

'Barrage' of pool-permit requests hits city

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Of the 28 building permits approved at the city council's April 19 meeting, eight involve requests to install swimming pools.

"It's a barrage of pools," said Councillor Conrad Peart, urban planning commissioner for permits and architecture. "We're seeing a trend. I've never seen anything like it," he added in moving a resolution to approve all 28 permits listed as being recommended by the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC).

Since 2017's total of six pool permits, "there has been a notable increase in landscaping projects that include pools" rising to 14 for the full year in 2020, he told the *Independent*. There have been 12 approvals so far this year.

"We can't be certain but this trend appears to correlate with the onset of the pandemic. Presumably, our residents have decided to make different or additional investments into their homestead." (See the April 19 permits list, p. 22).

Pool requirements can be found in By-law 1547, article 6.1.1.



A magnolia tree at the peak of its spring bloom on Arlington Ave. April 21.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



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'Imagine 2040' results posted

Respondents like today's city but cite many 'needs'

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

How did residents rate the city, its services and outstanding "needs" as surveyed online last fall in the city's "Imagine Westmount 2040" consultation process?

A tabulation by city consultants of the information from 689 survey respondents concluded that "overall," respondents were satisfied with city services but saw "an ur-

gent need" for action on commercial vacancies, environmental leadership, accessible infrastructure and social/affordable housing.

On the other hand, some felt that "existing problems" needed to be addressed first.

Among the answers and comments from 30 in-depth questions, for example, "many respondents" called for greater flexibility *continued on p. 11*





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Am I cute or what?



"This morning [April 17], I went for a walk and spotted this squirrel on Côte St. Antoine near King George (Murray) Park. It was so cute that I thought it would be an interesting addition to your newspaper," wrote Westmouter Imogen Prince.

Photo courtesy of I. Prince

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A-dog-tions, p. 19**

9 Lives, p. 19

**Retail Review:
Harry Toulch moves, p. 24**

City's 2020 financial reports to be filed

The city gave notice on its website April 22 that its financial and external auditor's reports for 2020 would be filed by its treasurer at the next regular sitting of city council, namely Tuesday, May 3 at 7:30 pm.

This action is in accordance with section 105.1 of the Cities and Towns Act (CQLR, chapter C-19).

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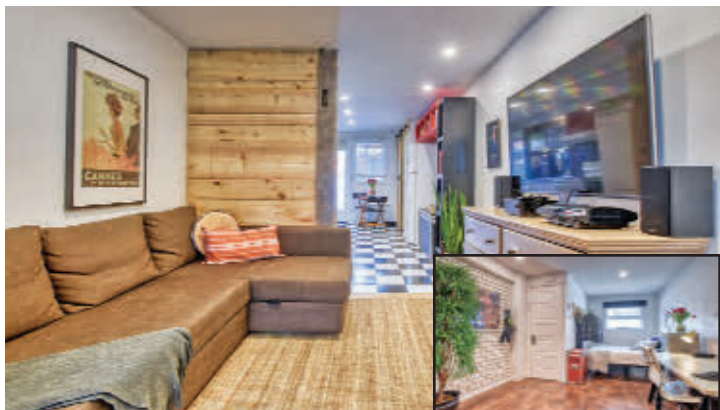
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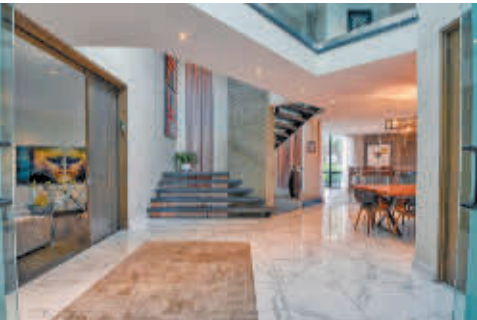
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Dog days of ... spring?



“Waiting for the ‘fur’ to grow [on Westmount Park’s dog/plant sculpture]. May the April snow showers not delay the bloom of May flowers,” said photographer Lena Atlas of this April 19 photo taken behind the Westmount greenhouses.

PHOTO COURTESY OF L. ATLAS.



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Parklets are here/coming



Two new parklet sites were in place April 23 on Victoria, top, and Sherbrooke east of Prince Albert, bottom, but not yet open for use. This set-up was also true of a “repeat site” on Sherbrooke west of Prince Albert (not pictured).

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

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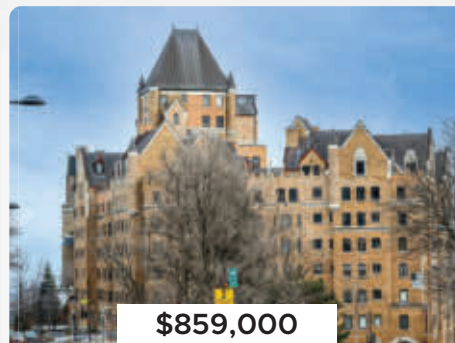
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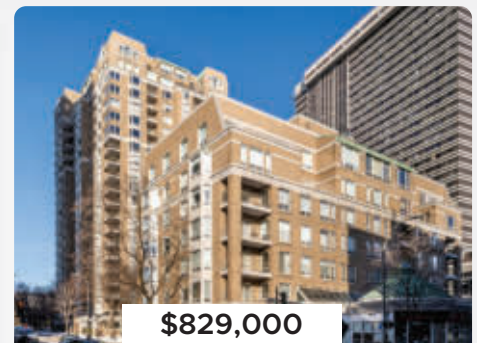
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THANKS FOR TREE TRIMMING

We would like to commend the company, Asplundh, for a job well done in cutting down several large trees next to our home on Summit Circle. The trees that could not be accessed by the “bucket truck” had to be cut by a very brave climber as seen in the photo at right. These men were courteous and professional and did a very nice clean-up job.

The tree-cutting project in our community is welcome, in order to protect our citizens from potential dangers as well as getting rid of those trees that are diseased. Those people who enjoy walking through the woods will now see a change in the geography and will benefit from a safer walk with their families, children and dogs.

