

Council dismisses city's top employee after long investigation

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Hadi Hakim, who had been hired by the city to head Westmount's administration as director general August 19 a year ago, was dismissed by the city council at its meeting October 11 after being suspended with pay July 12. At that time, he was reported as being "on leave."

In the unanimously approved dismissal resolution, Hakim was described as failing to comply with the city's code of ethics as well as its "policy of good conduct for employees" and its "policy on preventing psychological harassment and promoting civility in the workplace."

This resulted from an investigation conducted by EQUALS Human Resources firm, an independent external firm, whose findings, the resolution stated, "demonstrated without question the seriousness of the fault committed by Mr. Hakim."

"This process has been lengthy but in-

credibly thorough," Mayor Christina Smith said after the resolution was moved by Councillor Jeff Shamie as commissioner of finance and administration.

She later told the *Independent* the city had also engaged a labour law firm and said she commended employees who had met with the investigators. "It's very difficult to come forward against your boss. We need to make sure we have an organization where people can come forward – a message I delivered to the staff when I informed them" of the council dismissal.

The position was immediately posted, she explained. "When choosing a successor, we will underline the importance of service to citizens." It has been well known that the city has been losing employees, including some long-timers.

City unveils time-capsule contents



From left, city archivist Anthony Chiasson and Nicolas Leboeuf, records and archives technician, reveal some of the well-preserved photographs and post cards from a picture book included in a 100-year-old time capsule that had been buried in city hall. See p. 22 for story. PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Future of Villa Ste-Marcelline, a K-11 girls' school on Upper Belmont, uncertain, see p. 12

Man arrested, charged with sexual assault, see p. 23

Industry reps tell of microchip/battery shortage

Council tables draft ban on gasoline-fired leaf-blowers

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

As city council October 11 prepared to table regulations banning gasoline-fired leaf-blowers starting November 1, 2023, several landscapers and an equipment supplier stated during question period at its meeting that a global shortage of microchips has led to a scarcity of batteries needed to power electric leaf-blowers.

They spoke of the number of batteries they would need to clean some properties, that many of the leaves they remove come from city trees planted on city-owned land and that even though the city had warned five years ago of the coming ban, that was before COVID and the battery shortage.

They also asked to work with the city to implement the changes to reduce the environmental

continued on p. 3

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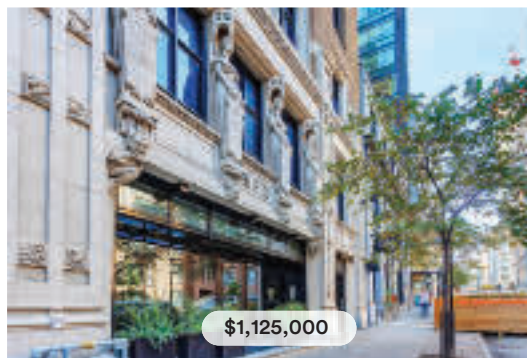
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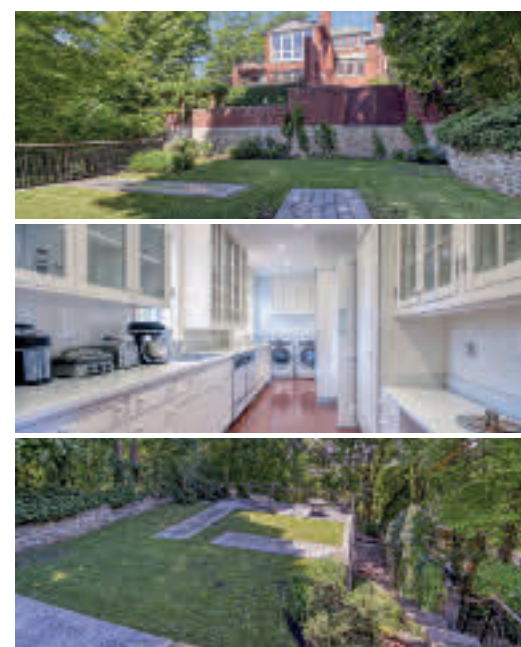
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Aloysius becomes assistant director of Engineering

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Shawn Aloysius was named by city council to be assistant director of the city's Engineering department at its meeting October 11, effective October 12. He had been interim division head of the department.

"It's a very well-deserved promotion," Mayor Christina Smith said. "Many will know and recognize him from being out at the worksites." She also said he has "a vision for long-term planning."

Among many projects he has been dealing with over the years was the re-doing of Argyle, for which he had been project manager (see story April 17, 2018, p. 5).

The assistant director position was vacant, according to the resolution moved by Councillor Jeff Shamie, commissioner of finance and administration. Filling it is reported to be especially important now that the department's well-known director, Elisa Gaetano, has been on leave for some time caring for a member of her family.



PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Fall is beautiful in Westmount, as seen October 16, but most of these leaves will eventually have to be gathered up somehow.

Gas-fired blowers, cont'd from p. 1

impact and asked for an easing of enforcement of the regulations until the industry is ready.

"I'm happy to work with you," Mayor Christina Smith said.

"I get your perspective, but we're giving you a year. This definitely is coming everywhere," she added, citing other municipalities and Montreal boroughs that have had already adopted bans.

Look for creative solutions

Judith Shapiro, a longtime resident of Victoria, told the meeting she thought the city could be "a little more creative" in

thinking out of the box, particularly if there is difficulty getting equipment. During the two brief spring and fall periods she suggested hiring student workers or limiting times of use or sharing the clean-up times for blowers.

"It's a complex issue," said Councillor Antonio D'Amico, who represents District 1, and explained he had contacted a supplier and was told the batteries that last three hours were on back order. "It's a supply chain problem," he said. "If you want to buy a new car... or kitchen appliance, you can't."

"The city is the biggest land owner" and would be facing the same challenges in its many parks, District 4 councillor Conrad Peart said.

Councillor Matt Aronson, whose commissionership includes sustainability, said he understood that the contractors had a business to operate, but that it was time to adjust to current needs.

The two affected draft by-laws are 1591 to amend by-law 1475 on nuisances and good order, which bans the blowers, and by-law 1592 to modify 1397 concerning noise (which is now incorporated into the new by-law 1591).

They are expected to be voted on at a subsequent meeting as is or with modifications.

