member for Montreal West Suzanne Barwick read out a letter to the provincial minister of Transport on the same theme, which she will be sending soon.

Westmount city councillors Cynthia Lulham and Kathleen Kez were in attendance, as was city employee Jonathan Auger, but they did not speak. The meeting was in a mix of French and English, with moderator Pierre Guillot-Hurtubise of National Public Relations translating any English into French, as per MTQ practice.

*The next meeting of the Bon Voisinage committee will be at Victoria Hall on Wednesday, April 24 at 7 pm.*

Services.”

Access to employees working at city offices in the yard such as Public Works, IT and purchasing will continue.

The good news is that at the end of the work, Hurtubise said, “it looks like we’ll be recuperating more land than originally thought.” Because of the new highway, the city has already lost some of its land used by Hydro Westmount for the storage of transformers under the old Ville Marie expressway (see story February 3, 2015, p. 7).

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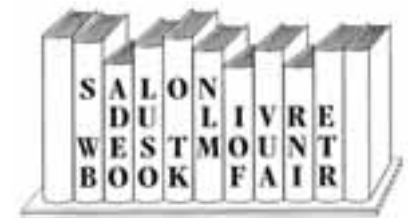
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# Fruit falls in February



Most people associate falling fruit with autumn, but some Westmount fruit trees were dropping their bounty last week, including a tree in an alley near Prince Albert and York (left) and a tree in the “Shakespeare in the Park” glade of Westmount Park, which attracted a hungry squirrel (centre). The falling fruit also seems to have enticed the first squirrel and a companion into the tree (right), which has presumably been possible for months.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

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**SCAOPI, cont'd. from p. 1**

(R6-24-08), is now applying for additional retail use and related activities at the ground and first-storey levels and to formalize the acquired office rights.

It also seeks the right to post signs on the Atwater and Tupper facades and at the corner as well as to reduce the required minimum of basement parking spaces to 47 from 192. The property's adjacent commercial parking structure provides another 166.

"Adding retail to the permitted uses allows the building more options, broader flexibility," according to city Urban Planning director Tom Flies.

It is also directly across Atwater from the former site of the Montreal Children's Hospital and the 38-storey multi-use tower to be built there at 1111 Atwater (see story February 26, p. 1).

The public PAC meeting is the latest in what one might call a string of proposals being submitted under the city's by-law for zoning variances known as SCAOPI or PPCMOI, English and French acronyms for "specific construction, alteration or occupancy proposal for an immovable."

**Permit issued in 2017**

According to documents from Kevric developments opened to the public February 26, a building permit had been acquired November 27, 2017 allowing for the building's conversion into "high-end" offices and repairs to the property's adjacent six-level commercial parking structure (four floors are underground).

They have been under extensive renovation ever since, as previously reported, and at a total declared cost of some \$15 mil-



Renderings of 1100 Atwater Ave. from the owner's SCAOPI zoning application with the city of Westmount, looking down Tupper (above, at right) and Dorchester (below, at left). SOURCE: WESTMOUNT WEBSITE.

lion on the permit.

The developer's application and plans can be viewed in French in a file at the Urban Planning department or on the city website under Resident Zone/Urban Planning/SCAOPI.

**Benefits offered**

Benefits of the project are described as turning the building's bunker-like appearance into a more "inviting" one having many large windows, a lowered entry at street level with landscaping, a small plaza and a park area, all to provide greater walkability and public appeal.

The aim is stated as incorporating the building into the "dynamic" area of St.

Catherine St., and to fit into the city's planning vision for the southeast sector.

Seeking certification by LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), the project, documents state, will reduce the building's vehicle traffic in the residential sector on Dorchester by landscaping over the vehicle entry ramp there and funneling circulation to Tupper St. Reducing parking would also encourage use of the nearby Metro station.

Constructed in 1975, the building was sold by Oxford Properties in 2017 to Kevric developments. It had been in operation 24 hours a day by the Royal Bank call centre and the Symcor cheque processing centre (see story May 31, 2016, p. 3).



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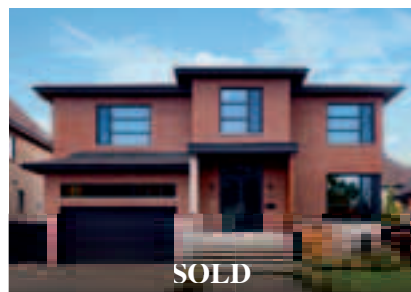
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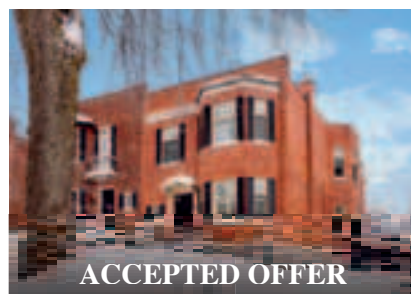
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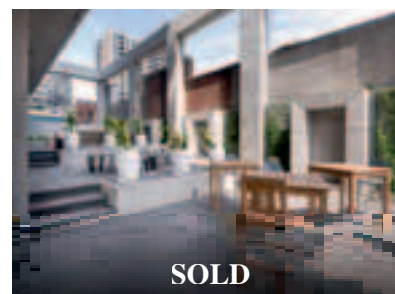
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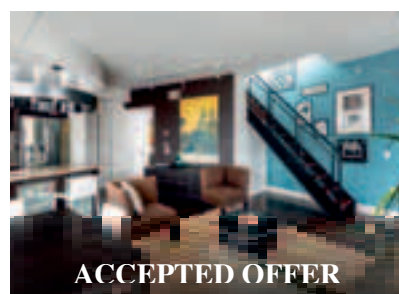
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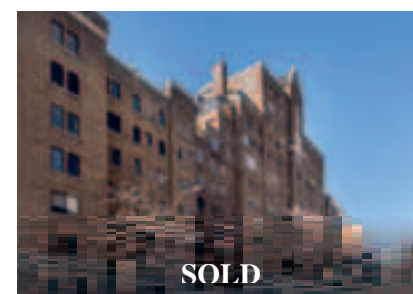
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Historical association lecture