SANDY LIPKUS & TED ADLER,
SUMMIT CIRCLE

NO LIGHTED REAL ESTATE SIGNS, PLEASE

I have noticed lighted real estate broker signs starting to pop up. Is there a by-law that prohibits illuminated advertising signs in residential areas? If not, we need one and quick. Obnoxious light pollution – horrible.

GEOFFREY ROBILLARD, SURREY GARDENS

YES TO NO-CAR ZONE

We are in complete agreement with the decision to make de Maisonneuve a no-car



zone between Atwater and Wood. Living close by at 1 Wood, we understand the concerns expressed by residents of the Plaza Tower [on de Maisonneuve]. However, we are convinced that Westmount's planning department can come up with a secure and attractive project that would satisfy all concerned.

CLAUDE AND M.J. COULOMBE, WOOD AVE.

EVEN ‘PARKLETS’ SHOULD RESPECT HANDICAPPED SPOTS

The picture, above right, was taken April 19 at the south corner of Prince Albert and Sherbrooke St. The parklet installation for the upcoming summer season is under way. However, in this particular situ-



ation, a handicapped parking spot has not been considered as part of the plan. I wrote about the same issue at the same location last year. It would be incredibly appreciated if the city planners would be more mindful and aware of people with limited mobility who depend on these parking spots.

NATHALIE ALLARD, PRINCE ALBERT

PLEASE REPLANT THE TREE ... THANKS FOR DOING SO

April 18: This budding tree, below, was uprooted due to work being done at Westmount Park School. One only hopes that it will be replanted soon.

*

April 19: After a few days out, the tree, below right, is back and feeling quite grounded!

SAM BEITEL, ABBOTT AVE.

MORE SUPPORT FOR CHIN

I am beyond shocked, dismayed and disgusted by the treatment meted out to Mr. Stephen Chin, who is one of the kindest, gentlest souls in Westmount, by the Montreal police (incident reported by Mr. Chin on April 6, p. 6 and decried by a reader on April 13, p. 7.) This letter is not

only in defence of Mr. Chin who keeps fit by doing tai chi in Westmount Park with his stick and by occasionally walking his neighbours' dogs, now that he no longer has the company of his own beloved miniature collies Scherzo and Wolfgang, but also in strong rejection of a police force that is not only afraid of an elderly and highly educated elderly citizen from a civilization that equates age with wisdom, but also sees fit to bully him.

A weaponized and racist police force should be out of bounds in Westmount Park. Let's return to cadets who make sure children don't get into trouble, the elderly don't suffer any mishaps and the average park user puts litter where it belongs.

MAYA KHANKHOJE, METCALFE AVE.

CONTRA LEAF BLOWERS (1)

[As a next-street neighbour of Westmount], I was glad to read your article about Public Security undertaking an enforcement campaign with respect to leaf blowers (“Public Security launches enforcement campaign on leaf blowers,” April 6, p. 11).

While the most common objections to leaf blowers are to their noise, biologists tell us that fallen leaves provide shelter to native pollinators and many other insects as well as to the pupae of butterflies and moths.

We have all heard that bird populations are declining – if we want to continue to enjoy birds, let's provide them with the cat-erpillars and insects they need for food. This means letting some leaves stay on your garden beds in the fall and not being in a rush to tidy your gardens till late April.

Another reason for avoiding leaf blowers is that gasoline-powered two-stroke engines are very polluting – they emit a lot of greenhouse gases (as well as other gases harmful to human health). The current climate crisis (a key factor in updating Westmount's urban master plan) is calling us



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

to create ways of living that are more in line with the very real limits of our planet and its ecosystems.

Your article states that Westmount had plans to ban gasoline-powered leaf blowers in 2018 but retracted them – the mayor saying a ban would be more effective if carried out with other municipalities. *Independent* readers may be interested to know that right next door to Westmount, Montreal's Ville Marie borough banned gasoline-powered ones completely in October 2019 (see clauses 37.0.1 and 37.0.2 of regulation CA-24-085.) And on the other side of Westmount, the Coalition for Green and Quiet Neighbourhoods (check out its Facebook page or website, www.coalitionquiet.ca) is working to inform citizens and elected officials.

If it can be done in Washington DC (James Fallows, *The Atlantic*, April 2019), why not in Westmount and all municipalities on the island of Montreal?

ELIZABETH ROBINSON, DOWNTOWN

CONTRA LEAF BLOWERS (2)

On p. 11 of the *Independent's* issue of April 6 under the headline: "Public Security launches enforcement campaign on leaf blowers" it explains that, from April 1 to May 1, the use of leaf blowers is allowed between 8 am and 4 pm from Monday to Saturday.

These are the days and times when most people are out in the open.

I wonder whether Westmount's health authorities are aware of Public Security's action in this respect?

And also whether Public Security's director is aware that, besides blowing leaves, the leaf blowers are also blowing nitrogen dioxide, asbestos, mercury, polycyclic hydrocarbons and the droppings of birds and animals into the lungs of children, seniors and residents of Westmount unfortunate enough to be in the path of leaf blowers?

And that the leaf blowers are helped by the wind to spread these pollutants far and wide?

And that these pollutants can, and will in the long run cause cancer, birth defects and damage to the brain, heart and, other organs?

In conclusion, the constant loud noise of these machines is not only annoying. It has been proved that a single exposure to loud noise is enough to damage the hearing. The hearing and health of the workers who operate them are greatly endangered. Sweeping away the leaves gently with a broom will give the workers healthful exercise and safety for residents of Westmount.

STEPHEN CHIN, SHERBROOKE ST.

PLEASE RE-CONSIDER CITY'S LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR ATWATER LIBRARY

Letter sent to Mayor Christina Smith and Councillor Mary Gallery

I am horrified to learn of the funding cuts and increased taxes relative to the Atwater Library and Computer Centre.

As I am sure you are aware, this organization is one of the oldest extant institutions in Montreal, having been founded in 1828. It has been located in Westmount since c. 1920, when it was brought from St. James St. to Westmount by Westmount's mayor William Rutherford. The architect was the firm of the Hutchison family, also of Westmount.

It continues its vocation as a library, and as a community centre in eastern Westmount, and as a place where people can learn more about their computers and the technology world. Widespread community support permitted a recent upgrading of the library building...for which Westmount has increased the building's taxation.

