

Westmount library to partially re-open

Supermarket-style curbside pick-up targets June 8 start

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

It's been a long wait for hundreds of Westmount Public Library users wanting to borrow books, documents and audio-visual material. And now there's a partial end in sight.

While the building will not open to the public, the library is targeting June 8 to launch a contactless curbside pick-up ser-

vice on appointment for items reserved on-line from the collection following complicated Quebec government pandemic restrictions.

"It's like a supermarket service," said library director Julie-Anne Cardella. "You order what you want and then pick it up."

But preparing for it has been a challenge while the building was closed and with the staff only returning from work at home this week. Among the preparations were more than eight trolleys-worth of books to be quarantined and processed after the building was closed March 13.

"It's a start," Cardella said. "Even the pick-up service hinges on the spread of contagion in the Montreal area. It all depends on what happens."

Borrowing an item continued on p. 8

WAG field fenced



The field (but not the track) at the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG) behind Westmount High was fenced off May 29. It is seen here on May 31. See p. 21 for more information and views on the closure.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Letters to the editor, p. 14

Dodge on real estate transfers, p. 18

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Social Notes (Jewel Lowenstein), p. 21

Are you thinking about winter? City council is

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

It's going to come: that snowy, slippery weather.

Please note the Independent's summer schedule

June 9, 16 & 23 – issues

June 30 – no issue (Dominion Day observance)

July 7 & 14 – issues

July 21, 28 and August 4 – no issues (usual summer break)

August 11 till Christmas – weekly issues

And just to be ready, city council May 19, on the approach of summer, approved the purchase of a new caterpillar sidewalk plow and agreed to participate in a group purchase with the city of Montreal for road salt.

"It seems winter has just ended," said Councillor Philip Cutler, commissioner of infrastructure and innovation. But now "we're planning for next winter to be proactive and move ahead."

Being part of Montreal's call for tenders for the supply of road salt for the next four winter seasons 2020-2024 will enable West-

mount "to get a reduced rate when bought in bulk," he explained. This had not yet taken place. The group includes all 19 Montreal boroughs, all 15 demerged municipalities of the agglomeration of Montreal and the Société de transport de Montréal.

The purchase of the sidewalk plow from Plannord Equipment Ltd. is for a maximum amount of \$215,468.57, including tax credits. It was listed on council documents as the lower conforming bid of two. The other came from R.P.M. Tech Inc. for \$222,588.83.



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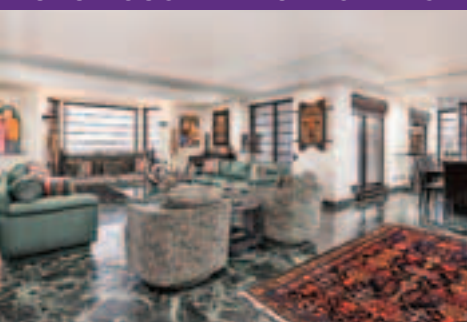
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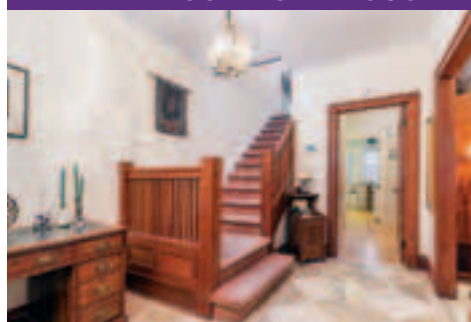
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# Council awards pool repairs to cost up to half-million

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

While the city awaited news from the Quebec government regarding pool use this summer, city council May 19 awarded the contract to repair the slab and walls at the Westmount recreation centre's pool.

(Since then, the Quebec government has announced that pools can re-open.)

The rusting rebar had become apparent and initial repairs were found to be inadequate. This led to the city taking steps to pursue legal action against the building contractor and inspection company (see story September 11, 2018). It is still ongoing (see story May 19, p. 3).

Moving ahead with the call for tenders opened May 1, council awarded the contract for a maximum amount of \$502,440.75, including taxes, to Construction Madux

Inc. described as the lowest conforming bidder. According to accompanying documents, it was the only one.

Architect Ken London, a resident of Prince Albert, asked in a submitted email to the virtual meeting a series of questions, including who had prepared the plans, about the schedule for the work, about the warranty and about the status of the court case.

City director general Benoit Hurtubise explained the work would be done at the end of the season, that the city would be claiming costs and that the plans for repair had been prepared by an engineering firm.

This requires removing the top layer of concrete, repairing the rusted rebar reinforcement and adding a thicker concrete layer.

The pool was opened in the fall of 2013.



On a hot steamy May 26 at the Prince Albert Park splash pad, there was nothing more fun than splashing water. Four-year-old Olivia (red swimsuit), 5-year-old Vladimir (yellow) and almost 4 year old Ethan (blue) were having lots of fun. Olivia said to her mum: "I'm making new friends." Olivia's mum said she was so happy they'd opened the water parks.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.

## Splash pads opened for heat wave

Just in time to help children cool off during last week's heat wave, the city opened its three splash pads May 27, the day the mercury reached more than 36°C, the highest ever recorded in Montreal for a May day, according to Environment Canada.

It was incumbent on parents to ensure that the two-meter distancing guideline was applied, according to the city's website notice. The splash pads are at Stayner and Prince Albert parks as well as at the former Melville pond in Westmount Park.

Though the city's air-conditioned buildings – usually serving as cooling shelters – remain closed over the COVID-19 pandemic, the pool, which usually opens the end of May, remains closed awaiting Quebec government directives.



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# Public Security, Urgences Santé help scooter fall victim



On May 26, just before 5 pm in Westmount Park beside the lagoon, a man in an electric mobility scooter took a tumble down the bank. According to a Public Security officer, he had been riding along the unfinished track between the tennis courts and the lagoon and his vehicle toppled over. He did not seem to be injured. Urgences Santé was also on the scene.