# ‘The Local News’ in Westmount: many publications, many decades

By RALPH THOMPSON

The Westmount Historical Association (WHA) held its first winter/spring lecture on February 22 at the Westmount Public Library. The evening’s theme was “The Local News” as presented by Don Sancton, whose father took over management of the *Westmount Examiner* in 1957 and who became its editor in the late 1980s, and David Price, the current editor of the *Westmount Independent*.

Sancton summed up what he felt made a good community newspaper with the slogan his father had placed under the *Examiner* nameplate more than 50 years ago: “Making not just your house but all of Westmount your home.”

Decades prior, a local newspaper, *The Westmount News*, had come to life on October 5, 1907. It was published by S. Groves & Son with the apologetic note “....we have been constrained to omit several valuable advertisements in this issue, on the grounds of first come first served.” Sancton said that he felt the three key roles of a good community newspaper are “to help create a community identity, to educate and empower residents and to hold public



Speakers David Price (left) and Don Sancton have been involved in local news for more than 50 years. “This pose is natural,” said Price jokingly.

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officials to account.”

The Sancton family sold the *Examiner* in the late 1980s and the last edition was circulated in October 2015. But the *Westmount Independent* had already established a prominent place in the municipality by then.

Price explained that his background had nothing to do with journalism. In the late 1990s, he had been an investment banker at the end of the dot-com boom, a period Price referred to as “...an important chapter in [the history of] human folly.” It is possible, he mused, that the experience gave him some basis to evaluate the potential of an “old economy,” mature industry (free newspapers) dispassionately. He left the business of finance around 2004 and joined his father in book and calendar publishing. Shortly after, they joined forces with Ted Sancton, Don’s brother, who was at the lecture and who continues to lay out the *Independent*.

Ted had a broad experience in publishing and layout, including working for the *Examiner*. Price moved forward with a series of guide books and went on to publish a “non-news” paper called *Vivva Montreal*. In 2007, the *Examiner*, by then owned by the printing and publishing behemoth Transcontinental Inc., moved its office out of Westmount to LaSalle. (It soon came back.)

The initial move started a chain of events that led to Price proceeding with the *Westmount Independent*, the first edition of which was May 16, 2007. Other publications in the area at the time included *Actualités Westmount*, *The Westmount Times* and a glossy magazine called *Westmount Living*. All of these have since ceased paper publication, although *The Westmount Times* continues as a website that was last updated in December.

“We try to be local, unique, focused... [and] our offices are in Westmount,” said Price.

He went on to point out one of several contradictions in the weekly newspaper game, “People love local news... but some also think local news is ridiculous... a big joke.”

He went on to give several examples of the business’ quirkiness, but pointed out that “local news affects you and you can affect it.”

In response to a question from the floor as to if it is beneficial for the city to “push” information to its population, Sancton said “it is absolutely essential that municipalities look at how their citizens are getting information....when you have a strong and, I believe, well-read newspaper like the *Independent*, then that should be a primary vehicle for the city to communicate with its citizens.”

## Heat creates art



Temperature variations this winter have turned lots of snow into ice that has played havoc with Montrealers' movement, but the swings have also been creative. This "snow gargoyle" was photographed on Prince Albert on February 27. "It also kind of looks like a car's hood ornament," said the photographer.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