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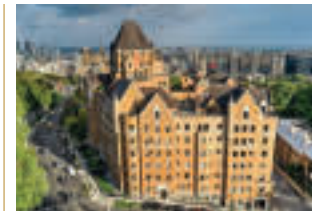
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Decorated pumpkin is entry for ‘Extravaganza’ Oct. 29

City’s first-ever Hallowe’en skating party takes place Oct. 30 for all ages

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A Hallowe’en skating party is to be presented this year for the first time Sunday, October 30 at the Westmount recreation centre (WRC) featuring costumes and spooky music. It takes place between 1 and 4 pm for all ages

“The Community Events team is really excited to be hosting this first-ever skating party,” said Donna Lach, assistant director of the Westmount Public Library and Community Events. Refreshments will be served and wearing a helmet with a costume is recommended for safe skating.” It’s free and open to all.

The library’s children’s department is also planning its traditional Hallowe’en Extravaganza Friday, October 29 at 6:30 pm, for children ages 5 to 12. A free entry ticket is required to the costumed event at Victoria Hall.

This ticket can be obtained in exchange for a decorated (not carved) pumpkin taken to the library between October 14 and 28 for the annual pumpkin decorating contest.

This year, the theme of the event is “Scooby Doo,” from the film of the same name, according to children’s librarian



Not this year! The city’s haunted house at the lawn bowling clubhouse near city hall will not be held this Hallowe’en, for the third year in a row. It is pictured here in 2019, the last time it was held.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Wendy Wayling.

For the third year, however, the Public Security’s longstanding haunted house at

the Lawn Bowling Club’s clubhouse will not take place following cancellation of the attraction since the start of COVID in 2020.

This year, Public Security will be holding a Hallowe’en Bingo in conjunction with Contactivity on October 19.



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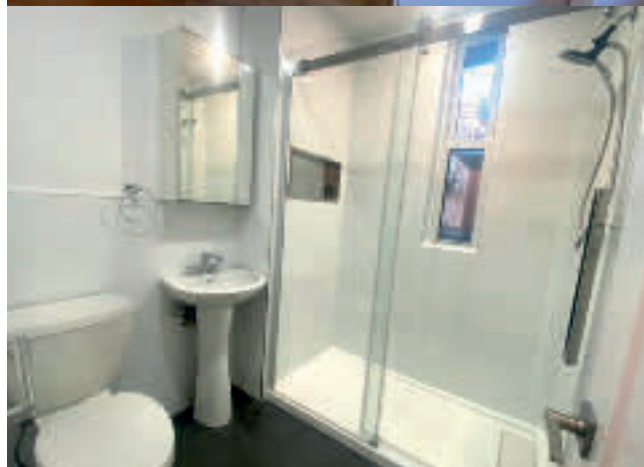
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EDITORIAL

Free Niloofar Hamed, remember Mahsa Amini

“... for each unharmed, gentle soul misplaced inside a jail ...”

– “Chimes of Freedom” by Bob Dylan (1964)

I’m never sure if an editorial in a newspaper is going to do any good at all, and even less sure when the newspaper in question is a weekly one focused on municipal life (e.g. us) and the relevant events are taking place far away (e.g. Iran).

For this reason, I have not written about the death of Mahsa Amini while in the custody of Iran’s “morality” police for “offences” related to what she was wearing.

Readers in Westmount, Iranian protesters and neutral parties around the world are not waiting for the *Independent’s* thoughts on this serious matter, which aren’t going to be original anyway.

Meanwhile, Iran has been rocked by demonstrations and is ablaze with protest burnings of hijabs, and the media there is being repressed even more than usual.

Surely every member of the press, no matter how distantly connected, should stand up for journalists who are in danger, or under arrest for no good reason, or both?

To take up one specific, important case, a prominent Iranian journalist – Niloofar Hamed – is under arrest. Her apparent

“offence”? According to Parisa Hafezi of Reuters, on September 16 she posted an influential photograph on Twitter of Amini’s parents visiting her in the hospital right before she died.

I had never heard of Hamed or her newspaper, *Sharq*, before last week (no surprise there – my ignorance), but Hafezi reported October 11 that she “got away with hard-hitting stories for years.”

I can’t imagine how much courage that took and how much she now needs to survive her current ordeal.

Don’t turn to the *Independent* for coverage of this important development inside a major, influential country. Our core expertise does not extend much further east than Atwater Ave.

But to any protestor or reporter or advocate who is looking for support and admiration in the most unlikely places (i.e. in this newspaper), you have it.

Free Niloofar Hamed. Remember Mahsa Amini.

David Price is the editor of the Independent.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



BORING PLAY STRUCTURE

In the words of our four-year-old grandson: “It’s boring!”

What is the play value of this (see above)? The manufacturer writes that it is for children ages 18 months to 12 years with adult supervision. Place an 18-month-old in front of it and what? Place the 18-month-old in it and what? Take him or her out. Fun? Nope. Boring.

Our six-year-old grandson climbs in on his own and immediately reaches higher, exiting the spaces above the inverted triangular shapes and climbs beyond, risking falling onto those protruding round steel supports.

What happened to the swings? The junior monkey bars?

It is no wonder that no one plays on that thing. You need go no farther than a photo of what it replaced, or what Westmount put in Murray Park to see what works for kids, and by extension for parents and grandparents too.

ALAN KLINKHOFF, METCALFE AVE.

GREENHOUSE WELL DONE, WORTH WAITING FOR

Walking by the million-dollar greenhouse on the afternoon of Saturday, October 8, I could not help but see at least 12 people in the two rooms. A group of girls, having a joyous time, were being photo-

graphed reaching up to a hanging spray. Two wedding-photo parties were entering as I was leaving. The place looked spectacular on a rather cloudy afternoon. The water ponds, which I expect did not come cheap, add to the beauty of the place. This greenhouse is part of the history of Westmount Park and the expense should not be derided by a small group. There are many of us who enjoy it. In my estimation a job well done and worth waiting for.

GRAHAM WRIGHT,
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

QUALITY COMPETENCY AUDIT NEEDED ON GREENHOUSE

For clarity, my suggestion to conduct an audit of the greenhouse project (October 4, p. 8) was meant to be a quality competency audit. Accounting for all the extras would be useful as well.

Given the poor management of this very significant contract from financial, technical and aesthetic standpoints and the impact on the finances of the city of Westmount, residents who were not consulted on this most expensive project (when every other major project goes to a survey), one would hope that the Smith administration would look inward as to how this was so poorly managed.

Who was in charge? Who negotiated a contract that looks like Swiss cheese – any-

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



The main playing area of the soccer field in Westmount Park was being re-turfed October 12.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

thing but iron clad – with so many extras? Who hired the architects, who signed off on the terrible design and how were so many significant technical elements

missed?