# In for a minute, but asked to get out



With a temperature of 33°C May 26, children took to the lagoon with gusto, despite its untreated water. Public Security was in the area dealing with a small accident (see story at left) and afterwards asked everyone to get out of the water. A sign stating the policy was up by May 29 (inset).

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.



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Second portion of city grants still ‘on hold’

Atwater Library seeks second allocation to help pay tax bill

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Lynn Verge, a resident of Kensington Ave. and executive director of the Atwater Library and Computer Centre, asked the city council at its virtual meeting May 19 when it would award the second portion of 2020’s supporting grants for non-profit community organizations.

While the library received \$8,000 during the first portion of grants April 6, this was designated specifically “to improve accessibility and conservation of its heritage building.” But the library was depending on the second portion to pay, among other expenses, some \$14,000 in municipal taxes due at the end of June, Verge explained.

Grant for building

The library, which last year received a total amount of \$36,500, was the only organization along with the Contactivity seniors’ centre, to benefit from the first city’s first portion of supporting grants allocated in April.

“The others are on hold because we are very much in the middle of COVID-19 and the financial impact on the city is substantial,” Mayor Christina Smith explained. She said the city would be in touch with all applicants to give them updates.

Some programs in hold

The grants are given out to the community groups – seven last year – for programs they offer the community that the city does not, Mayor Smith pointed out.

The Atwater Library has continued to

provide its computer assistance programs by phone and internet to help people in accessing digital technologies during the current “stay at home” coronavirus prevention measures.

The first portion of its grant allowed the library to be eligible for a federal government Legacy Fund grant linked to the 100th anniversary of its building this year. The funding had also offset the permit fees the library paid to the city for its elevator accessibility project, according to Verge (see story April 14, p. 5).

Westmount library, cont'd. from p. 1

requires browsing the collection online and then anyone holding a library card can reserve a desired item either on the internet or by phone at 514.989.5355 or 514.989.5299 or from the children’s department at 514.989.5229.

Free cards for Westmounters

Membership cards, free for Westmount residents, can be obtained via the website.

After the reserved item has been put aside, pick-up appointments can then be made.

These are expected to take place at 15-minute intervals during weekday afternoons and into one or two early evenings once a schedule and times have been determined and posted on the website this week, Cardella said.

Many preparations

Preparation for the curbside service has been complicated due to the many government and workplace safety criteria, she explained.

The re-entry of staff, for example, required acquiring protective masks and gloves as well as sanitizing pumps for desks and other work areas. Winter carpeting had to be removed for placing directional signage for the staff to follow, including one-way use of different stairways to provide safe distancing.

The 72-hour quarantine requirement to decontaminate material, includes boxes of newly arrived books from suppliers as well as any books returned. The book drop itself has had to be repositioned to provide safe-distancing access. It had been emptied regularly by Public Security while the library was closed.

The library continues to provide the many online services it has provided since the building’s closure March 13.

Written comments on St. Léon expansion posted  
Mayor Smith: ‘Opportunity to improve traffic’ on Clarke Ave.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

An over-riding concern for traffic was expressed in most of the eight written comments received by the city before the council’s final approval May 19 of an expansion wing for École St. Léon on Clarke, according to a review of the comments posted on the city’s Urban Planning website.

Along with the future impact of traffic an enlarged school might have, the existing traffic “mayhem,” as one writer called it, includes speeding, cars making U-turns, driving and parking over the sidewalk as well as 18-wheel trucks.

Drivers racing along the north-south lane behind houses on the east side of Clarke to bypass the street’s congestion was also mentioned.

“This is an opportunity to improve the traffic situation and work proactively with the school,” Mayor Christina Smith told the *Independent* last week.

She acknowledged the congestion and dangerous driving habits around the school area that council members had viewed first hand while participating in the

two last Public Security campaigns. This stretch of the street south of Sherbrooke has been designated a truck route (see story October 10, 2017, p. 9).

Mayor Smith said the conditions imposed in the final resolution approving the project May 19 should help as well as the creation of the new pedestrian corridor on de Maisonneuve “if we continue keeping it.”

The school has been overcrowded for several years and is the only elementary public school in the French system for Westmount and many downtown students.

Many of the eight comments also questioned the council’s need for taking “priority action” to hasten the project’s approval “while a global pandemic is occurring” and replacing a register with “a non-binding consultation,” as permitted of municipalities by the Quebec government at this time (see story April 14, p. 1).

Others worried about the impact of the construction phase on the structure of their houses along with noise, pollution and the

continued on p. 16

Green energy in waiting?



A colourful windmill adorns an old tree stump in Murray (King George) Park May 15.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Atwater Library expects to start pick-up service this week

The Atwater Library and Community Centre will provide loans of physical books and DVDs with pick-up at the main entrance at scheduled times, the library announced last week. Access to the building will have to wait “until later” when necessary preparations are made, the notice stated.

Pick-ups will “possibly” start this week on Tuesdays and Fridays from 3 to 5 pm, by appointment only. The loan period for DVDs and books is being lengthened from two weeks to three weeks, with a maximum number that may be borrowed at once is being increased from three to five.





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# Business slowly returning after COVID-19 ‘break’

By MARTIN C. BARRY

While there are perhaps a few more empty storefronts in Westmount following the two-month-long COVID-19 crisis, most retail business owners contacted by the *Westmount Independent* last week were upbeat and optimistic about the future.

Along some stretches of the Victoria village shopping district, gone are stores such as Lolë women’s wear on Sherbrooke St. And just around the corner on Victoria Ave., the Café-Crème bistro seemed ready to close last month, only to be open again June 1 when the *Independent* went by at 2 pm.

But if anyone was looking for proof that disruption can also create opportunities, they would find it a few addresses away on the west side of Victoria near the corner of de Maisonneuve Blvd.

### A switch

There, Matt Wetmore, owner of Le Frame Shoppe, and Reza Yavarian of the Leonidas Culture Belgian chocolate shop, have done business side by side for the past five years.