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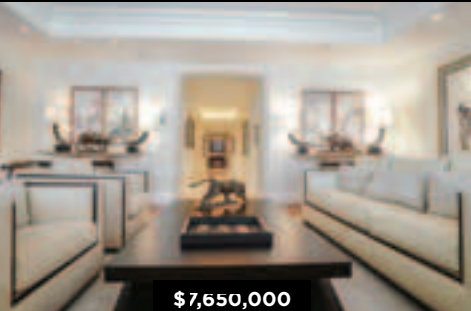
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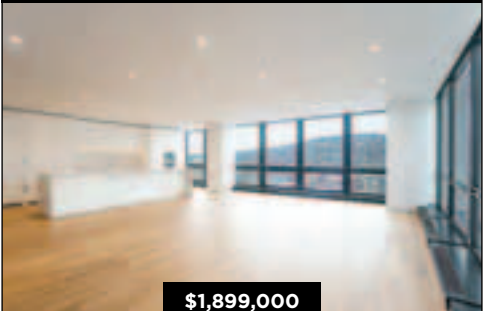
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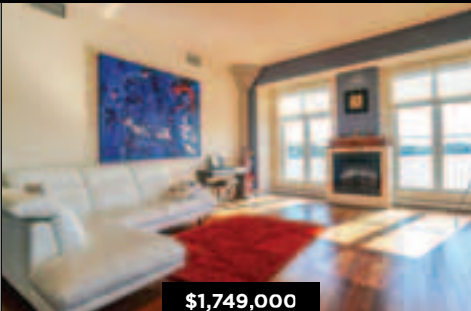
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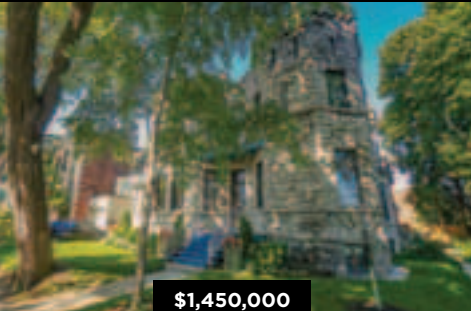
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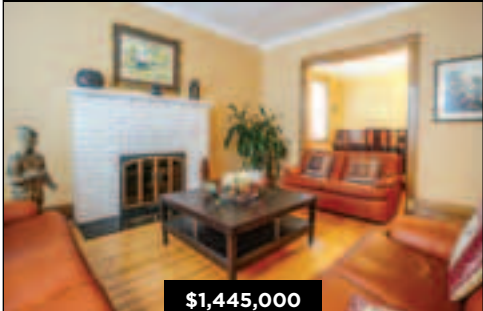
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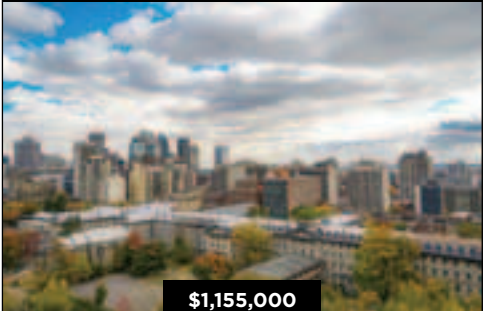
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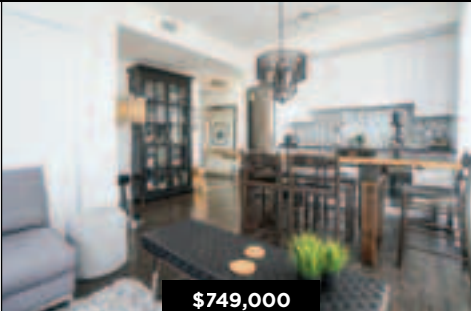
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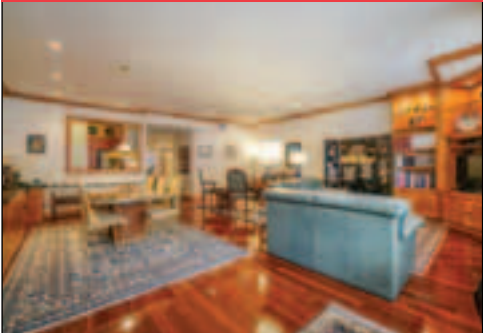
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# January Sales: Catching our breath



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ing for \$965,000, the first under-\$1 million sale to be posted since last May!

Thus, while the graph shows a definite slide in the past three months, we have to remember that the average adjusted price remains above \$2 million, where it has been since last April, and the average mark-up over valuation actually increased last month to 38 percent, with no sales at anything less than a 23-percent mark-up. Because the price range was so much lower, the actual average price was \$1,724,125, but when adjusted for mark-ups and volume, the “typical” Westmount house still is selling for well over \$2 million.

Only two condominiums – both in older buildings – were reported sold in January, along with two co-operative units, one in a duplex and the other in Westmount Square. The only conclusion we can draw at this point is that last year the condo market ended up strong, with a 24.6-percent increase in the value of the “typical” Westmount condo, but again prices have eased off somewhat since the fall.

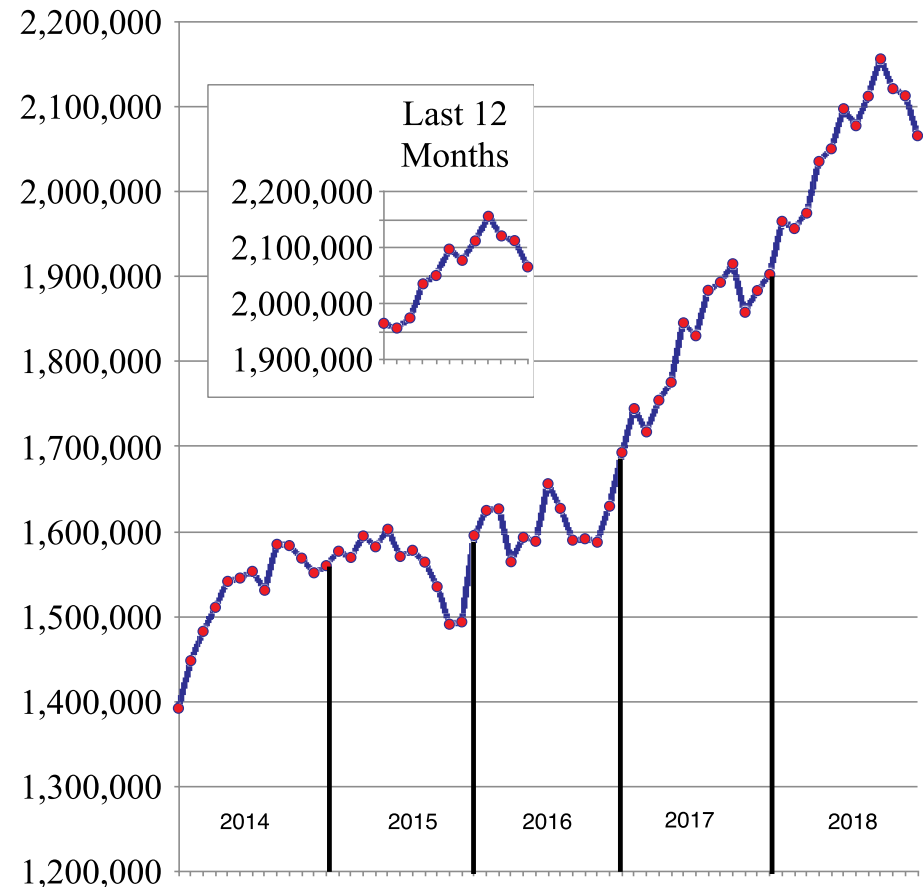
For adjacent-Westmount, again the slow market was evident: two house sales in eastern NDG, both for prices between \$1 and \$1.5 million, and one sale just east of West- *continued on p. 26*