The city closed the greenhouse in 2015. Certainly, six years is sufficient time to do a comprehensive review of the work to be

carried out. Construction began in 2021, after six years of poring over plans, with architects and engineers no doubt reviewing a very old structure. Did no one look “under the hood” given the age and neglect of the structure?

As Edith Katz commented (October 11, p. 6), this points to the incompetence of the Smith administration, of those overseeing this expansive work and city council’s inability to manage in an effective manner. There should be quality competency audit, a type that is sorely needed in many areas at city hall.

JANIS KRAUT, THE BOULEVARD

Editor’s reply: The principal facts are public and the building is open. Haven’t you already done your own “quality competency audit” with this information? You are *absolutely* entitled to your own subjective conclusion, but why should everyone’s resources be expended to weaponize it? – DP.

LET THE GRASS GROW, FOR YEARS

Early the morning of October 12, I noticed a hundred or more seagulls frantically flying before and after a yellow truck on the soccer field in Westmount Park near Melville Ave. (see photo at top left). They were having their annual banquet of worms because the special truck was ploughing the well-established grass to

sow grass seeds for next year’s spring and summer sports.

Although not a professional botanist, I daresay that this year’s grass has already established deep roots that would have resulted in a stronger, firmer and healthier lawn for games next spring.

Am I mistaken? Or is our city? And why is Westmount encouraging more seagulls, which are fast becoming pests?

Field grass, carpet grass and countless other species of grass have evolved since a forgotten time to blanket our planet. Grass is a hardy plant that survives even near the Arctic and Antarctic circles.

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More action near rail bridge



This small tree came down on Greene Ave. between the CP rail bridge and the 136/720 highway on October 13. The rail bridge is often hit by over-height trucks.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Fall/fallen leaves can be irritating



Sherbrooke St. near Roslyn October 14.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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Proportional representation complicated, weakens regional representation



T'S TAKES

RALPH THOMPSON

Since our recent Quebec election, there's been a chorus of calls for electoral reform: "It's broken. There's clearly a need for proportional representation." I don't agree.

Whenever there's an apparent anomaly or injustice in our public systems, there is naturally a call for change. Its easy to snatch at the seemingly obvious solution.

Similarly, the Conservatives, both federal and provincial, are stating that the solution to the healthcare backlog is private care. They are dead wrong. In England, private healthcare runs in parallel to the public system, allowing people who are able to pay to get faster access. Those without insurance or deep pockets have to accept the public system, the NHS.

Yet the headlines describing healthcare in England could have been taken from the Canadian media. An article in *The Guardian* of October 6 states "NHS England could face £7bn budget shortfall next year."

The private system exploits the public system, skims off the less complicated cases paid for by private insurance and makes some unscrupulous individuals very rich. The USA has, for the past 50 years, had one of the highest infant mortality rates in the western world thanks, in part, to private healthcare.

'PR' would be easy grab

In our electoral system, the easy grab is proportional representation (PR), over the current system first-past-the-post system (FPTP). The concept sounds good. It resonates fairness. "Proportional" and "representation" sound reasonable.

It's a bit like Beyond Meat sounds healthy and eco-friendly (think again). Mathematicians love proportional anything, because they can argue the anomalies all night. Apportionment paradoxes are well known, an example is the Alabama Paradox where a state may lose a seat even though its population has increased.

Implementation of PR is far from easy. Over 80 countries have employed some kind of PR electoral system and few are the same. It's an understatement to say PR is complicated. Just a superficial study of PR will make your head spin. The devil is in

the details. In some PR systems, you might never have met or know anything about the person that your vote elects. It has the potential to allow people with extreme views to enter mainstream politics. It can produce ineffective government without a majority to move forward with any significant change. Exceptions can be made for minorities, a good thing, but we know which minority would not be given any exception in Quebec. I'm sure the majority of the electorate would run a mile from trying to understand the nuisances of the different approaches of PR. Many will see the complexity as a reason not to vote.

The argument, "the current electoral system is unfair" does not mean, just like with healthcare, that any alternative is better. FPTP is simple to understand and rigging the system is hard to hide.

Is there a problem?

Glancing at the results of our recent election at the top level, the seats and the voting percentages in particular, there's fodder for complaint. Or is there?

Quebec is far from a homogeneous environment. The island of Montreal and its surroundings are economically and socially quite different from the rest of Quebec.

Greater Montreal has a population of close to three million, larger than sixty United Nations countries. Its ethnic diversity, life styles and work opportunities are quite different. The aerospace industry, all the youngsters in software development like gaming and artificial intelligence, finance, insurance, construction, mobility, transportation and the public services are substantial. Montreal generates about 35 percent of Quebec's GDP (Produit intérieur brut régional par industrie au Québec – Édition 2022). The demand for resources and infrastructure for those on and off the island is far greater and more complex than other cities. Montreal has a vast hinterland where the population commutes in and out of the city every day. Associating the needs of Westmount–St. Louis riding and the Gaspé or Nord du Québec ridings makes no sense. Montreal needs a representative and effective voice in the provincial assembly.

Reflective result

The following abbreviated table summarizes the recent election results in 44 ridings in and around Montreal. The voting pattern looks quite fair and, in my opinion, illustrative of what I see every day in Montreal.

Would a CAQ-created PR system preserve this important representation for Montreal?

		% of vote amongst	
Elected	Party	Votes	the top 4 parties
20	Liberal	251,111	42.88%
16	CAQ	234,682	40.08%
7	Quebec Solidaire	87,795	14.99%
1	PQ	11,959	2.04%
Total votes		58,5547	100 %

Data from Elections Quebec website and Global News. Parties that didn't win any seats in the area are excluded from this table.

The indigenous peoples of Quebec have a legitimate complaint with the current electoral system and they should get seats allocated to bring their perspective to the legislature, in the same way Quebec gets a guaranteed voice in Ottawa.

And did you know that amongst those too young to vote, out of 898 schools and 109,682 kids, Québec Solidaire was voted top dog (49 candidates) and they also got the highest popular vote at 29,156. Out of the mouths of babes.

Our current electoral system has flaws, but alternatives like PR are not a panacea and there's one thing for sure, understanding how PR works and how the best person and party of the job are chosen would be a challenge. There'd be plenty of fodder for complaint.

RCMP silent on firefighters' presence



The regional RCMP headquarters on Dorchester at Greene October 13. An October 14, 9 am email to its media office was not returned by press time at noon October 17. PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM RICHARDS.

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What happened to Westmount's submachine gun?