However, with time to think things over during the lockdown, they reached out to their landlord, Brian Newsam, who agreed they could switch locations, since one needed more room, while the other already had too much space.

“This is kind of a silver lining,” Wetmore told the *Independent*. “With the COVID-19 pandemic, there are certain safety measures we need to take. But at the same time, we needed more space for our clients when they come in with artwork for framing.”

As it turned out, Yavarian had been thinking for some time of moving into a smaller space. The lockdown provided both with the perfect opportunity to make the switch. As such, Le Frame Shoppe was planning to reopen June 2, after press time, at 318 Victoria, while Yavarian’s outlet is now at 318A Victoria.



Left, Tony's Shoes owner Tony Fagnoli serves a customer on May 29 while using a protective screen that was specially made to address COVID-19 risks; right, Seen here at Nick's Restaurant on Greene Ave. on May 29 are (from the left) cashier Caroline Laroche, owner Rob Callard and employee Nikos Kyriakopoulos.



Yavarian said the decision will help ensure that his business remains viable in the currently turbulent economic context. “This is going to help me stay in Westmount,” he said, noting that after five years on Victoria he has an established clientele and feels determined to stay.

It is not the first time that two Westmount retailers have switched locations. Hogg Hardware and the Société des alcools due Québec (SAQ) switched locations in 2009 (see May 19-20, 2009, p. 1).

At the Foot Solutions orthopedic shoes boutique on Victoria Ave., owner Simon Bitton said business was fairly steady during the lockdown, even though hours were reduced.

The store was among the businesses recognized by the provincial government as essential because of its products and services. Foot Solutions only closed completely for two weeks in March.

Bitton said he senses there could be a sudden upsurge in spending by consumers in the coming weeks as they rediscover shopping after two months of restraint. Case in point, he said one customer who came in last week, and who usually buys one pair of shoes, ended up buying three.

### Greene Ave.

At Naturino Shoes on Greene Ave. May 29, owner Glenn Neven opened his store for the first day of business since the lockdown began. But again, the disruption led to something new: for the first time, his online sales dominated all sources of revenue.

“People across Canada were stuck at home, so they were shopping online,” he said, noting that his web business now has clients from all over the country as well as in other parts of the world. The store warehouses and ships footwear from a work area in the basement that has been busy since March.

Over at Nick's Restaurant on Greene, owner Rob Callard kept things running over the past two months on a take-out-only basis. He was uncertain late last week as to when the government will declare restaurants can re-open with customer seating. “We’ve been running on a skeleton staff, but managed to keep the lights on,”

he said.

In addition to the established businesses, there’s also at least one new presence in the Victoria village. Restaurant Boss Grill, on Somerville Ave. near the corner of Victoria, is owned by Westmount resident Christina White. It will be open for Uber take-out delivery beginning June 8.



Matt Wetmore of Le Frame Shoppe on May 29 between his new (left) and old addresses on Victoria Ave.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT

## City to distribute 5,000 masks, many at 5 places this week

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Public Security will be setting up its blue tent at five locations this week to distribute many of the 5,000 disposable masks allotted to Westmount by the Montreal agglomeration from a Quebec government donation. The number is based on a percentage of the population, according to Public Security director Greg McBain.

Officers, he said, had already been handing out the masks to many of the seniors they are in contact with since many are not able to obtain any themselves. They will also show people how to wear the

masks and how to dispose of them at the following distribution locations:

- June 2, 8-10 am, in front of Westmount Park Church;
- June 3, 10-12 noon, at Victoria and Somerville;
- June 4, 8-10 am, Greene and de Maisonneuve;
- June 4, 12-2 pm, Hillside at the WAG.

Some of the masks were offered to the Contactivity seniors’ centre but they already had enough, McBain said. The city has ordered washable masks also for distribution but these have yet been received.

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# How to continue protecting yourself and protecting others

While the activities of life have gradually begun to resume in Québec, abiding by health instructions remains essential to keeping the virus from spreading. This requires changes to everyone's daily habits.

## HERE IS WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO:

- ✓ **Remain at home if you have symptoms of COVID-19.**
- ✓ **Remain at home whenever possible through telework and online ordering.**
- ✓ **Restrict the number of people with whom you have live contact** (no more than 10 people from a maximum of three different addresses for outdoor gatherings).
- ✓ **Always keep a distance of two metres from between yourself and other people, except those who live in your home.**
- ✓ **Always wear a mask or face covering when you are unable to meet the two-metre rule in public settings.**
- ✓ **Wash your hands often with soap or a sanitizer.**
- ✓ **Abide by the breathing etiquette by coughing into your mask or the crook of your elbow.**
- ✓ **Clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces.**
- ✓ **If possible, avoid unnecessarily touching surfaces and objects.**
- ✓ **Do not share objects such as balloons, papers, dishware, etc.**





### Keep a distance of two metres between yourself and others, because:

- The virus spreads from one person to other by contact with infected droplets projected into the air when an infected person breathes, speaks, coughs or sneezes.
- The infected droplets **can be projected up to a distance of two metres** and therefore reach anyone who is close by.
- Some people with no symptoms or symptoms that have not yet developed can unknowingly transmit the virus to others.



### Why is it so important to wear a mask or face covering?

- It can protect you when you are unable to follow the two-metre rule, and the virus can be transmitted between people by contact with droplets from an infected person that are projected into the air at up to that distance.



### Why are only outdoor gatherings of no more than 10 people (ideally from at most three households) permitted?

- Because the probability that an individual will become infected depends on the number of people with whom they are in contact; the probability that any one of those people is already infected and contagious; the degree of their intimacy; the duration of contact and the protective measures taken to limit the transmission of the infection.
- For example, if a person meets five times with nine different people, they will have been in contact with 45 people in total. It is therefore important to limit our contacts, and ideally to favor gatherings with the same people.
- The fewer the number of people in the same location, the lower the risk of being in contact with an infected person, whether that person is symptomatic or not.
- The risk of transmission out of doors is considered low compared to an indoor environment.