*NOTE: The following article relates to offers to purchase Westmount residential dwellings that were reported by local real estate agents as having been accepted in January 2019. Because they are not final registered sales, the addresses cannot be made public, but give a good idea of current trends in local real estate activity. The graph on p. xx offers a picture of these trends over time.*

January is often considered a “catch your breath” month and this year is no exception. Only eight sales were posted by agents as having been negotiated in January, the lowest monthly volume since the previous January (when there were only four sales) and the highest price was only \$2,435,000 – this after months that reported sales of \$3,850,000, \$4,500,000 and \$7,900,000.

And while we were reporting last month that under-\$1 million sales in Westmount were becoming a thing of the past, one small townhouse on Melville Ave. was sell-

Average adjusted price for ‘typical’ Westmount house, by month, January 2014 to January 2019, based on accepted offer dates



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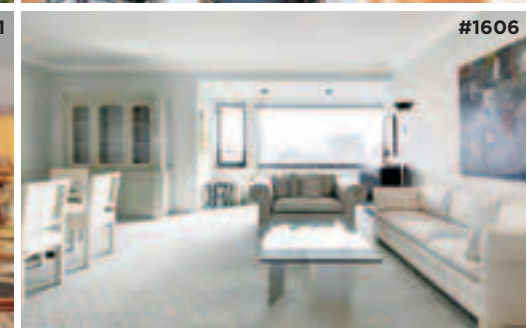
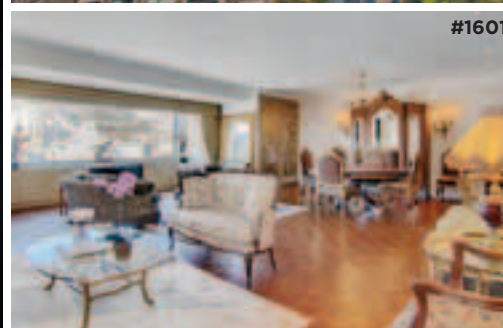
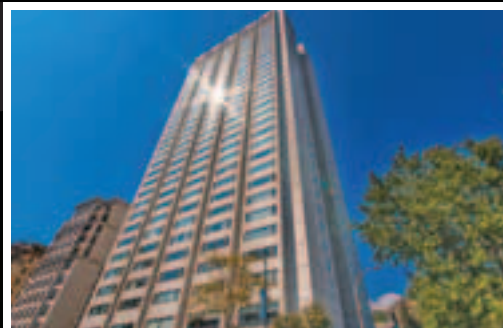


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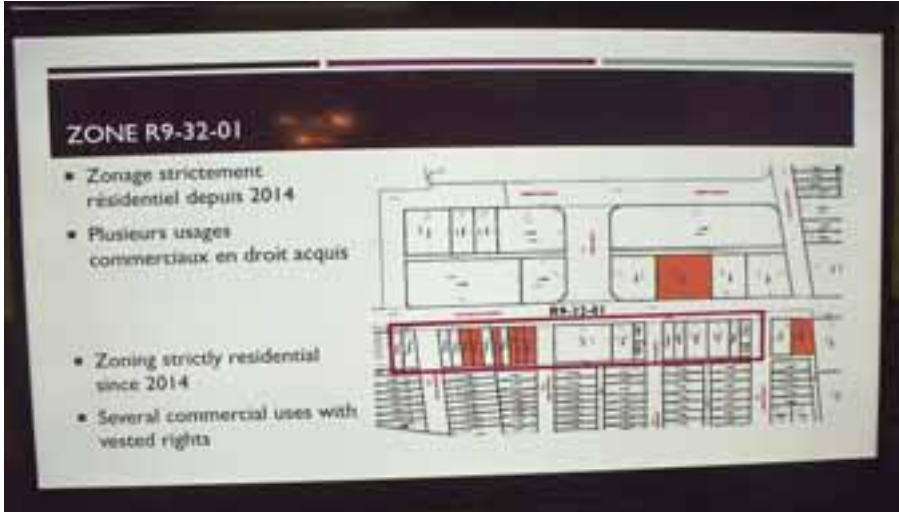
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New total of six buildings on St. Catherine near Lewis could house commercial tenants

# Zoning change meeting attracts 2, no opposition voiced



At left, the affected zone as shown in the presentation February 27 indicates six properties in colour that would be eligible for office use. They already hold vested rights for medical or office use. The others may not convert from their current residential occupancies. At right, from left: councillors Conrad Peart and Cynthia Lulham with Urban Planning project manager Nicolas Gagnon.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A public consultation meeting to ease zoning in a three-block strip on the south side of St. Catherine took place February 27 before an “audience” of one couple who live in the neighbourhood. The affected area stretches from just west of Blenheim Place to Abbott.