I find it most unfortunate that in the time of COVID, Westmount has significantly increased taxes on the organization to an onerous degree, and has at the same time reduced the annual grant, putting the finances of the institution in a precarious situation.

Please re-consider this taxation/grant situation, and alleviate the financial stress that Westmount's increased taxation and grant reduction is causing the Atwater Library and Computer Centre.

I hope you can find somewhere monies to continue adequate support of this National Historic Site, a venerable institution in Westmount, a part of Montreal's history, and a valuable asset to the Westmount community and beyond.

SUSAN MCGUIRE, MONTROSE AVE.

WHY QUARANTINE VACCINATED, UNVACCINATED TOGETHER?

Letter sent to Marc Garneau, MP for NDG-Westmount & Canada's minister of Foreign Affairs

I hope all goes well with you and yours.

I would like to ask you to consider my personal situation, and I am not the only one, with this serious dilemma. That is of vaccinated Canadians returning from Florida. I am a retired pharmacist, living at 1 Wood Ave. and I have some knowledge of the science. What possible positive results can there be from putting vaccinated people in hotels with people from all over the world, not vaccinated, and the danger that they may be carrying a variant of COVID?

Spring Cleaning



At the very least, vaccinated people should be only with other vaccinated people.

To my knowledge, there is no place, anywhere, that treats vaccinated people with such Draconian measures. Even from an economic perspective, treating vaccinated people less strictly is helpful, as they will not be a burden on the already stretched health budgets. Everywhere, the move seems to be to get vaccinated people to return to normal, as soon as possible. Green passports, or a version thereof, is where we are heading, for the benefit of everyone. I have spoken to many doctor friends of mine, and all agree that restrictions on vaccinated people is of no, or very little value, in any case.

Sending fully vaccinated people home to quarantine, and take a follow-up COVID test upon arriving in Canada, in addition to the one taken on departure seems like a win-win situation. If you were to confirm to me, that you will consider this, and have it discussed, I would be most appreciative.

BERNIE SHUSTER, WOOD AVE

FREEDOM TO BURN A BOON

I sat by my fire this afternoon, with my laptop on my knee and an inch of snow

covering my tulips outside and my furnace on the blink (the plumber is very busy with other customers). I am grateful for the freedom to have a woodfire from time to time, for ambience if not for heat, but for heat if need be.

As the warm weather approaches, I wonder if those who decry the burning of firewood for a (very) few hours annually also criticize the use of outdoor barbecues and how much particulate matter they throw up into the air?

While we're targeting outdoor burning, we could also talk about what's being cooked on the grill. It seems that producing 1 kg of beef pumps 60 kg of CO₂-equivalent into the atmosphere (source: ourworldindata.org, quoting a 2018 article in *Science*). That's the same as burning 26 liters of gasoline!

Asparagus and strawberries come to us out of season by air freight, with an attendant large carbon footprint. Am I going to ask you to change your diet? No, but allow me to suggest that you think about doing it anyway.

I appreciated reading David Price's cogent editorial comments on this matter (April 20, p. 6).

NICHOLAS PRATLEY, THORNHILL AVE.

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Grants based on services, not philanthropy: Mayor Smith

Atwater library continues to press city for added funding

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Three representatives of the Atwater Library and Computer Centre submitted questions to the city council April 19 asking for restoration of a higher supporting grant received last year of \$45,500 compared to the \$25,560 awarded last month.

The library was one of six not-for-profit organizations to share in an envelope of \$130,500 for this year's qualifying non-profits that provided specific services to Westmount residents that are not offered by the city and based on the groups' applications (see story March 30, p. 1).

In the case of the Atwater, Mayor Christina Smith explained, this service specifically related to its computer courses that Westmount Public Library does not provide. Last year's grant included a one-time amount to offset permit fees for work related to the installation of an accessibility elevator in the heritage building.

"I salute the work" of the library, she said while explaining that the city's grant can vary from one year to another depending on specific needs. As an example, this year's largest went to Contactivity Seniors' Centre to help with its added COVID services to seniors such as help with grocery shopping and driving to vaccination sites.

Second largest recipient

"I want to make it very, very clear that the city is not in the business of philanthropy," she said, emphasizing the service aspect. "I would note that the Atwater Library has been the second largest recipient of grants," she added.

She said she was "a bit shocked" by some information from the library. She empathized with its needs but that the city gives the money for services to Westmount residents and "I would encourage them to provide data on the number of users who are Westmount residents." She also said



The Atwater Library on April 23.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

she hoped that next year "we see some new groups" apply for the support grants.

Councillor Cynthia Lulham said she was disappointed by the library's comments decrying a lack of support, in part because the city had been supportive of the library over 25 years and also provides it with various Public Works services.

Councillor Jeff Shamie said he supported the mayor's "very eloquent" comments.

He pointed out that he worked in the area of philanthropy and "it's not our job to be giving out municipal dollars to charitable organizations."

The request for the city to reconsider its

2021 grant had also been made in the Letters to the Editor section of *Independent* (see April 6, p. 6) by board member Richard Conrad, one of the three repeating the request at the council meeting.

While the library is located in Westmount at the border with Montreal, it serves a large territory outside Westmount.

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This just in:
Westmounters appreciate old, new buildings



According to the city's Imagine 2040 survey (see story on p. 11), Westmounters see the city's older housing as a strength (81 percent of respondents) and do not see new construction as a threat (72 percent). As seen April 23: top: a nurses' residence on Dorchester was built in 1919 as part of the Western Hospital, before the site was absorbed into the Montreal Children's Hospital. The building is now part of the 1111 Atwater development, part of which is in Westmount. Bottom from left, there is a cluster of newer buildings just west of Westmount High: condos at 11 Hillside (started by March 2011; first sale in March 2012), townhouses/condos on 175 Metcalfe (construction began in 2014; first sale in November 2015) and four townhouses on Hillside at Metcalfe being completed now.

Looking at some of the survey results

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Of the 689 respondents to the “Imagine Westmount 2040” survey, 424 completed the lengthy 30 questions – many requiring fairly in-depth answers. Of the total number responding, 85 percent were residents while the rest worked in Westmount.