### Why is regular hand washing so important?

- Even if the principal mode of transmission is from infected droplets projected into the air through talking or coughing in proximity to others, the virus can also spread by touching contaminated surfaces or objects.
- The unwashed or non-sanitized hands of an infected person (whether or not that person is aware of their situation) can contaminate objects and surfaces nearby by touching them.
- Anyone can catch the virus by touching a contaminated surface then touching their eyes, mouth or nose.

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EDITORIAL

HONG KONG, YOU ARE ALWAYS ON MY MIND

I write to support *The Globe and Mail's* May 24 editorial "Canada, and the world, must stand up to China's latest attack on Hong Kong."

Given how easily good intentions go astray, it is hard to know how to help groups of people with serious problems in our own country, and even more so when we contemplate the plight of people overseas. In addition, there are a lot of things that I don't know about the situation over there, about how to help or if help is even

possible. I am about as Asian as John Bull (or Fred Flintstone, if you prefer a pop culture reference), with no material connection to Hong Kongers in their home city or abroad. As a result, I find myself quickly at sea.

But I do have a very high confidence in these things:

- The residents of Hong Kong are people, with all of our problems (including the COVID-19 ones), plus these new political ones.

- They have a lively society ruled by law, where they have enjoyed many liberties since the 1997 handover and which is no bother to anyone.
- They are again bravely taking to the streets to defend the freedoms that they have, in a time of global recession and of COVID-19, when there is so much more to lose than one year ago, when this part of their struggle began. They are clad in t-shirts, armed with nothing and allied to nobody. (And they are basi-

cally "un-ally-able." Who can be their ally?)

- The impression that I get from TV, online and letters to us in the past is that they want the world's attention.

Well they've got mine, and I am working with this editorial to get the attention of the 20,000 or so recipients of this newspaper. If anyone out there has an idea for a way to help, tell someone!

*David Price is the editor of the Westmount Independent.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HEALTH HAZARD IN MURRAY PARK

We live very close to Murray Park, and our daily walks, with and without our dogs, have taken us across and/or through the park on a regular basis for the last 20-some years. Recently, we have noted with pleasure the small gatherings of parents and kids, the picnics – people who enjoy being outdoors in nature. But it has come at a price.

The closure of the dog parks has meant that the same people who don't pick up in the dog park don't pick up on the grassy hill. Yesterday evening [May 26], the garbage from picnics, including glass and aluminum bottles and cans, littered one area; the garbage containers were chock-a-

block with rubbish, and the squirrels feasted on a gourmet meal of leftover pizza. Notice that I have not mentioned the discarded masks and gloves, or the usual littler of plastic bottles and paper wrappers, the odd condom, and neatly tied-up poop bags just left at the site of the crime.

This is surely a visual offence, but also a potential public health hazard.

EMY BENJAMIN & GRAEME LOW,  
ARLINGTON AVE.

**GARBAGE DAY, DISGUSTING WAYS**

This photo (right) is just a small sampling of the disgusting stuff I saw while walking up Grosvenor on garbage day a couple of weeks ago.

I mean really.

It takes a special type of idiot to think



that they can chuck a bag of garbage out their front door the night before pick-up and expect there won't be a mess – for someone else to clean up – in the morning.

And there was one household that had garbage with cardboard on top. Uh, buddy, ever hear of recycling?

Meanwhile, on Prince Albert between Sherbrooke and Chesterfield, another evildoer's pandemic routine (left) clearly involves throwing their protective gloves on the ground each time they get in, or out, of their car. There are blue gloves littering both sides of the street. Boy ... how I'd like to catch that moron in the act.

We really are doomed as a species.

THOMAS LAPIERRE,  
CHESTERFIELD AVE.

*Editor's note:* I noticed the exact same block of Prince Albert (Sher-

brooke to Chesterfield) two weeks ago. There were more discarded gloves in the gutter there than any other comparable stretch of Westmount street that I have seen. I tried to take a picture, but it did not capture the scene. Thank you for yours. – DP.

**PAY ATTENTION TO REFUSE IN PARKS, PLEASE**

*Open letter to city councillor Cynthia Lulham with copies to Mayor Christina Smith, councillors Anitra Bostock and Mary Gallery, and Public Security director Greg McBain*

Today [May 27], during our daily walk, we came across rubbish strewn across the slope just south of the tennis courts in King George Park.

During this COVID-19 time, many folks wish to enjoy our parks; more and more are using them. Garbage disgraces our community. Another person sitting nearby had called Public Security and Public Works to alert them. After 1.5 hrs, there was no onsite response. A local resident who lives very close to the park reported that there had been a loud gathering last night, a source of the rubbish.

King George Park is a treasure in our city. We request that there be greater surveillance regarding partying, late-night



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

gatherings and such display of disregard for our environment. Where was a Public Security patrol? Where is someone during the day to look to the condition of parks? I note that there are no signs declaring fines for leaving rubbish. But on St. Sulpice near our home, such a sign is prominently in view.

In your role as commissioner of urban planning, economic development and parks, we urge you to give serious attention and action to the city parks, to cleaning them, to patrolling for misuse of the park space, to levying fines for leaving refuse.

JUDITH KASHUL,  
HOLTON AVE.

### MARKETS WOULD BE UNSAFE

I was shocked and disappointed to read the article “Sunday markets planned for Victoria, Greene” in your May 26 edition (p. 1).

This unwise and reckless decision, to invite a public street gathering in the midst of the pandemic, puts commerce far ahead of public safety. Such a gathering also sends the message that things are “under control” and it’s time to drop our guard. To think that the event can be safely produced is unrealistic.

Incidentally – in the same issue – a photo of the Montreal police patrolling the



### THANK YOU, FRONTLINE WORKERS

Every evening (see photo above) for the last nine weeks, we have been between 10 and 20 people clapping to thank frontline medical workers.

Please join us on any street.

MARIE-LAURE GUILLARD,  
PRINCE ALBERT AVE.

### YES TO FUN ON YORK STREET

We read with dismay the letter from Trisha Felgar published on May 19 (p. 7) about an anonymous letter she received complaining about her kids playing on the street.