The two residents attending the meeting said they turned out “to see what was happening” but were not heard to voice serious objection.

Zoning by-law 1535 regulating office-type commercial activities in zone R9-32-01 is expected to be adopted by council at a later meeting. This would be followed by the issuing of a timetable for anyone filing a petition to trigger a possible referendum.

sues – in proximity to the new Glen super-hospital.

“Unfortunately, we went too far,” she added.

Along with Gagnon and Lulham, the city panel included Councillor Conrad Peart, urban planning commissioner for permits and architecture.

This is the same property that had been owned by surgeon Sandra McGill with whom the city reached an agreement in February 2018 to protect the vested rights for the medical-use of the building she was attempting to sell just west of Lewis (see story March 20, 2018, p. 4).

This agreement aimed to settle a dispute that continued on p. 22

**Spearheaded by one**

The current change was spearheaded by a request from the new owner of a grey-stone at 4606 St. Catherine that has vested right for medical use, but at which he wants to use one of the two storeys for his own commercial office.

Since this was not likely to generate the same traffic and parking volumes, it made sense to allow some of the existing medical offices with vested rights to be able to convert to commercial-type, explained Lulham who is urban planning commissioner for zoning, economic development and parks (see story February 12, p. 1). She also represents District 7, where the zone is located.

**Affects six properties**

According to a presentation by Urban Planning project manager Nicolas Gagnon, the proposed change in the residential zone would permit the use of commercial offices in some six properties that already hold vested rights as medical or commercial offices, but prohibit the conversion of residential occupancies.

Opening the session, Councillor Cynthia Lulham explained how in 2014 the city had designated the sole use for the zone as residential. The goal was to restrict the potential for new doctors’ offices or clinics – along with resulting parking is-



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## *Cold means frozen pipes, leaks*



Redfern at St. Catherine was closed for much of February 27 due to emergency work related to a water leak, Westmount's director general Benoit Hurtubise told the *Independent* by email the same day (above). Crews from Westmount's Public Works department and a sub-contractor were also busy last week using steam to thaw out water entrance pipes, including outside a home on the south side of The Boulevard near the corner of Grosvenor on February 28 (right).

LEFT-HAND PHOTO: INDEPENDENT, RIGHT-HAND PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY.



## *Melting, re-freezing create icy maze*



This photograph of the path in Westmount Park near the lagoon was taken last week, but could have been taken elsewhere in the city and at other times this winter.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

# Shopping on Sherbrooke St.



Victorian buildings on the north side of Sherbrooke St., c. 1910



4879 Sherbrooke St. W. as it was in 2018 with the house converted into a store.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DOREEN LINDSAY.



**Westmount  
Then & Now**  
CAROLINE BRESLAW

The three blocks of Sherbrooke St. Victoria village are reminiscent of the high street in an English town, supplying the daily services needed by local residents. There have been stores in this sector of Westmount since the arrival of the electric streetcar in 1893, after Sherbrooke had been extended to the city’s western boundary. Many early businesses were opened on the ground floor of houses, with the owners’ families living upstairs. Grocery stores, banks, drugstores, laundries, shoemakers, butchers and bakeries supplied residents’ needs and were located close to tram stops. Most delivered to the customers’ homes, since few people owned cars.



Campbell Framing’s first Westmount store at 4119 St. Catherine St. (left) and its shop at 4150 St. Catherine St. with the family’s home above (right). Both buildings are gone. The original 4150 St. Catherine was the last building standing before the current “4150” office building was put up.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF: CAMPBELL FRAMING ARCHIVES.



A gas station was established at the corner of Grosvenor about 1925, and one has

remained there ever since. In the 1950s, Steinberg’s grocery and Pascal’s hardware



Campbell Framing at 4916 Sherbrooke St. W. in 2018.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DOREEN LINDSAY.

became the first large chain stores in the area. Over the past 20 years, major changes have occurred in Victoria village, as Cromwell Management has acquired over 50 commercial properties along the stretch. Very large rent increases have forced out a number of tenants, in my view, and franchises have replaced many of the small businesses. The lure of “big box” stores outside the community and the rise of internet shopping have also had an effect. Empty stores with “à louer” signs line both sides of the street, a situation rarely seen to this extent in Westmount.

Visually, changes over the past hundred years have been less dramatic. The street has kept its integrity, with in-scale buildings and uniform setbacks. Two rows of converted Victorian row-houses still face each other

continued on p. 22



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## Police Report

## Police say missing wallet probably lost

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A woman whose wallet disappeared around the time she had been dining at a St. Catherine St. eatery found out the hard way that restaurant owners are serious when they say they are “not responsible for lost or stolen items.”

After leaving the restaurant on the evening of February 15, the woman made a phone call to the restaurant to report her

wallet was missing, while asking whether restaurant staff had located it.

“They told her they didn’t have it,” said Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Adalbert Pimentel.

In a declaration to the police, the woman said the last time she remembered her wallet being in her hands was when the restaurant bill was paid.