Most (47 percent) came from the ages grouped 45-64 years and another 35 percent from those 65 and older for a total of 82 percent. The following findings categorized in degrees of strength and weakness are among those from a summary pre-

pared by the city’s consultants, Transfert, Environnement et Société, which conducted the survey:

Urban planning

- 50% saw an increase in property values as a strength by allowing for increases in public finances, the delivery of quality services and investment in infrastructure, but 29% saw them as making the city less accessible, diverse and sustainable.
- 52% found the absence of bars to be a strength compared to 31% rating it a weakness and saying the city could

benefit from “a small microbrewery, bistros, pubs or wine bars to rejuvenate the city.”

- Shops and services missing include: independent restaurants and café terrasses, diversity of shops including affordable stores.
- 81% viewed Westmount’s older housing as a strength for its high quality and architectural character but noted it was not easily accessible to people with reduced mobility and was difficult to restore using materials now obsolete or expensive.
- 72% said new construction does not threaten Westmount’s identity but should be integrated into the landscape.

Greenspace

- Parks and greenspaces were seen as the city’s main asset “but need better maintenance.” More tree canopy is desired in districts south of Sherbrooke.

Pandemic street use a hit

- The temporary use of public spaces last summer by café terrasses and street furnishing was deemed “a great success” especially on Greene Ave. but should be confined to Greene and Victoria and not occupy parking spaces or hinder pedestrian mobility.

13% for pool

- Answering an open question on miss-

ing public spaces and infrastructure, 13% of 389 responses stated an indoor pool.

Westmount in a nutshell

- Wording most representing Westmount today: privileged living environment (16%), green space (15%) and heritage (14%).

Next step in the 2040 process

A detailed “diagnostic” of the Westmount territory by Urban Planning officials is already under way following the consultation findings from the survey, Councillor Cynthia Lulham, said last week. This is the next step in the 2040 project to revise the city’s Planning Program.

“It involves gathering detailed information and background on the many aspects covered in the consultation report,” she said. This includes maps, census information, pie charts and tables, which will all be put on the city’s Engage website for residents to review and comment on.

While the project’s original timeline was to complete a draft revised version of the new Planning Program by June, this has been held up by COVID delays in the consultation process, Lulham explained.

Imagine 2040, cont’d. from p. 1

and simplification in obtaining building and renovation approvals, while 81 percent valued the city’s older housing stock for its architectural quality (see separate story, above).

The survey was conducted October 15 to November 16 as part of updating and revising the city’s 20-year-old Planning Program, a blueprint for zoning and other urban planning by-laws.

The findings, however, on which council members had been briefed February 15, only came to light in those minutes when they were tabled publicly April 6 and in a

follow-up question submitted to the council meeting April 19 by Denis Biro of Burton.

According to Urban Planning officials, the results had, in fact, been posted (unannounced) on the “Imagine Westmount” website at the end of February. They had been difficult to locate, it was later explained by Councillor Cynthia Lulham, urban planning commissioner for zoning, economic development and parks.

The report can now be sourced from the “Engage Westmount” button on the city’s home page.

TESTIMONIAL

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- Sherry -

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Tree removal at Tupper lots



This dead tree on the edge of the city’s Tupper parking lots, seen December 2020 at left, was taken down April 20 and 21, right.

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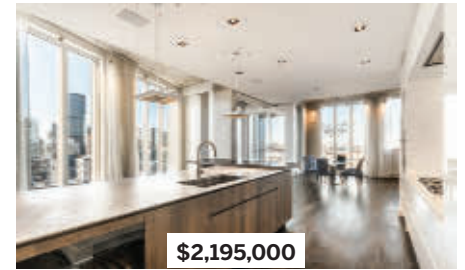
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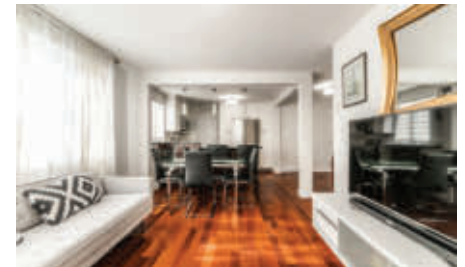
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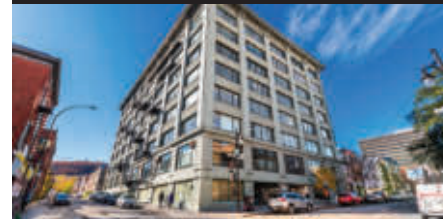
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We all want to know more about COVID-19 vaccination



There are many reasons to get vaccinated, including protecting ourselves from the complications and dangers caused by infectious diseases, but also to stop the return of infectious diseases that are avoidable through vaccination.

The COVID-19 vaccination campaign now underway is aimed at preventing serious complications and death from COVID-19. We also use vaccination as a way of protecting our healthcare system and getting back to a more normal life.

When did the vaccination campaign start?

COVID-19 vaccination in Québec began in December 2020 with the delivery of the first vaccine doses. Because the availability of vaccine is limited, categories of people deemed at higher risk of developing COVID-19 complications have been given priority. As more vaccine becomes available in Canada, the categories of recipients will be extended.

Order of priority of recipients of COVID-19 vaccines

- 1 Vulnerable people and people with a significant loss of autonomy who live in residential and long-term care centres (CHSLDs) or in intermediate and family-type resources (RI-RTFs)
- 2 Workers in the health and social services network who have contact with users
- 3 Autonomous or semi-autonomous people who live in private seniors' homes (RPAs) or in certain closed residential facilities for older adults
- 4 Isolated and remote communities
- 5 People 80 years of age or older
- 6 People 70 to 79 years of age
- 7 People 60 to 69 years of age
- 8 Adults under 60 years of age who have a chronic disease or health problem that increases the risk of complications of COVID-19
- 9 Adults under 60 years of age who do not have a chronic disease or health problem that increases the risk of complications, but who provide essential services and have contact with users
- 10 Everyone else in the general population at least 16 years of age

What supply strategy was used to acquire the vaccines?