We feel sorry for the person who felt the need to write such a letter.

Some of us on York St. have been delighted to see kids playing on the street as well as on Prince Albert, now that there’s so little traffic. It is wonderful to see life out there again, especially in these difficult times, and to see that kids find ways of enjoying themselves.

BARRIE HOWELLS &  
CARMEN GIMENEZ CACHO, YORK ST.

Westmount park suggests that the police are busy doing the job of policing social distancing. This is misleading. I run in that park every day. Every day, the park is filled with unsafe gatherings of people playing soccer and lounging in groups with no visible efforts to maintain safe distances.

If the police wanted to make a difference, the most effective way might be to post an officer in the park.

I guarantee you that officer would be kept busy.

JOSEPH WIECHA,  
KENSINGTON AVE.

## Gas leak on Springfield

As the *Independent* went to press on June 1, a resident of Springfield Ave. informed the paper that there was a gas leak on that street and that residents had been evacuated. Apparently, a worker preparing the street for repaving cut an unmarked pipe.

## McEntyre winners announced

The winners of the city of Westmount’s McEntyre student writing competition were announced last week. The theme of this year’s competition, open to Westmount residents and students who attend school here, was freedom. Here is the list of winners and their schools.

<b>Grade 1</b>	Vela Iordanova Gabriel Michel	The Study Selwyn House School
<b>Grade 2</b>	Sarah Ruby Sternthal Adam Chaban Zev Auerbach HM Adamo Ben Chikh	Michèle-Provost Selwyn House School Selwyn House School Selwyn House School
<b>Grade 3</b>	Hu Junran Priya Hostakova-Burns Violet Corning-Kern	The Study The Study The Study
<b>Grade 4</b>	Dahlia Beauregard Romi Sebag Ethan Lubarsky HM Joseph Ranjitsingh	École St-Léon Akiva School Akiva School Roslyn School
<b>Grade 5</b>	Yutong Li Mila Freiheit Georgia Clark HM Ziyang Wan	The Study Akiva School St. George’s School The Study
<b>Grade 6</b>	Jake Lubarsky Gabrielle Fisk-Girard Andrew Carsley HM Sofia Boudreau HM Jayme Victor	Akiva School Villa Sainte-Marcelline Selwyn House School Villa Sainte-Marcelline Akiva School
<b>Grade 7</b>	Héloïse Henry de Villeneuve Yaebin Cheon Antoine Archambault-Ramirez Sophie Gomery Fewes HM Alexis Lyness-Polson	Villa Sainte-Marcelline Westmount High School Westmount High School Villa Sainte-Marcelline Westmount High School
<b>Grade 8</b>	Jennifer Shannon Clara Marleau Aela Reinoso Cadieux HM Chloe Blundell	St. George’s High School Villa Sainte-Marcelline Villa Sainte-Marcelline Villa Sainte-Marcelline
<b>Grade 9</b>	Thaïs Derosiaux Devdas Hind Jacob Schwisberg HM Dylan Kimmel HM Doha Yousaf	Marie de France École Internationale de Montréal Westmount High School St. George’s High School Westmount High School
<b>Grade 10</b>	Shimi Gandelsman Sofia Walewicz 2. Adele Doyle 3. Dylan Lee	Westmount High School Westmount High School Westmount High School Selwyn House School
<b>Grade 11</b>	Henry Mitnick Denise Labrinie Economides Chloe Isaacs HM Patrick Knowlton	Westmount High School Villa Sainte-Marcelline St. Georges High School Westmount High School

The city received 382 entries this year, chief judge Rosalind Davis told the *Independent* May 28. The winning entries are on the website of the Westmount Public Library.

“A big thanks to the 54 volunteer judges,” she also said, “who read and judged the entries, and wrote personal comments to each student. Congratulations to all [the participants]. And a special thanks to Wendy Wayling and the staff of the children’s library for their time and support with this competition.”

HM = Honourable Mention



Guest column

# Composting survey results are in – improvement needed

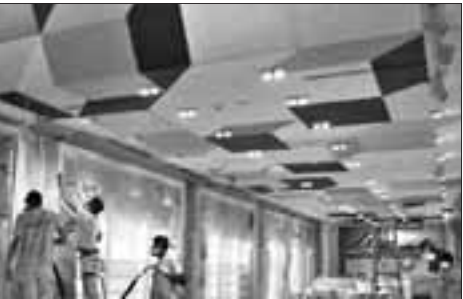


ROSS BROWN  
& SUSAN GRUNDY

From January to April of this year, five resolute volunteers from the Westmount Healthy City Project (Ross Brown, Susan Grundy, Martina Lund, Tony Moffat and Penny Westman) walked their local neighbourhoods to survey the number of single-family residences that placed compost bins on the curb for morning pick-up.

The objective of this activity was to obtain a benchmark estimate of the number of single-family households participating in the curbside compost pick-up program. Close to 950 Westmount residences were included in the survey that covered five local areas centred on the following streets:

- Burton-Somerville-Winchester (116 residences),
- Victoria-Grosvenor between de Maisonneuve and The Boulevard (430 residences),



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- Anwoth-Thornhill (143 residences),
- Strathcona-Mount Stephen (167 residences) and
- Upper Belmont-Upper Lansdowne (92 residences).

Surveys were repeated two to four times at approximately monthly intervals, with the average results for the five survey regions shown in the table at right. These numbers do not account for households with backyard composting – a DIY alternative that produces black earth for the garden without using collection or processing resources.

Approximately one third of the observed residences participated in the compost program. This percentage changed very little over the different survey dates, even though participation rates varied widely across the five areas, exceeding 50 percent on some blocks, falling below 20 percent on others.

### Clusters of participation

One common observation of the Healthy City volunteers was that participating households were often clustered together, possibly a result of neighbour interactions and the efforts of early adopters.

Nothing like setting a good example! The survey results show that Westmount has a solid and dependable core of participating households in the curbside compost pick-up program.