Although she had taken out her wallet for that purpose, another member of her party ended up paying the bill. Only after leaving the restaurant did she realize the wallet was missing.

The police consider the purse to have been lost, said Pimentel, while adding, “It’s possible it was not lost in the restaurant. It’s possible that while walking out it was lost.”

He noted that the owner was in a hurry at the time of the incident, as she was scheduled to pick up a relative at the airport and also had some other matters to take care of at a hotel.

*Jeep stolen*

A 2016 Jeep parked near the corner of Sunnyside and Roslyn avenues in upper

Westmount was stolen sometime between 10:30 pm and 7 am on the night of February 20-21.

According to a report filed by the owner with the police, the vehicle’s doors were locked at the time of the incident. Police at Station 12 have no suspect and no leads, said Pimentel.

*Car broken into*

On February 16 sometime between 8:30 and 9:30 am, a car parked on Oakland Ave. in upper Westmount was broken into and robbed of a purse that had been left behind in plain view.

The owner of the vehicle reported to police that upon returning to the vehicle after visiting a nearby home, she saw that a rear side window had been smashed.

The purse contained keys, a cell phone, a wallet with credit cards and identification as well as small change.

“It’s surprising that some people still leave their purses inside the car,” Pimentel said, noting that a measure of prevention might have helped in this case. “This was definitely a crime of opportunity,” he added.



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# Julia Reitman named a couture ‘muse’

By VERONICA REDGRAVE

Westmounter Julia Reitman was named one of the muses of the *Montreal Couture* exhibition by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA). She was joined by Lucie Bouthillette, Ruby Brown, Nathalie Bussière, Isabèle Chevalier, Claude Krynski, Karine Kay Limage, Alysia Yip-Hoi and Debbie Zakaib.

*Montreal Couture* features 10 top Quebec fashion designers and is being presented in conjunction with the star-powered *Thierry Mugler Couturissime* exposition, which is a fantasy installation featuring a retrospective of Mugler’s creations for such celebrities as Lady Gaga and David Bowie.

The world première of the Mugler exhibition features 150 outfits culled by curator Thierry-Maxime Lorient from thousands of archival pieces.

The visionary couturier, photographer, and perfumer attended the star-powered opening, complete with red carpet. Mugler welcomed guests, including Kim Kardashian and Sandrine Groslier, president Clarins Fragrance Group, along with Nathalie Bondil, director general and chief curator at the museum.

The expositions run until September 8.



Julia Reitman.



From left, Thierry-Maxime Lorient, Thierry Mugler, Nathalie Bondil and Sandrine Groslier.

## Zoning, cont'd. from p. 18

arose in January 2017 between the city and her as to whether the building continued to benefit from vested rights.

According to a council resolution, the decision to recognize the rights followed affidavits filed by McGill in September 2017 from people attesting to the continuation of medical practices during a period of 365 days required to protect the rights.

“She had proven she was still using it as a medical building,” Lulham had explained at the time.

## Sherbrooke St., cont'd. from p. 20

on Sherbrooke St. near Prince Albert. The Royal Bank has occupied its site since 1907, when the rest of the block was vacant land. A handful of family-owned, older businesses continue to operate; Campbell Framing and Westmount Stationery have been in Westmount for several generations. Other independently-owned stores, including National, Fruiterie Mont Victoria, Hogg Hardware, Coiffeur Jean-Jean, and Courval lingerie have been here for many years. All the small businesses of century-old Victoria village face the challenges of high taxes and limited parking,

while continuing the tradition of providing valued services to Westmounters.

More information about Westmount’s heritage can be found on the Westmount Historical Association website [www.wha.quebec](http://www.wha.quebec).

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### Snow Help Needed

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# CAQ should rethink four-year-old pre-k, says Liberal Maccarone

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Westmount-St. Louis Liberal provincial legislator Jennifer Maccarone says the Coalition Avenir Québec government needs to rethink a plan to send children as young as four to pre-kindergarten, while maintaining that provincial resources would be better used addressing more pressing educational problems.

“We’re not against the idea of four-year-old pre-k,” Maccarone, who is the official opposition critic for family issues at the Quebec legislature, said in an interview with the *Westmount Independent*.

“We’re against the idea of wall-to-wall implementation. We believe in complementarity – in having a complementary system. And we think what we need to do

is to take some steps back to evaluate.”

Since earlier this week, many Montreal-area daycare operators have been circulating a petition to be signed by parents, calling on Premier François Legault to abandon his plan to include pre-k for four-year-olds in Bill 5.

If the legislation passes as the government intends, 250 new pre-k classes for four-year-olds would become available across the province by the start of the next school year.

One problem the Liberals feel has not been sufficiently addressed concerns the cost. “We now know that the price tag has gone up from \$250 million that they had announced during their electoral campaign, to between \$400 and \$700 million,” said Maccarone.

“We have many stakeholder groups that are saying that this isn’t the solution that we need to put into place today – from teachers to specialists and researchers. And now we’ve added the voice of parents.”

The Liberals don’t go along with the

bad idea. It’s just not well thought out. It’s not what the priority should be today.”



Jennifer Maccarone on January 24.

CAQ’s rationale that the bill amending the education act will provide a way to better diagnose children who have potential learning problems. “The reality is that four years old is too late – it has to happen much earlier,” Maccarone said.