The Government of Canada signed advance purchase agreements for seven promising COVID-19 vaccines with the following companies: AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Medicago, Moderna, Novavax, Pfizer and Sanofi Pasteur/GlaxoSmithKline. The purchases are conditional upon approval of these vaccines by Health Canada.

To date, the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been approved for distribution in Canada. Soon, other vaccines from these companies will be used to speed up COVID-19 vaccination.



What types of COVID-19 vaccines are being studied?

There are three types of vaccine currently being studied.

- 1 mRNA vaccines:** These vaccines contain part of the RNA of the virus which has the ability to make the S protein located on the surface of the virus. Once the RNA messenger is inside our cells, they make proteins similar to those on the surface of the virus using the instructions provided by the RNA messenger. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it. The RNA fragment is quickly destroyed by cells. There is no risk that this RNA will alter our genes.
- 2 Viral vector vaccines:** These contain a weakened version of a virus that is harmless to humans. Once in the body, the vaccine enters our cells and gives them instructions to make protein S. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it. Once in the body, the vaccine enters our cells and gives them instructions to make protein S. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it.
- 3 Protein subunit vaccines:** These contain non-infectious fragments of proteins that mimic the envelope of the virus. Our immune system recognizes that this protein is foreign and produces antibodies to defend itself against it.

Will an mRNA vaccine alter our genetic code?

No. Messenger RNA does not enter the cell's nucleus or come into contact with the nucleic DNA. As such, it cannot alter our DNA in any way.

How do COVID-19 vaccines work?

When someone receives the vaccine against the virus that causes COVID-19, their body starts to defend itself against the virus. An immune reaction occurs which neutralizes the virus producing antibodies and activating defense cells.

Most COVID-19 vaccines in development prompt the production of antibodies to block protein S; the protein that allows the virus to infect the human body. This prevents the virus from entering and infecting human cells.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is composed of strands of ribonucleic acid (RNA) genetic material surrounded by a crown-like envelope with proteins that include the S (spike) protein, hence the name "coronavirus."



What side effects can be expected from injection with the COVID-19 vaccine?

Some minor side effects may occur, such as redness or pain at the injection site and fatigue, fever or chills. These symptoms are less common among vaccine recipients over the age of 55, are usually benign and do not last long.

As of now there are no known serious side effects from mRNA vaccines. While other random problems may arise, such as a cold or gastroenteritis, they are not related to the vaccine per se.

Because the vaccine does not contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus, it is not capable of causing COVID-19. However, people who come into contact with the virus in the days leading up to their vaccination or within 14 days of receiving the vaccination could still develop symptoms and get the COVID-19 disease.

As such, following health measures remains important until such time as a majority of the population has been vaccinated.

Why did it take 40 years to develop a flu vaccine but only nine months for one against COVID-19?

Past efforts, particularly during the SARS epidemic in 2003, advanced coronavirus vaccine research and accelerated the fight against COVID-19.

There are currently over 50 COVID-19 vaccines undergoing clinical trials around the world, the result of unprecedented scientific cooperation. Considerable financial and human resources have been invested in the development of vaccines that meet regulatory requirements in such a short span of time.

Public health and regulatory authorities in many countries, including Canada, are working hard to ensure that as many safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines as possible become quickly available to their populations.

Why are two vaccine doses required?

The second dose "reminds" the immune system to continue producing antibodies and ensures long-term protection. In current circumstances, where COVID-19 is spreading very fast, administration of the second dose may be delayed somewhat to be able to vaccinate more people with the first dose.

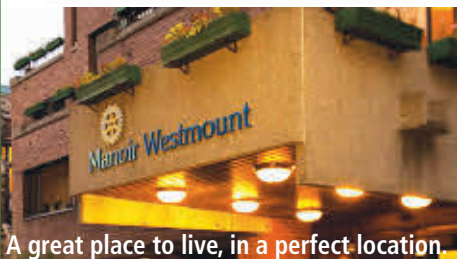
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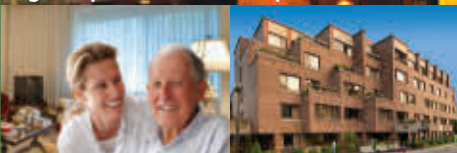
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Victoria Hall re-painted, ready for re-opening

COVID has taken a toll on Westmount's employees, Mayor Smith tells Rotarians

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic more than a year ago, three elected officials with the city of Westmount and at least 10 city employees have come down with the coronavirus, Mayor Christina Smith told members of the Rotary Club of Westmount during their weekly noon-hour online gathering on April 21.

The Rotarians had invited the mayor to speak on what it's like to be the mayor of a municipality during a pandemic.

While word of Mayor Smith's and her family's bout with COVID made news last October throughout the Montreal region, she said two city councillors also became infected.

Public Security, Public Works affected

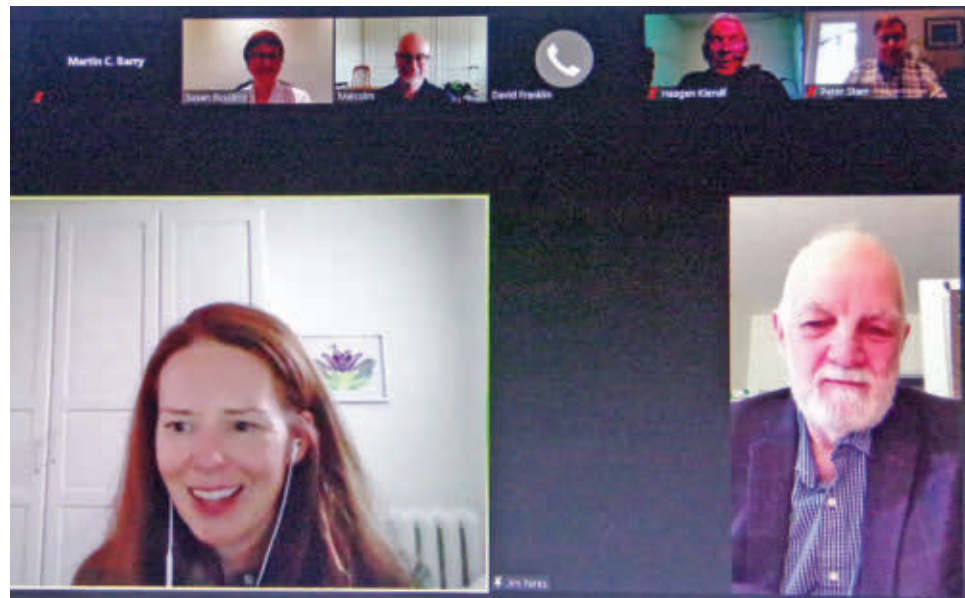
As for the employees, she said, "I guess probably in the end about 10 came down with COVID-19, and that Public Security was dealing with an outbreak as early as last fall.