However, this participation rate is a long way short of helping Westmount reach the government of Quebec target to divert 60 percent of organic waste from landfill.

As mentioned in a previous column (see February 11, p. 7, “Composting in Westmount: Keep food waste out of the garbage!”), the diversion of organic waste is important for two reasons: first, Montreal’s landfill sites are filling rapidly, and second, organic waste in landfills generates

*Average participation rate of single-family houses in curbside compost pick-up from repeat surveys (January-April 2020).*

Survey Area	# of surveys	# of residences	Average participation %
Burton–Somerville–Winchester	3	116	43.4
Upper Belmont–Upper Lansdowne	2	92	39.7
Victoria–Grosvenor	4	430	32.6
Anwoth–Thornhill	3	143	30.5
Strathcona–Mount Stephen	3	167	29.9

methane, a greenhouse gas many times more powerful than CO<sub>2</sub>.

### Residents should do more

In 2009, Westmount was one of the leaders in implementing compost collection for single-family homes. More than ten years later, a one-third participation rate among single-family homes is hard to paint as a success story, even more so given that the city has extended its programme to apartment buildings with mixed results.

Looking forward, we now have a benchmark to measure progress. With COVID-19 keeping most of us close to home, the timing has never been better for residents to increase composting efforts.

Roll out that idle bin leaning against the wall and wheel it to the curb! If odour is a turn-off, make space in your freezer to store kitchen waste. Clean out your refrigerator the day before collection. Encourage neighbours to compost. If you live in an apartment without collection, speak to the building manager!

### City should do more

The city also has a major role to play to

improve our score.

Best composting practices need to be promoted. More options are required, including drop-off points for apartment building residents without collection (some of these residents currently share a bin with willing neighbours).

The ultimate solution may be a city by-law declaring composting to be mandatory, as was done years ago for recycling. \*

We’re all in this together, so let’s make an effort to regain Westmount’s status as a leader in municipal compost collection – we can do better!

*With municipal buildings closed, new compost bins can be requested using the online form on the city website (“Contact the waste management team” option under Environment, Management of residual materials). There is about a four-week waiting time for delivery.*

*\*Editor’s note: In 13 years at this newspaper, I have never heard of anyone being ticketed for not recycling or of any city official checking garbage for recyclables. In what way is recycling “mandatory” here? – DP.*

### St. Léon, cont’d. from p.8

spread of COVID-19 contagion among construction workers.

Only one person expressed outright opposition to the zoning variances required for the project but did not list reasons.

The eight written comments were received from the total of 248 qualified voters from two zones that had been eligible to vote in a register.

### Suggestions offered

Some of the comments suggested ways of alleviating the current traffic problems that included “sacrificing” a narrow portion of the school property along Clarke to create a safety “pull-in” for cars in front of the school.

Others raised ongoing requests for a mid-block pedestrian crossing, the creation of a safety corridor for children and the installation of speed-limit bollards.

The council’s decision to move the project forward has been explained at many of the council meetings since December 2, 2019 when the conditional requirements were explained.

These include a traffic policy, concrete traffic instructions for parents, the presence of “proactive workers” to maintain traffic flow at the morning rush hour and support for active transportation like trot-tibus, a “walking school bus” project that organizes elementary school children to walk to school together in the morning, accompanied by volunteers.

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## Guest column

# Cash is vital to economy, safer than cards

By STEVEN MEITIN

*This open letter was received by the Independent on May 21.*

COVID-19 has exacerbated fears that as cash changes hands, it becomes a transporter of germs. But is cash really any worse than your debit or credit card?

LendEDU, a company that helps consumers learn about financial products, used a scientific device that tests for bacteria on a given surface to examine just how dirty credit/debit cards and cash really are. They tested the front and back of 41 different debit and credit cards, 27 different bills and 12 different coins.

After calculating the average germ score for each payment method, debit/credit cards turned out to be the dirtiest payment method. The study showed that the average germ score for credit/debit cards was 285 versus the average germ score for cash/coins at 148 (almost two times higher for cards compared to cash).

Just think of how many surfaces cards touch as they wait on tables, bars or counter-tops to be picked up and swiped. In fact, the average score for plastic cards was worse than the score registered for the bathroom at New York City's Penn Station, which used to see more than 650,000 people on an average workday!

Eliminating the use of cash only punishes some of the most vulnerable members of society: homeless people looking for a few dollars to buy breakfast, elderly people who may be uncomfortable with technology, people with no credit, coin drives for charities (like poppies for veterans, daffodils for cystic fibrosis, change at Christmas for the Salvation Army), tips for those in the service industry, and the list goes on.

It is also critical for consumers to have options to pay for their goods and services. While some may prefer the convenience of cards, others prefer how cash protects their privacy and anonymity, while helping them manage their debt level. Cash is a vital part of our economy.

Fabio Panetta, a member of the executive board of the European Central Bank, recently noted that, "Adequate availability of cash is crucial for the functioning of the economy... [cash] remains the dominant means of payment for consumers, and is of fundamental importance for the inclusion of socially vulnerable citizens, such as elderly or lower-income groups... Overall, banknotes do not represent a particularly significant risk of infection compared with other kinds of surface that people come into contact within daily life."

We need to end the practice of cash shaming. Dirty cash is a stigma for songs, not economies. Everybody needs to continue to practise good hygiene and be considerate of those around them.

But don't buy into the fear. The best way to protect all consumers and retailers is to continue to provide options for payment and to keep our economy moving. Wash your hands frequently, avoid touching your face and maybe even wipe your cards and cash with the right products, but don't think you are protecting anyone by refusing to accept cash or removing cash from our economy.