Search for Sten gun from World War II's Dieppe Raid comes up empty

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Despite a tip provided by a Westmount resident that a World War II Sten gun might be concealed in the city's Stanton St. public safety complex, a search of the building's basement has failed to turn up the military relic.

Mark Goldstein told the *Independent* that in the late 1960s, he had an older cousin who had returned to Montreal from Israel where he was involved with the country's intelligence service, the Mossad.

Westmount's firing range

He informed Goldstein that the Westmount Police Department (which had not yet merged with the Montreal Urban Community Police) kept a gun firing range in the basement at the Stanton St. police headquarters, which was kept open by the Montreal police after the 1972 merger.

Having worked in the security domain,



This image from the Imperial War Museum in Britain shows one of the many versions of the Sten gun. It was first developed during the early years of World War II.

according to Goldstein, the cousin befriended some of the police officers at the station, to the point that they allowed him into the basement to use the firing range – with Goldstein tagging along on at least one occasion.

“On the side of the wall was a picture of a Westmount guy, I can't remember who he was, with a Sten gun,” said Goldstein, referring to a type of compact and low-cost submachine gun first manufactured for British and Commonwealth armed forces during World War II.

Dieppe connection

According to Goldstein, the Sten gun seen in the photo had been presented by the man, a veteran of the World War II Dieppe Raid, to police officers using the firing range. “On the wall was a picture of him and the gun,” he said.

Westmount Public Security director Gregory McBain confirmed to the *Independent* that there was at one time a firing range in the basement of the security complex. “Now it's being re-used. We're actually

keeping our archives in there,” he said.

“Back in the day, the officers from the Westmount Police, that's where they used to practise, down in the basement,” he continued. “And that shooting gallery, it's basically under my parking spot at our building now.”

Looking around his office, McBain said he had two trophies on hand that were passed along to him by previous Public Security directors. One was for an annual shooting competition between city of Westmount police officers and members of the Pistol Club of Montreal.

'Not in our bunker'

However, neither item even vaguely matched the description provided by Goldstein of the Sten gun trophy and the photo accompanying it. Following a search of the former practice range, McBain said in an e-mail to the *Independent*, “Sorry, we do not have the trophy in our bunker.”

Anyone with information about this piece of Westmount and World War II history is invited to contact the *Independent*.

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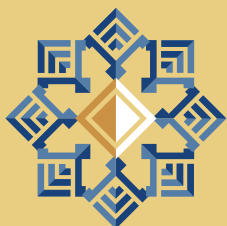


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City spreads school-safety message



As part of the city's school-safety campaign, councillors Kathleen Kez, left, and Antonio D'Amico, right, with public safety officer Julie Noiret worked to alert motorists and parents October 14 to precautions required in the school zone at St. George's elementary school at The Boulevard and Aberdeen.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT PUBLIC SECURITY.

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Property's owner, school's board send different messages

Villa Sainte-Marcelline may close given \$12-16M cost of renovations

BY JENNIFER BALL

Students at Villa Sainte-Marcelline (and their parents) were recently informed that it would close at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

Located on Upper Belmont Ave. and Devon Ave., it is the only private, all-girls French school in Westmount. The building's owners – the sisters of Sainte-Marcelline congregation – announced that the lease wouldn't be renewed.

An email was sent from Sister Marielle Dion, dated October 6, and it indicated that they had commissioned engineering reports that show "...that approximately \$12 to \$16 million must be invested to ensure the conformity and modernity of the buildings.

"...considering the seriousness of the situation, we are evaluating all options. On the other hand, in 2022 a study of feasibility to collect the funds demonstrated the impossibility to pursue this avenue to finance the necessary work..."

Members of the board of directors present unanimously voted against the closure of the school on October 13. This comes too late, though, for the parents of a secondary 4 student, as they took immediate action to find their daughter a spot at Collège de Montreal.

Change of message

They expressed incredulity that the tone of the October 6 email seemed resolute, but then just one week later, it seems the building may be salvageable, they said.

Dion, who is both president of the board of directors and regional delegate of the sisters of Sainte-Marcelline, wrote on October 13 "...we are currently exploring promising avenues..."

So, what will happen to students next year if those avenues turn into dead ends?

One mother echoing that query is Sandra Szewczuk, whose two girls – one in kindergarten and one in grade two – go to the school. She expressed shock: "We fought so hard to get into this school, signing up my daughter when she was just two years old," Szewczuk said.

"It is a special school. It has a great reputation. It is the only all-girls private French school in Westmount. There are not that many options. We are just kind of disappointed, I guess, in the lack of transparency. Even a week later, we have no more information than we did a week ago."

Her grade-two daughter said, "I just don't want the school to close because I like schools with only girls."

Where will students go?

A father of a secondary-two schoolgirl pondered practicalities. "If the school does close at the end of the school term, where will the [almost 600] girls go? Where will we be able to find any other places? Every parent wants to send their children to the proper school. Now you are going to be on a waiting list and having to start at a time when all the lists are closed."

He also worries about longer term implications. Bill 96 was made law in June by the provincial government.

Might it work against them if their school plan is disrupted, he wondered?

"Even though it is a French school, you have many students who are coming from abroad where French is not their first language. When the Quebec government is saying 'everyone needs to have a proper French level,' parents will be sending their kids now to another new environment entirely."

Interview requests with Sister Marielle Dion went unanswered prior to the *Independent's* print deadline.

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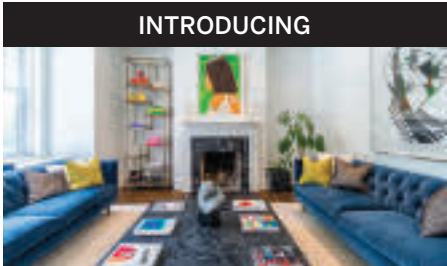
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660 AVENUE MURRAY HILL
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WESTMOUNT **\$1,850,000**
310 AVENUE LANSDOWNE
BEDS: 3 BATHS: +1 | MLS 16653505
Renovated bright open concept townhouse ideally located in the heart of Victoria Village.



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WESTMOUNT **\$1,895,000**
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BEDS: 3 BATHS: 3+1 | EXCLUSIVE
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SAINTE-MARGUERITE-DU-LAC-MASSON **\$2,595,000**
372 RUE DU BARON-LOUIS-EMPAIN
BEDS: 7 BATHS: 4 | MLS 19337620
Waterfront property on sought after Lac Masson.