“And so rather than invest the \$400 to \$700 million in the school system to get four-year-old pre-k, why not take that money and invest it in the daycare system? Since we’re talking about having professionals, well, we can certainly have those professionals available in alternative networks.

“That’s the first thing. And we know that our schools simply don’t have place. So if you’re talking about the francophone network especially, they are bursting at the seams. Many of our schools require significant investments in infrastructure, improved quality of buildings.

“We have a shortage of teachers. We have a shortage of labour in general. What we need to be doing is focusing our attention elsewhere. So it’s not that pre-k is a

## Rotary honours supporters



The Rotary Club of Westmount honoured notable supporters of the club’s projects at a recognition luncheon February 20 at Victoria Hall. Among the honourees were, from left, Mary-Anne Fyckes, Gary White, France Morisset, Ghislaine Vincelli and Karin Griffin.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ROTARY CLUB OF WESTMOUNT.

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Social Notes  
VERONICA REDGRAVE

The sparkling sliver of a near new moon smiled in the sky as JDRF hosted Dia-Beat-It at Le Windsor. The hue of the hour was noir. Ladies were cocktail chic in edgy LBDs (little black dresses).

Most were knee length – some with peek-a-boo cut-outs, others with tantalizing transparency. Many had the lure of lace. No grunge to be seen. It was an elegant eve. No clunky boots. Pumps were pretty, with some verging on vertiginous.

**Maarika Paul**, executive vice-president and chief financial and operations officer, Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, was the 2018 honoree. She spoke about being the mother of a son who is T1D (Type 1 diabetic).

Greeting guests were JDRF’s CEO **Dave Prowten**, **Kim Lacombe**, regional director

# New moon ‘shines’ on successful JDRF eve



Réjean Tremblay, Dave Prowten, Kim Lacombe and Maarika Paul.

Eastern Canada, and Dr. **David Kozloff**, Quebec chair, attending with his wife Eve-

lyn and dentist daughters **Lisa Kozloff** and **Rosanne Kozloff**, there with hubby **Lloyd**

**Feldman** and in-laws **Linda** and **Solly Feldman**.

They were joined by little young “ambassadors” who carefully – and with inimitable appeal – explained their much-rehearsed message: they were selling raffle tickets to help “find a cure.”

Children present had Type 1 diabetes. Former ambassador and local res **Joelle Vineberg** – now a team leader – was fashionably festive in a fitted dress. She attended with her parents **Samantha** and **Justin Vineberg** and grandparents, Westmounters **Rhoda** and **Robert Vineberg**.

Emcee was **Benoît Gagnon**, Rouge FM-Bell Media. Noted in the Versailles-style-chandeliered Windsor ballroom were AON Hewitt’s **Réjean Tremblay**, **Christine Blanchette** and **Alexandre Daudelin**; **Nadia Saputo** and **Patrice Brisebois**, **Theresa** and **Carlo De Rose**, **Cynthia Guillemette**, **Alexandra Jeanty**, **Cathy Monticciolo** and **Franco Cianci**, **Marc Villeneuve**, **Sylvie Desmarais** and **Jacques Aubé**, **Gail** and **Michael Wagen**, **Suzanne** and **David Chaitman**, **Marla Oringer**, **Lisa Steinberg**, **Laurent Debrun**, **Laura Fratassi**, **Domenico Angilecchia** and **Brandon Desmarais-Patterson**, **Young Leaders** ..... committee.

continued on p. 25



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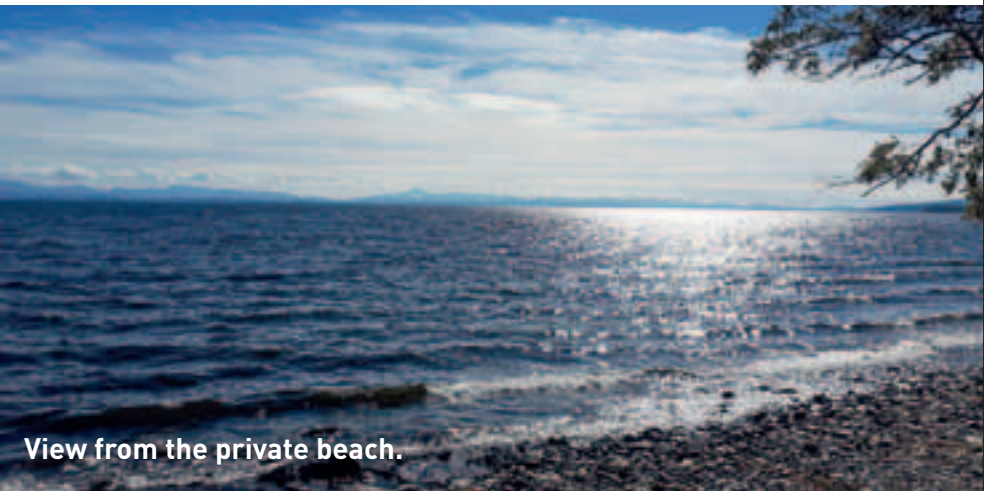
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View from the private beach.



Lisa, David and Evelyn Kozloff.



Heather Adleson, Gloria Kakon.



Justin Vineberg, Robert Vineberg, former city councillor Rhoda Vineberg, Joelle Vineberg and Jamie Wajcman with two young supporters.

### Social notes, cont'd. from p. 24

Among the local res present were Jo and Eric Aronoff, Gloria Kakon, David Laidley, Sandy Ranson and David Mars, Barbara and Bernie Fersten, Jillian and Jordan Aberman and Dan Bensoussan, owner of the Windsor Ballrooms.