"So, it went through Public Security fairly quickly, and Public Works, and then we've had, you know, one in Legal at the very beginning, which was scary because it was so unknown."

She said there were around five cases at Public Works and that all those infected were quickly isolated so there was no need to shut down the department's work teams.

"We've been very lucky and very fortunate," she continued, suggesting that dividing up the department's workforce into isolated "bubbles" helped keep infections in check.

"It's quite astounding, actually, because other cities have been hit very hard with their Public Works teams. Say in the winter and there had been a snow storm and two bubbles had cases, they then would be iso-



Left, Westmount mayor Christina Smith is seen with Rotary Club of Westmount president Jim Fares during the service club's online meeting on April 21.

lated and would then be off. And if we had a snow storm, then the snow was not getting picked up. And remarkably we didn't have that."

Mayor Smith said the Montreal borough of LaSalle had a far more serious problem dealing with COVID last year.

"It was very much in the first wave in April where they would have huge numbers of their Public Works team who were COVID-positive."

She said that in comparison, Westmount's Public Works staff "have been very, very lucky," although "some have been quite sick and have been hit very hard, and others have been more fortunate. But we've been lucky so far. But now it's really the race against the vaccine."

She agreed with Westmount Rotary president Jim Fares that Westmount did well with respect to COVID. "We did, in

comparison to others, and also considering how closely they work together," she said, alluding to the Public Works employees.

'Debt of gratitude' owed

The mayor said Public Works and Public Security are owed "a huge debt of gratitude for what they have done over the past year," while adding that in "being our own city, being an independent city, having control of our own budget ... we were able to put forth initiatives that made sense."

Asked whether she had any idea when Victoria Hall will re-open, Mayor Smith replied, "We don't have an exact time. But while it's been closed, you'll be happy to know we've painted it and we've cleaned it up and we're trying to do the repairs that we can. But as soon as we are given the go-ahead, we will actually open it and allow for our community groups to be back in."



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Greenhouse work continues

Views of work on the Westmount conservatory/greenhouse April 9, April 16, April 20 and 21. "After application of the membrane protecting the foundations, the workers installed French drains to keep water away, then covered them with crushed stone to allow surface water to filter into the French drains, and then covered it with earth, as seen here with the back-hoe," said former city councillor Patrick Martin, who also happens to be an engineer.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF P. MARTIN.



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Mr. HANS J. EICH, aged 93 years of Westmount, Quebec, passed away suddenly at the hospital, on March 22, 2021. He is survived by his sister Dora, niece Conny Biasca, her husband Marcel, and nephews Marco and Remo all in Switzerland, and former partners Tom (Kansas City) and Andre (Montreal), as well as friends Trudy and Walter (Vernon, BC), and Bob (Montreal) and Eda (Montreal).

Mr. Eich, born in Guggisberg, Switzerland spent most of his working life in the grain business with assignments that brought him to New York, Portland Oregon, Kansas City, and finally Montreal.

During a 20-year span Mr. Eich served both on Westmount's Contactivity Center on the Board of Directors representing the Member's Council and, as a volunteer driver, taking people to their medical appointments.

Always known to his family and friends as a very discerning, modest gentleman, of exquisite and refined taste. He was a music lover and regular subscriber to the Montreal Symphony, The Montreal Opera, and the Saturday Morning Ladies Musicals and enjoyed opera in Europe and New York. Hans was the consummate host and chef of many congenial fine dinners, much appreciated by his friends. His culinary skills were absolutely exceptional!

He will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Thanks are given to his caretakers, particularly Caroline Corbin. Also, the attentiveness of Eda Kistler and Nastran Razmjoo during the last phase of his life is much appreciated.

Following his wishes, his remains were entrusted to the McGill University medical school. A memorial will be held at a later date.

Ice cream here/coming



Vic village ice cream stores Dairy Queen and Bilboquet were respectively opening next month and open, as seen April 23.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.



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LYSANNE FOWLER

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Your neighbour,
Lysanne



Here is this most handsome Tucker from the Montreal SPCA, a faun and brindled Great Dane in the best of both colouring types!

Still quite young as a large puppy at three years of age, Tucker is at the Montreal SPCA kennel hoping for a family soon to share home life and outings with. Being a tall youngster from a susceptible breed, Tucker has tested positive for an Ortolani test for early detection of hip laxity.



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Police Report

Construction equipment stolen during break-and-enter at building near de Maisonneuve, Atwater

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A break-and-enter incident believed to have happened sometime from April 6 to 20 in a commercial building near the corner of de Maisonneuve Blvd. and Atwater Ave. in Westmount resulted in the theft of construction equipment and tools with an undisclosed value.

“It was machinery that was in a locale in the basement of a building,” said Station 12 spokesperson Adalbert Pimentel, while adding that the equipment’s owner was a contractor working on a job who had left the gear behind.

Although the area where the equipment was kept was locked, Pimentel said an em-

ployee showing up for work found the lock removed, the door forced open and the tools that had been inside stolen.

According to Pimentel, the investigators have little to go on as they had no suspect.

The initial investigation report didn’t estimate the value of the stolen equipment.

Hallowell incident

The Montreal police department says police officers as well as paramedics from Urgences Santé were called to intervene last week when someone tried to commit suicide on the commuter rail tracks near Hallowell Ave. in lower Westmount.

“The SPVM intervened for a situation involving a suicide attempt on April 20 in

the Westmount sector,” a spokesperson for the police force’s headquarters said in response to an e-mail from the *Independent* seeking information.