INTRODUCING

VILLE-MARIE **\$645,000**
3455 RUE DRUMMOND, APT. 106
BEDS: 2 BATHS: 2 | MLS 16273334
Spacious corner condo located in the heart of the Golden Square Mile and close to all amenities.



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WESTMOUNT **\$5,995,000**
55 BELVEDERE ROAD
BEDS: 10 BATHS: 7+1 | MLS 18821264
Grand 10 bedroom home sitting on 34,500 ft² of land, steps from the summit.



WESTMOUNT **\$3,898,000/\$14,000/MO**
11 ANWOTH ROAD
BEDS: 5 BATHS: 3+1 | MLS 9080798
Grand & elegant detached 3 storey home steps to Greene Avenue with 2 car garage.



MANOIR BELMONT **\$3,975,000**
2333 SHERBROOKE STREET WEST, APT. 700-701
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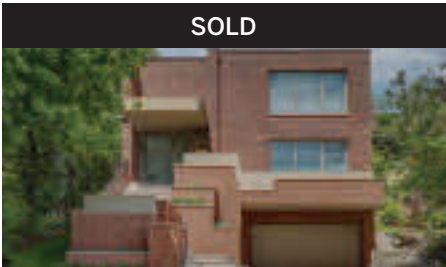


WESTMOUNT **\$ 2,195,000**
15 ANWOTH ROAD
BEDS: 3 BATHS: 3+1 | MLS 14507740
Beautiful home located on one of Westmount's most coveted streets on the flats.



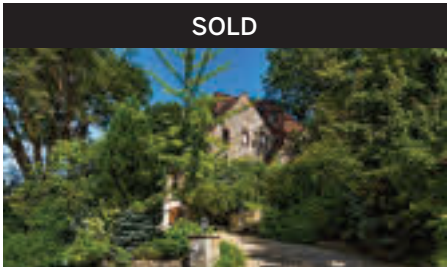
NEW PRICE

WESTMOUNT **\$1,449,000/\$4,400/MO**
37 BURTON AVENUE
BEDS: 5 BATHS: 2 | MLS 21072879
Perfectly located in the heart of Victoria Village, this turn-of-the-century victorian family home has it all.



SOLD

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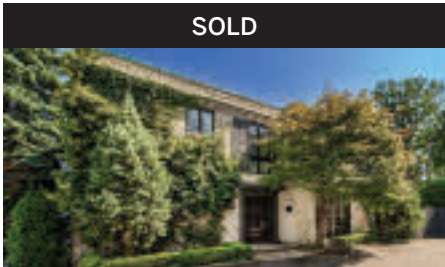
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One decade later: What’s up this harvest time?

City’s self-serve ‘Incredible Edibles’ garden project shrinks in scope

By JENNIFER BALL

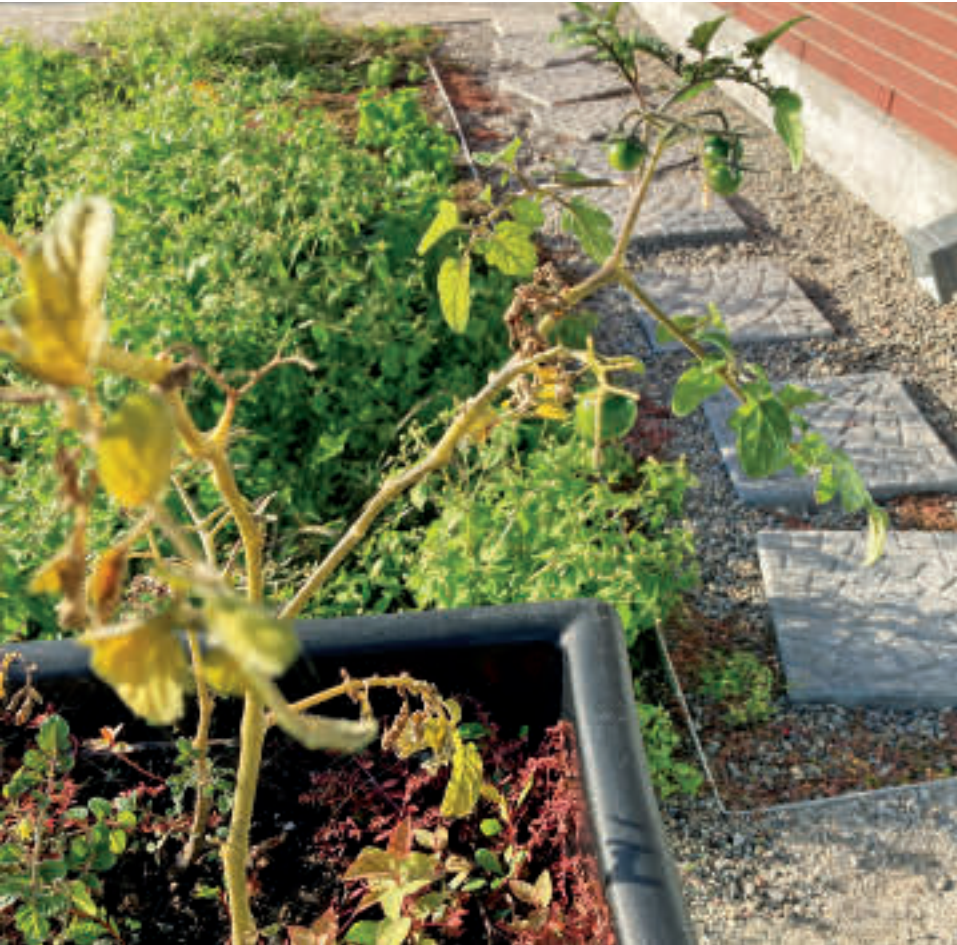
Inflation is high and some foods are more expensive. Having the option of plucking a pepper, harvesting herbs and foraging for fruit locally – and for free – could not come at a better time.

But the bounty could be so much more generous, according to two original members of the city’s Horticulture Advisory Committee (HAC), which started the Incredibles Edibles project in collaboration

with the city.
Marci Babineau – a former resident of Prince Albert who owned chickens and practised bee husbandry on her rooftop – and Westmount resident Margaret Gundara both served on the HAC at the project’s inception.
“I pulled up my HAC minutes from 2012 and we were discussing edibles in planters,” Gundara said. “That is how that took off. The HAC is one of many advisory committees for the city and we



A 2011 painting by Marci Babineau, showing a woman ploughing up Prince Albert Ave. above Sherbrooke.



A cherry tomato plant on the roof of the Westmount recreation centre, as seen September 4.