*Steven Meitin is the president of the Canadian Association of Secured Transportation (CAST), whose purpose is to promote and advocate for the interests of Canadian providers of secure transportation of valuables, provide a venue for beneficial dialogue among members, and encourage the advancement and excellence of industry standards across Canada and abroad.*

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### Outreach Services

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Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

*Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in December 2019. A list of sales can be found on p. 19.*

Prices dipped somewhat in real estate transactions registered in December, but volume was strong for the third month in a row as 13 homes sold. Coupled with 15 sales in each of October and November, the final quarter of last year saw 43 sales, leaving 2019 with almost as strong a record of fourth-quarter sales as it had in 2018 (51

# December transfers: prices weaken

sales) or 2017 (44), which were way ahead of anything seen in Westmount since early in the century.

The average of the 13 December sales was \$2,210,038, but the average mark-up over municipal evaluation (based, still, on the 2017 valuation) dropped to 23.6 percent from 40.1 percent in November and 51.6 percent in October. This creates an adjusted value for the “typical” Westmount house of \$2,086,853, still above \$2 million as it has been for all but one of the last 16 months.

Highest & lowest

Highest price was \$4,450,000 for one of

the homes built on Surrey Gardens in 2013, the sixth-highest price of 2019. The only sale less than \$1 million was a small row-house at 450 Claremont Ave. above Sherbrooke St., which sold for \$820,000, fifth-lowest price of the year. Highest mark-up for December came in the sale of 5 Douglas Ave. for \$2,100,000, 52.2 percent above its 2017 valuation, while 62 Rosemount Ave. represented the only mark-down of the month in a \$3,700,000 sale, which was almost 12 percent less than its 2017 deemed value.

Condominiums

Three condominium sales were closed

in December, including \$2,600,000 for a penthouse apartment at 215 Redfern Ave., the second-highest price for a condominium in 2019.

The others were both less than \$1 million.

Also sold were two shares of duplexes: 54 Thornhill Ave. has always had a single address and the owners of the “upper” and “lower” units are separate; the December sale involved the upper floor.

Various ownership percentages changed in the sale of 537 Prince Albert Ave. and it appears the stated exchange value involved more than simply compensating a previous owner.



53 Surrey Gardens sold for \$4,450,000, the highest sale in December.



450 Claremont sold for \$820,000, the lowest sale in December.



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# Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in December 2019

ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2017 VAL	RATIO (%)
450 Claremont	Benjamin Henkewick	\$820,000	\$726,500	12.9%
4293 de Maisonneuve	Marian Kellerman & Rachel Levy	\$1,600,000	\$1,139,900	40.4%
5 Douglas	Richard Black	\$2,100,000	\$1,379,900	52.2%
4323 Montrose	Elizabeth Merson	\$1,260,000	\$1,025,300	22.9%
4380 Montrose	Steve Nador & Catherine Cox	\$3,800,000	\$2,660,900	42.8%
644 Murray Hill	Norman Jaskolka & Linda Migicovsky	\$1,982,500	\$1,526,000	29.9%
23 Oakland	Oleg Khalimonov & Olga Sergeyeva Khalimonova	\$2,700,000	\$2,225,400	21.3%
62 Rosemount	David Clifford & Mary Rose Elizabeth Dupas	\$3,700,000	\$4,194,800	-11.8%
53 Surrey Gardens	Frédéric Girard & Stéphanie Larivière	\$4,450,000	\$3,438,900	29.4%
39 Thornhill	Yongjun Song	\$1,653,000	\$1,377,600	20.0%
623 Victoria	Enrico Padula & Maria Elena Guarino	\$1,440,000	\$1,155,000	24.7%
633 Victoria	Janis Brownstein	\$1,575,000	\$1,280,300	23.0%
663 Victoria	Mark Pretorian & Sara Leclerc	\$1,650,000	\$1,105,700	49.2%
<b>CONDOMINIUMS</b>				
432 Claremont	Zhe Song	\$570,000	\$456,400	24.9%
215 Redfern #607	Colin Adair	\$2,600,000	\$1,868,700	39.1%
4476 St. Catherine #103	Alan Osler Aitken	\$693,000	\$467,600	48.2%
<b>SHARES OF DUPLEXES</b>				
54 Thorniill, 49.5% <sup>1</sup>	Patrick Toledano	\$870,000	\$653,450	33.1%
535-37 Prince Albert, 30% <sup>2</sup>	Margaret Louise Babinok	\$222,885	\$274,110	-18.7%

<sup>1</sup>Exclusive use of upper unit, Valuation is 49.5% of \$1,320,100.  
<sup>2</sup>October transfer. Use of 537 Prince Albert. Valuation is 30% of \$913,700.





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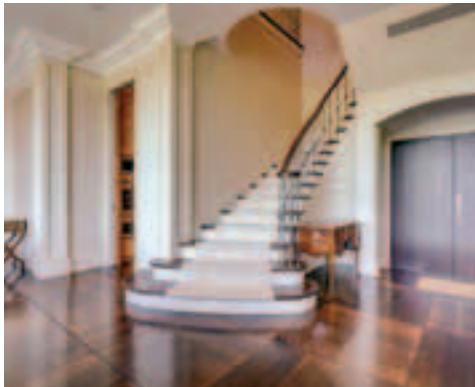
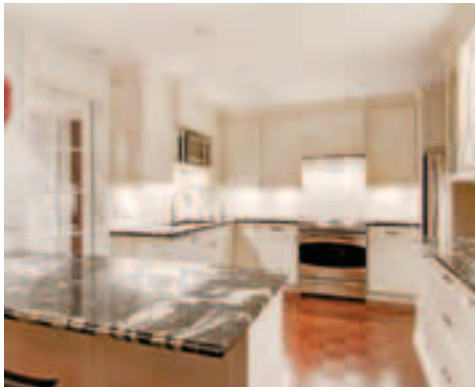
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## Cause: Temple Emanuel-Beth Sholom Gala 2020

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## Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

As Social Notes depends on social events, which depend on gatherings, times have changed. But we'll meet again. Until then, we profile the disappointed but determined supporters of great causes to see how they are faring in our smaller world and learn their event's new plans.

## What was your event? Cause?

It was Westmount's Temple Emanuel-Beth Sholom Gala 2020, "Peace, Diversity, Inclusion: a Celebration of Shared Values"

honouring Marcia and Brian Bronfman, introduced by Helen Antoniou Molson. The proceeds were to augment the temple's education, outreach and interfaith programming.