Station 12 community relations officer Adalbert Pimentel told the *Independent* that, given the nature of the incident, he had no authority to answer questions and referred the matter to the SPVM’s head of office.

The SPVM said responsibility for the person involved was transferred to Urgences Santé. “Out of respect for confidentiality regarding the identity of the person in question, we will not be commenting further,” they said.



Hallowell and the CP tracks on the morning of April 20.

PHOTO: VERONICA REDGRAVE.

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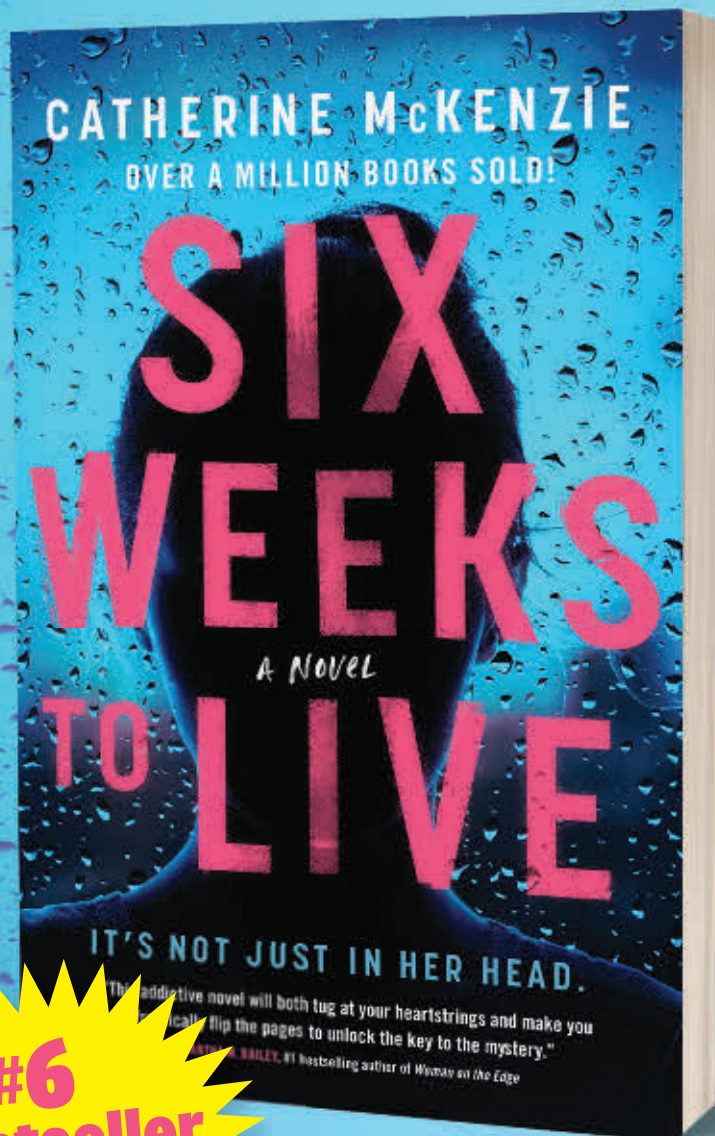
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Council approves 28 permits at April 19 meeting

The following 28 requests for demolition, exterior construction, alteration and renovation were approved at the April 19 meeting of the city council. There were no refusals.

- Approved**
- 322 Prince Albert:** to rebuild the rear balcony provided the dimensions of the balcony are revised to be at the minimum of the requirements of Quebec Construction Code;
- 29 Willow:** to install a new swimming pool and proposed revision to the application to install a glass railing surrounding the pool;
- 56 Sunnyside:** to rebuild the rear solarium;
- 4299 de Maisonneuve:** at a Category I building, to rebuild the front entrance steps and landings;
- 628 Murray Hill:** to renovate the rear upper sunroom, modify the rear lower deck to transform it into a sunroom and add a basement addition below, modify some window openings and replace windows;
- 160 Metcalfe:** at a Category I house: to modify the rear balcony provided that the level of the deck is not higher than the window;

- 57 Sunnyside:** to build a pool at the rear and do landscaping in the side and rear yards;
- 4323 Montrose:** to replace windows and doors provided the bottom section of the window designed #12 is fixed.
- 83 Stayner:** to replace a door on the second floor balcony;
- 57 Sunnyside:** exterior renovations to include replacing windows, modifying rear openings, replacing the front marquise and rebuilding the steps;
- 566 Lansdowne:** to build a swimming pool at the rear and do landscaping work in the front, side and rear yards, including the removal of an elevated deck in the side yard and the reconstruction of some retaining walls in the front yard;
- 156 Metcalfe:** to replace windows and a door which consist of replacing the windows with aluminum-clad ones given that the replacement of the front façade ones with the cladding was approved by the city council in 2017 for the second floor and in 2019 for the first floor;
- 455 Claremont:** to replace windows;
- 36 Summit Cresc.:** to replace windows and doors and modify openings on the side and rear façades;



1 Winchester on April 23.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

- 1 Winchester:** at a Category I house, to replace windows and a door provided the proposed windows are made of wood (interior and exterior), without any cladding as per Table 4.2.2 of the *Guidelines for Renovating and Building in Westmount* for Category I buildings;
- 65 Forden Ave.:** at a Category I house, to build a pool at the rear and do landscaping;
- 425 Roslyn:** to renovate the entrance stairs on the side façade and do landscaping work in the front, side and rear yards;
- 60 Sunnyside:** at a Category I house, to replace windows and a door provided the windows are in wood (interior and exterior) with cladding in accordance with Table 4.2.2 of the *Guidelines for Renovating and Building in Westmount* for Category I buildings;
- 565 Argyle:** at a Category I house, to build

- a pool and do landscaping;
- 589 Côte St. Antoine:** to do landscaping work in the front, side and rear yards, including reconstruction of the front retaining walls;
- 4297 de Maisonneuve:** at a Category I building, to rebuild the front entrance steps and landings;
- 308 Roslyn:** to replace a window;
- 3180 The Boulevard:** to replace windows and a door.
- 344 Kitchener:** to install a new pool in the rear yard;
- 4386 Montrose:** at a Category I house, to install a new pool in the rear yard;
- 467 Mount Pleasant:** to replace a fence in the front yard;
- 528 Victoria:** to modify a canopy and to replace a door on the side façade;
- 642 Victoria:** to build a pool at the rear and do landscaping.