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Pigeons profit



Pigeons were eating seed and/or exposed worms on these tire tracks in Westmount Park's "Shakespeare in the Park" dell near the bike path and gazebo October 5. Yummy. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Nico Draesch of the NDG Food Depot on September 7.



were established by council resolutions."

Gundara credits HAC member Babineau and her infectious enthusiasm for locally grown food for igniting the interest of the city's mayor at the time, Peter Trent. Babineau was struck by how Todmorden, UK, planted 40 public fruit and vegetable gardens in 2008 and invited passers-by to help themselves.

"I persuaded my co-committee members that this was the way to go," Babineau said. "The whole Incredible Edibles idea is that food is a great uniter. We come together around food and it is what we need. It is one of the things that just defines us, really."

"[The city] embraced it! 'We are going to put it all up Sherbrooke, all the way from Grosvenor to Claremount,'" she recalled the city declaring.

But, she laments, there seemed so few who really wanted to maintain it. "Most people in the city want food when it is set on a plate in front of them."

Barbineau completed a painting at that time with a woman ploughing up Prince Albert. Her "muse" for the work was her frustration over the size of the trees on her street, and the raccoons and the squirrels that scotched her planting efforts.

"I realized that all the best growing

spaces were in the middle of the street," she said sarcastically, "because that was the only place that was not shaded. It just felt insurmountable."

Westmount still plants thousands of edible plants throughout the city, including more than 400 around city hall. Anyone is welcome to pick small quantities of the plants for their own consumption, but there is no signage currently identifying the edibles.

"All they have to do is go back to what we used to do: plant in garden beds and then have a QR-code stick so [residents can

find out how to harvest them and how to prepare them by going to the website]," Gundara said.

The edibles in 2022:

- Westmount recreation centre roof: various mixed veggies including cherry tomatoes,
- Murray Hill Ave., Douglas and Grenville: bull's blood beets,
- King George Park at Belmont Ave.: bull's blood beets,
- City hall (Côte St. Antoine side): Swiss chard bright lights and apples.

A final 2022 harvest is coming. Nico Draesch of the NDG Food Depot on Somerled St., corner of Bessborough St. in

NDG, said Jayme Gerbrandt from the Horticulture and Arboriculture division of Westmount's Public Works department was coordinating with him on drop-off times for kale, beets and Swiss chard that city workers will pick and that will be used in the depot's kitchen.

The *Independent* reached out to the city for an interview with the Incredible Edibles project manager, but was told he or she was unavailable.

The Incredible Edibles program is completely distinct from the city's community gardens at the Westmount Athletic Grounds behind Westmount High.

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Le dévoilement du contenu de la capsule temporelle emmurée près de la pierre angulaire de l'hôtel de ville il y a 100 ans a eu lieu le vendredi 14 octobre au Victoria Hall. westmount.org

Maison Goode : décision du Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec
Dans une lettre envoyée à la mairesse de Westmount, le Ministère de la Culture et des Communications a fait part à la Ville de sa décision de ne pas procéder au classement de la Maison Goode en tant que bien patrimonial. westmount.org

Gestion des matières résiduelles
Des questions au sujet des collectes d'ordures, des résidus alimentaires, des résidus verts, des encombrants ou le recyclage à Westmount? Visitez westmount.org/matieres-residuelles

Vidage de l'étang au parc Westmount
Le mardi 11 octobre, l'étang du parc Westmount a été vidé. L'étang devrait être rempli à nouveau au printemps 2023. westmount.org

Ouverture du dépôt Belvédère
Le dépôt pour résidus de jardin du ch. belvédère est ouvert aux entrepreneurs détenant un permis de la Ville depuis le **lundi 26 septembre**.

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Appliquez pour un permis de stationnement à Westmount. Les voitures doivent être immatriculées à une adresse de Westmount. westmount.org/permis-stationnement

BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

Appel de candidatures : Comité de la Bibliothèque publique
Nommés pour trois ans, les candidats retenus devront offrir leurs temps et leurs compétences de façon bénévole dans le but d'aider le comité à remplir son mandat. Soumettez votre lettre de motivation à Anne-Marie Lacombe, directrice, au plus tard le **lundi 3 octobre**. Informations : mlacombe@westmount.org / 514 989-5429.

Conférence : Understanding Dyslexia
Mardi 18 octobre, 19 h, Bibliothèque. Avec Véronique Paulet, directrice générale du Centre de la fluidité verbale de Montréal et Katherine Bavaro, orthophoniste. En anglais. Inscription requise. westmount.org

Club de films documentaires : Summer of Soul (2021)
Mercredi 19 octobre, 19 h, Bibliothèque. Invité spécial : Maurie Alioff, critique de cinéma et journaliste. Le festival culturel de Harlem a été filmé dans le parc Mount Morris au cours de l'été 1969, à une centaine de kilomètres de Woodstock. westmount.org

Bingo d'Halloween de la Sécurité publique pour les aînés
Mercredi 19 octobre, 16 h à 18 h, Victoria Hall. Bingo sous le thème de l'Halloween pour les aînés (60 ans et plus). Des rafraîchissements et des prix seront offerts. Places limitées. Réservez au 514 989-5367.

Fête de l'Halloween sur glace
Dimanche 30 octobre, 14 h, Centre des loisirs de Westmount. Apportez vos patins à glace et enfiler votre costume d'Halloween pour un après-midi de patinage et de musique. Du plaisir pour toute la famille! Des rafraîchissements seront servis. Gratuit et ouvert à tous. Pas d'inscription requise. westmount.org



NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL
MEETING

Monday, November 7



Unveiling of the City Hall Time Capsule
The unveiling of the contents of the time capsule encased in the corner stone of City Hall 100 years ago took place on Friday, October 14 at Victoria Hall. westmount.org

Goode House: decision of the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec
In a letter sent to the Mayor of Westmount, the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications informed the City of its decision not to proceed with the classification of the Goode House as a heritage property. westmount.org

Waste management
Do you have questions about recycling, garbage, food waste, green waste, or bulky items collection in Westmount? Please visit westmount.org/waste-management

Emptying of the pond at Westmount Park
On Tuesday, October 11, the pond in Westmount Park was emptied. The pond is expected to be refilled in the spring of 2023. westmount.org

Belvedere depot to open
The garden waste depot on Belvedere Rd. is open to landscaping contractors with a City permit since **Monday, September 26**.