**It was planned to be held on what date?**  
June 11, 2020.

## Have you planned a new date?

Yes! Temple will be having a *virtual* shorter musical event on Thursday, June 11, 2020, as a Connection event instead of Gala 2020. It's open to the public. Information: templemontreal.ca

## How are you sheltering in place?

I am staying at home. This includes no food shopping. But delivery services have been amazing. Walking in this gorgeous neighbourhood, I can see spring arriving,

and all the flower beds sprouting.

## Have you developed a daily routine?

Somewhat. Zooming with my exercise class. Zooming on Temple's programs and McGill's lectures.

## Instead of cocktail attire, what are you wearing?

[I was] wearing same comfortable pair of wool pants and turtleneck sweaters – until it [got] warmer.

## How are you staying in touch?

With the world via CNN and CBC TV. With friends and family via telephone, FaceTime and Zoom. Reacting to and passing on wonderfully creative online jokes re COVID or US politics. And, of course, Netflix.



## Fraser: 'We need this field right now'

## City fences off Westmount Athletic Grounds field

The city fenced the field (but not the track) at the Westmount Athletic Grounds behind Westmount High on May 29.

The *Independent* was told that Aaron Fraser of Hallowell Ave. was among those nearby residents opposed to the move and reached out to him for his comments.

He wrote back by email June 1, saying among other things:

"I decided [after seeing the fence] to write our councillor, Ms. Kathleen Kez,

who wrote back quickly, apologized and stated that she had noticed that the field was yellow and dry, and that she had called it in and this is the remedy that was decided upon.

"Many other neighbours inquired as to why the irrigation wasn't turned on ... It felt offensive that such an impactful decision like that would be made and no one thought to even inform the residents. My question is: why is the health of the grass

more important than the health of our residents during springtime in a pandemic? Someone should have thought, 'This isn't a good idea right now.' This could be easily remedied by taking down the fence and putting on the sprinklers at night. Let the grass be what it is. People are more important. We need this field right now."

When asked for a statement, Mayor Christina Smith also wrote back June 1, saying among other things, "I know that

residents who live near the WAG are very angry and disappointed to see the field restricted ... The grounds are very hard, so seeding and irrigation will not be enough to salvage [it]. Water is simply not being absorbed. The field needs to be fertilized, irrigated, aerated and seeded. This process will take between two to three weeks, depending on weather... There are about four times more people enjoying our green-spaces than usual, which is why, more than ever, our fields need to be maintained. I know how critical parks are right now in helping us get through this pandemic. I wish more time had been given to notify residents and I will work with the [city's permanent] administration to make sure this happens in the future."

See photo, p. 1.

## Parks getting use



A trainer and exercise group had taken over the lower half of Murray Hill (King George) Park May 23 with steel ropes, green cones and elastic cords attached to a lamp post.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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9 Lives  
LYSANNE FOWLER

Prince is quite memorable and, yes, regal. He is a sleek black domestic short-hair with contrasting bright gold-tone eyes and a sculpted black nose for a stunning profile.



Stunning Prince

This sweet six-year-old is presently at the Montreal SPCA cattery and he is now available for adoption to a loving family in our neighbourhood. He is so cuddly and playful, a heartwarming companion to all in the home.

Prince is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations and treatments, neutered and microchipped.

Your Handsome Prince is waiting at the Montreal SPCA cattery and his identification number is 43643844. Please refer to its website at [www.sPCA.com](http://www.sPCA.com) and complete its simple online application for Prince's adoption. You will be contacted within 24 hours for a telephone interview, followed by a visit by appointment at the SPCA.

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne



Westmount  
A-dog-tions  
LYSANNE FOWLER

Well, Bandit is the most handsome brindled thief of hearts! Can't miss this happy fellow, attentive and looking forward to friendly play and companionship.

Bandit is waiting for his best life and you can give it to him. He is now at the Montreal SPCA kennel and he really needs a family's love as soon as possible.

He is a sporting four-year-old, wanting to play ball, enjoy swims and set out on long walks.

Bandit is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations and treatments, neutered and microchipped.

Fun Bandit is waiting at the Montreal SPCA kennel and his identification number is 43843291. Please refer to its website at [www.sPCA.com](http://www.sPCA.com) and complete its simple online application for Bandit's adoption.

You will be contacted within 24 hours for a telephone interview, followed by a visit by appointment at the SPCA.

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne

Bandit, cuddles  
and play



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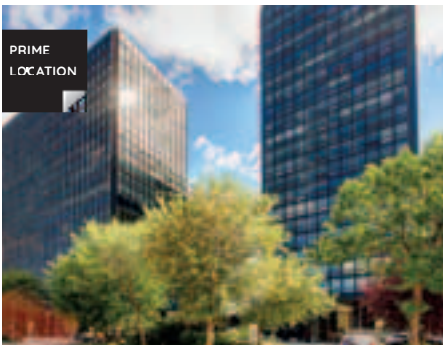
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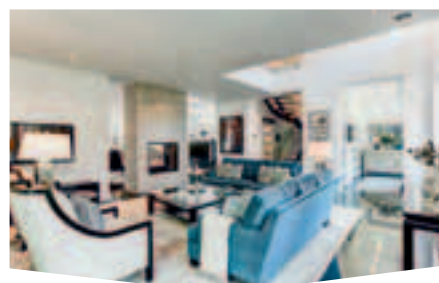
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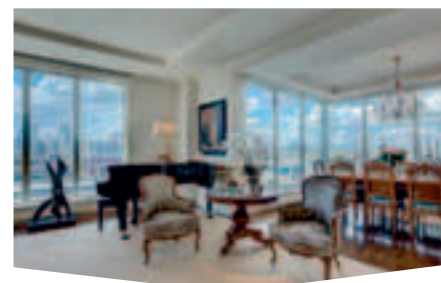
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