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BUILDING PERMITS *What's permitted***Council approves 12 permits at April 6, refuses 1**

The following 12 requests for demolition, exterior construction, alteration and renovation were approved at the April 6 meeting of the city council. There was 1 refusal.

Approved

3261 Cedar: at a Category I house, to complete exterior restoration work that includes replacing the roof and windows and modifying openings on the side and rear;

500 Wood: at a Category I house, to modify existing openings of an accessory building in the rear yard;

473 Roslyn: to install a new pool in the rear yard, build a new driveway and to do landscaping;

48 Aberdeen: to demolish and rebuild the rear deck, build a new swimming pool and do landscaping provided the underside of the raised deck structure is covered by a wood soffit and a wood fascia so as to hide all the structural elements from view;

476 Strathcona: to replace windows;

116 Aberdeen: to install a new pergola on a terrace;

4821 St. Catherine: at a Category I house, to replace three windows on the front façade;

728 Upper Roslyn: to replace windows and doors;

4151 de Maisonneuve: at a Category I building, to replace a front door;

485 Strathcona: to replace two doors according to Option A of the application;

59 Windsor: to replace the windows of the garage;

4333 Sherbrooke: at city hall, a Category I building, to restore windows as original and insert two new ventilation grills (see story April 13, p. 1).

Refused under By-law 1305

469 Argyle: at a Category I house, to enlarge an above-ground terrace and add a pergola, given that the proposed surface of the deck is substantial and approximately eight feet above ground level, and that the deck will have an impact on neighbouring properties due to its size, height and proximity to property lines.



469 Argyle on April 23.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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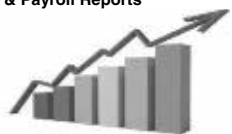


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Harry Toulch becomes Optik



Retail Review
VERONICA REDGRAVE

eases. “Our new space is more spacious with higher ceilings,” explained Michael, son of the founder Harry Toulch.

“We had planned to move anyway as our lease was up, but with the COVID restrictions Optik Avenue couldn’t be a better area. We have a lot more room for browsing,

there is an easier traffic flow and we offer totally private eye-care areas. And, obviously we have put all pre-cautions in place. Having been on Greene Ave. since 1993, we have families of grandparents and grandchildren who come to see us.”

The partners’ new boutique offers classics as well as trends: niche brands such as Moscot from New York along with couture lines and the vaunted Ray-



Throughout Westmount, one door closes and another opens. The renowned optometrist boutique Harry Toulch on Greene Ave. has closed, but a new door has opened just down the street.

Now called Optik Avenue Optométristes, Michael Toulch, above, has partnered with Earl Asimov, formerly of Vision 21/20. Both optometrists, they are joined by Lori Medoff, Diana Miceli and Tata Mahvelati, also trained optometrists.

Not only is the team highly skilled in current eye-care technologies and treatments for corrective lenses, they can also write prescriptions and diagnose eye dis-

Ban collection.

“Now that the weather is nice, Ray-Bans are selling really fast.” Harry Toulch opened in 1958 on trendy rue St. Laurent and for years was the go-to destination for the latest and greatest eyewear collections. Today, the new Optik Avenue offers fabulous frames – bookish modern classics, vintage and luxury styles – as well as the all-important eye examinations. Welcome to the neighbourhood!

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Chris was accompanying his mother Pamela Frankel, a Grosvenor resident, in Westmount Park on a chilly afternoon April 22.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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What a difference a day makes



This man was enjoying a spring jog – albeit at 10°C – April 20 on de Maisonneuve between Prince Albert and Victoria. The photo at right was taken the next day in the same block. The temperature was 3°C.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

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Kovac #2 at provincial science fair, advances to nationals

Westmounter Edward Kovac received the silver medal in the junior category at the 43rd Super Expo-sciences Hydro-Québec, finale québécoise, which wrapped up April 25. He also received a bursary of \$2,000 from the University of Sherbrooke to study there.

This placement puts him in a Quebec team of 20 going to the Expo-sciences pan-canadienne, which will take place virtually from May 17 to 21. See our April 6, p. 24 article for more on him and his project on

making less expensive hearing aids: *Entendre, mais à quel prix?*

Overheard

April 7, 9:20 am – Sherbrooke St. near Prince Albert:
“He was executing a 1980s plan in 2000.”

April 8, 2:20 pm – Vic village
“I’m very busy and I don’t care,” – that’s what she said.”

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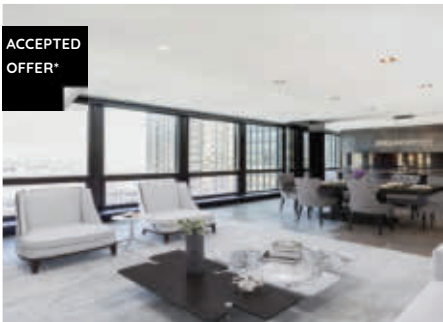
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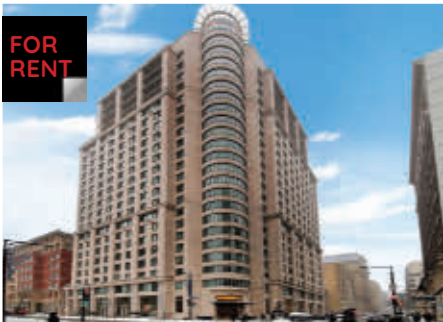


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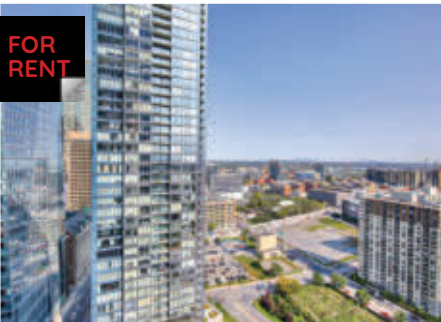
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