Apply for a parking permit
Apply for a Westmount parking permit. Cars must be registered to a Westmount address. westmount.org/parkingpermit

LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Call for Candidates: Public Library Committee
Appointed for a 3-year term, successful candidates are expected to volunteer their time and expertise to help the Committee fulfill its mandate. Submit your letter of interest to Anne-Marie Lacombe, Director, by **Monday, October 3**. Information: 514 989-5429 / mlacombe@westmount.org.

Lecture: Understanding Dyslexia
Tuesday, October 18, 7 p.m., Library. With Véronique Paulet, Executive Director, Montreal Fluency Centre and Katherine Bavaro, speech language pathologist, Montreal Fluency Centre. westmount.org

Club de films documentaires : Summer of Soul (2021)
Wednesday, October 19, 7 p.m., Library. With special guest Maurie Alioff, film critic and journalist. In the summer of 1969, just one hundred miles south of Woodstock, The Harlem Cultural Festival was filmed in Mount Morris Park. westmount.org

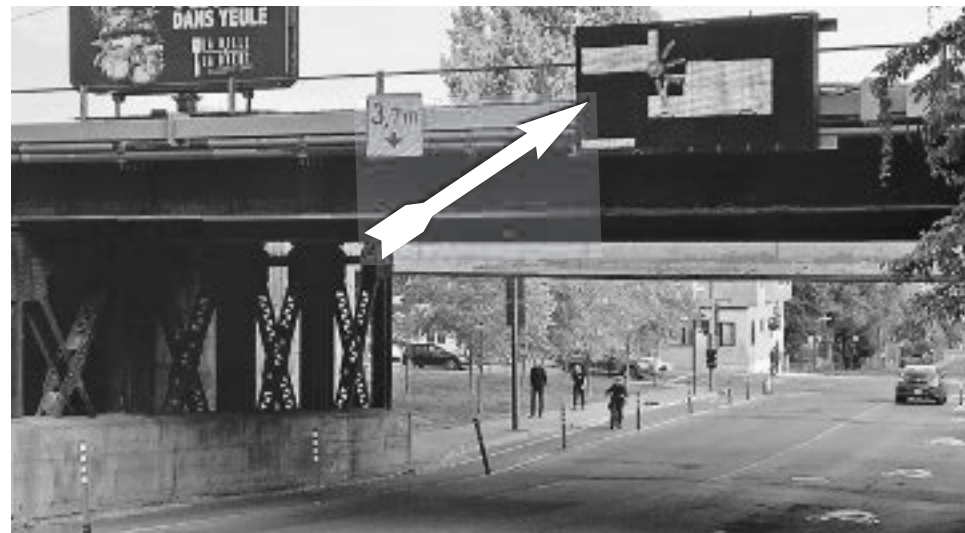
Public Safety Halloween Bingo for Seniors
Wednesday, October 19, 4-6 p.m., Victoria Hall. Halloween-themed Bingo for seniors (60+). Refreshments and prizes will be available. Space is limited. RSVP: 514 989 5367.

Halloween on Ice
Sunday, October 30, 2 p.m., WRC,. Bring your skates and put on your Halloween costume for an afternoon of skating and music. Fun for the whole family! Refreshments will be served. We recommend wearing a helmet and a costume that allows safe skating. Free and open to all. No registration required. westmount.org



Guest photo-essay

Different heights, different warnings at downtown rail bridges



Guy St. southbound above St. Antoine: 3.7 meters, with a video-warning screen.



From left, Atwater Ave. northbound (4 meters) and southbound (4.05 meters).

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WILLEM WESTENBERG.

Westmounter Willem Westenberg lives near the famous/infamous CP rail bridge over Greene Ave. It is located between St. Antoine and Dorchester, and has a clearance of 3.5 meters, northbound and southbound.

To the *Independent's* knowledge, it has been hit by trucks at least 15 times in the last 23 months, causing vehicle and bridge damage, train stoppages and closing the underpass, sometimes in both directions.

Frequent photographer

Westenberg has often photographed these crashes and became curious about the signage and clearance heights where the train tracks cross streets east of Westmount, namely Atwater and Guy.

The heights are all greater there, and Guy St. has more aggressive signage than

the underpass in Westmount, which has street signs and an often-missing warning

panel that hangs from the underside of the 136/720 highway over the northbound lane.

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9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Caramel's coat is of a golden marmalade shade, contrasting his soft, light-green eyes. Yes, very handsome indeed.

Caramel is available for adoption from the Montreal SPCA cattery, and is ready to come home and cuddle. He is a very healthy four-year old, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

Caramel is so affectionate and playful,

Sweet Caramel

an excellent companion in need of a loving family.

By searching for the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, find Caramel's information page with his identification number, 51290416, then click on the "Book a visit" button at the top right side of the page to consult the calendar of visit availabilities in order to meet an adoption coordinator about him.

Please do not hesitate, Caramel is waiting.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne



Westmount
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Marley is a loving, intelligent, young fellow that needs a family to belong in. He is presently at the Montreal SPCA kennel waiting for a stable, caring home where he can grow from a pup into an adult with a caring framework to his days.

Our neighbourhood is excellent for young dogs as there is so much to do and other doggy companions to get to know on a daily routine. Marley is a healthy pup, up

Marley at one year of age

to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

If you would like more information on him, please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com and scroll to his information page from his identification number, 51114844.

Please click on the "Fill out the form" button to then fill out the basic information that the adoption coordinators require to communicate with you to discuss adopting Marley and bring him home.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Application to open a registry in view of approval by way of referendum – Second draft of By-law 1589

1. Following the public consultation meeting held on August 8, 2022, on the first draft of By-law 1589, the Municipal Council adopted the second draft of by-law 1589 entitled "BY-LAW 1589 TO FURTHER AMEND ZONING BY-LAW 1303 – NUMBER OF PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS IN THE CASE OF MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS" by resolution at its regular sitting held on October 11, 2022.
2. This second draft by-law contains provisions that may be requested by interested persons in order that a by-law containing them be submitted for their approval in accordance with the *Act respecting elections and referendums in municipalities* (CQLR, chapter E-2.2).
3. Interested persons may submit to the City Clerk's Office, no later than **Wednesday, October 26, 2022, at 4:30 p.m.**, an application to open a registry in view of submitting the provisions of the second draft of by-law 1589 to the approval of certain qualified voters.
4. The legal notice relating to the foregoing is available at: <https://westmount.org/en/resident-zone/legal-services-city-clerks-office/public-notice/>

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A private time capsule?