The cocktail dinatoire was amazing, with perfect *al dente* pasta, succulent lamb and sushi. And then there was dinner!

Luckily Paul Chacra and the 1985 orchestra helped guests dance the night away energetically burning off calories. Gold sponsors were EY, Banque Nationale and Local 144, which presented JDRF with a cheque for \$100,000. The outstanding eve raised \$550,000 to accelerate research in the treating and preventing of Type 1 dia-

betes, which affects more than 300,000 Canadians.

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Westmount Lives Lived

# Peggy Croydon (1930-2018)

BY ALEXANDER GAY

I attended Westmount High from 1980 to 1984.

I, like many others, had a history teacher by the name of Peggy Croydon. She passed away in October 2018. Her story is one worth telling.

Peggy was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia in 1930. She was born to a Jewish father and a Christian mother.

During World War II, her father was deported to a concentration camp, where he perished. Peggy received notice from the Germans to go to a deportation centre in Prague, due to the fact that she was the daughter of a Jew. Her mother went to a doctor to obtain a medical certificate to say that she was not well enough to go to the deportation centre. Her mother's efforts worked and Peggy avoided the death camp.

During German occupation, she traded food on the black market to survive. She travelled on trains and traded food with passengers as a means of avoiding detection.

This was risky business for a person who was classified as a Jew and who did

not have valid papers. As the Germans intensified their search for Jews, she and her younger sister went underground. She survived the war.

In 1950, she emigrated to Montreal. She attended university and obtained an MA in history from McGill University. She eventually became a history teacher at Westmount High and remained a teacher for nearly 30 years.

In 2011, after the death of her husband, she moved back to the Czech Republic, where her stories were recorded and documented by the Jewish community. They can be seen on YouTube.

In 2018, at almost 90 years of age, she made the decision to die with dignity. She took a train from the Czech Republic to Switzerland, where she ended her life with assisted dying.

She always told her stories of horror and warned us all against the cruelty of humanity. Her stories marked many of us, regardless of our religion or faith. "If you want to survive, don't follow the system" were her words of advice.

Alexander Gay is counsel with the federal department of justice in Ottawa. He is also a



Peggy Croydon in 2016.

PHOTO COURTESY OF A. GAY.

part-time professor at the faculty of law, University of Ottawa. He grew up in Montreal

and attended Westmount High School from 1980 to 1984.

**Dodge, cont'd. from p. 17**

mount with a price over \$2 million.

But while things were slow in January, this looks like a busy year to come. By mid-February the number of house listings had increased to 90 from 77 a month previous, and prices are so positive that many agents are listing houses exclusively – such as the \$40-million asking price for the McConnell mansion on Sunnyside Ave. (An “exclu-

sive” listing is one that does not go through the multiple listing service (MLS).)

Six new house rentals came on the market last month, bringing the total available to 24. The latest are all for amounts over \$10,000 per month, even though no Westmount rentals were posted for all of last year over that amount. Three houses have already been rented this year, for amounts ranging from \$4,950 to \$7,000 per month.

## Comin' Up

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 6**

Héma-Québec Blood Drive. Victoria Hall. 2:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 9**

Twenty-seventh annual Westmount Antiquarian Book Fair. Used and rare books, maps and prints. Centre Greene, 1090 Greene Ave., Info at [www.defreitasbooks.com/wbf.html](http://www.defreitasbooks.com/wbf.html) or 514.935.9581. 10 am to 5 pm.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 12**

Public meeting of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) on presentation of SCAOPI project for the office development at 1100 Atwater. City hall. 8:30 am.

Westmount Horticultural Society presents a film on gardens in the rolling hills of the Charlevoix region. Westmount Library. 7 pm. Guests \$7.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13**

St. Matthias Human Trafficking Forum. Free. Victoria Hall. Doors open 6:15 pm, programme 7 to 9:30 pm.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20**

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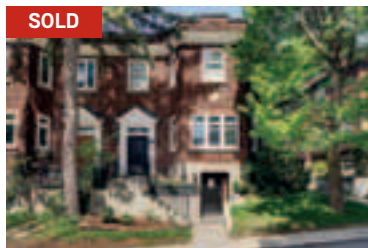
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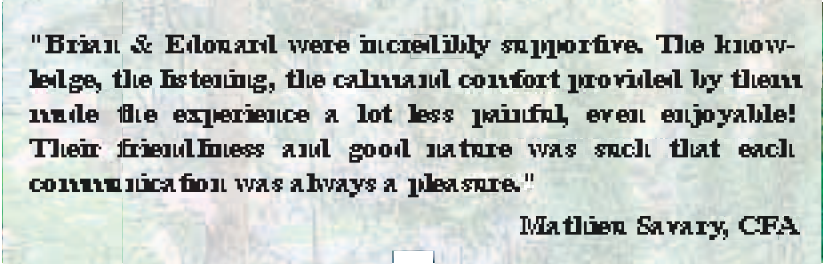
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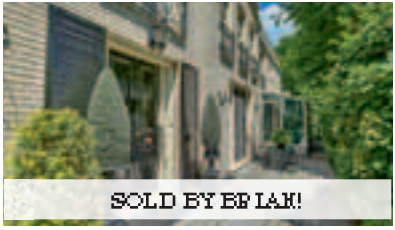
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