Two of Westmount major institutions – the municipal government and the Shaar Hashomayim – have or will soon open time capsules. (See p. 1 for the city and September 20, p. 15 for the Shaar.) Was there also a private time capsule removed recently from this house on Prince Albert near Sherbrooke? It was photographed on September 19.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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Winners announced for next time capsule

City reveals contents of 100-year-old time capsule from 100-year-old city hall

By RALPH THOMPSON

Approximately 60 people gathered in Victoria Hall October 14 at 2 pm with great anticipation to see the contents of the copper-and-lead-sealed time capsule that was buried in the foundations of the then-new city hall almost exactly one hundred years before – 3 pm on October 14, 1922.

Mayor Christina Smith and Donna Lach, assistant director, library and Community Events, welcomed all those present. Lach explained that “the city was just a straggling village in 1922 with a population of 17,593 people.”

Process began in May

City archivist Anthony Chiasson, assisted by Nicolas Leboeuf, records and archives technician, explained the process of unearthing the time capsule, which was done last May.

The time capsule was mentioned in historical notes and council minutes as being buried near the cornerstone of city hall in 1922 and there is an inscription referring to it on a large pillar by its front doors.

Ground-penetrating radar was used to confirm the location of the box and expert masons were hired to remove the cornerstone and reveal the completely sealed solid copper box (see September 6, p. 9).

The exterior was well aged to a dark green-brown patina but as Chiasson removed the already severed top, a perfectly clean, shiny copper interior was revealed.

In UK: plus ça change....

The first document to be very carefully removed was *The Montreal Daily Star* dated October 14, 1922, which, to the amusement of all, had the familiar-sounding headline: “BRITAIN’S PRIME MINISTER TO DEFEND HIS POLICIES.”

There were quite a number of newspapers including *The Standard*, *The Gazette*, *The Herald*, *Le Canada*, *Le Patrie*, *La Milinerue*, *Le Devoir*, *The Westmount News* (with an ad for the greatest sale of men’s overcoats for \$32.75) and *La Presse*.

A lot of the headlines referred to labour problems in Britain. The papers were all in remarkably good condition, according to Chiasson, but he did not wish to open the “papers at [this] time in case they [are] fragile.”

Next was by-laws from the city of Westmount, specifically relating to building and construction, followed by the 1908 city charter, a letter from Nicolson Construction Ltd with the contractors for the new city hall (which included John Watson), city hall plans from Robert Findlay, a list of the capsule contents, a written historical sketch of the city from W.D. Lighthall, the mayor’s speech at the time of the laying of the cornerstone, a list of all the city’s Catholic schools, a list of all the city’s employees, a miniature history of the public library from 1899 to 1922 by librarian Mary S. Saxe, the city’s annual report from 1921, a city envelope, stamps (not listed in the capsule contents), and currency from the



Trowel presented to His Worship P. W. McLagan, mayor of Westmount, on October 14, 1922.



Some of the newspapers from the 100-year-old time capsule.

period, including a \$1 note, and 1-, 5-, 10-, 25-and 50-cent pieces dated 1920, and a

gold \$5 piece.

Finally, there was a picture book that included immaculate post cards and photographs of daily life in Westmount.

All these items were displayed for everyone to view.

Winners for next capsule announced

The city had asked citizens for contributions to a future time capsule under the heading “Westmount Now and Beyond.” Everyone was asked to vote on the entries that were displayed in the Victoria Hall gallery over the past few weeks. Lach thanked all those who had contributed to the competition and the 150 people who had voted.

The winning entrants were invited to the front of the hall to be photographed with the mayor and councillors Jeff Shamie, Matt Aronson, Kathleen Kez and Conrad Peart.

The photographed winners were Amber Giovanni, Lily Lam, Susan Kazenel and Cora Siré, plus Hizban Afuz and Ti-anyou Liu, who weren’t present.



From left, city councillors Jeff Shamie and Kathleen Kez, competition winners Cora Siré, Susan Kazenel and Lily Lam, Mayor Christina Smith, winner Amber Giovanni, and councillors Conrad Peart and Matt Aronson.

Police Report

Arrest made after brutal overnight assault in Westmount Park

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Officers from the Montreal police department's Station 12 arrested a male suspect the morning of October 12 following an overnight incident in Westmount Park during which a woman in her early 20s was violently assaulted and sustained non-life-threatening injuries.

According to an incident report provided to the *Westmount Independent* by the police, the woman, who was not a Westmounter, was returning home around 4 am on October 12 from an evening out downtown.

While driving on the bike path on de Maisonneuve Blvd., which passes through Westmount Park, she decided to turn northward towards Sherbrooke St. where she planned to continue heading west.

"When she was cutting through the park, she came across a man in his late 20s who stopped her and asked her for money," said Station 12 spokesperson Cst. Mike Yigit.

"When she said she didn't have anything, he insisted. She repeated she didn't have anything, and that's when he attacked her."

After sustaining several blows, resulting in a black eye and a bloody nose, the woman broke free from her attacker, then made her way out of the park towards Sherbrooke St. where she flagged down a

passing STM bus.

The driver called 9-1-1 and officers from Station 12 were on the scene around 6 am.

"When the officers arrived, they took statements from the girl, they called for back-up, and they organized for a search," said Yigit.

A short time later, an individual who corresponded to the woman's description of the suspect was located by the police near the corner of Atwater Ave. and St. Catherine St. around Alexis Nihon Plaza.

"When the officers approached to talk to him, he ran, and so there was a foot chase," added Yigit.

"And after, I would say, a good five-minute foot chase, he was found in an alleyway on Lambert Closse, and that's where he got arrested."

A crime scene investigation was under way in Westmount Park throughout the day on October 12.

The *Independent* saw four police cars and at least eight officers in Westmount Park at the time, with a source saying that four additional police cars had been on site earlier.

"It was all day," said Yigit. "In the struggle, there was blood and there was hair that was pulled. What we do normally in these

circumstances is we secure the area for the crime scene investigators to come in and gather the evidence, because at first we didn't know who it was."

In a phone interview with the *Independent* late last Friday, Montreal police media relations officer Caroline Chèvrefils identified the suspect as Ilies Kelbaz, age 26. She said he is charged with sexual assault causing injury, as well as illegal confinement and making death threats.



Three police cars and at least eight police officers in Westmount Park near the eastern source of the lagoon the morning of October 12 (plus another car not shown). A source told the *Independent* that more four cars had recently left.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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‘Operation Winterize’ works to outfit needy MUHC patients

The Friends of the MUHC (McGill University Health Centre) have partnered with the hospital’s social services department to buy clothing for needy patients as they leave the hospital. In the past, “gently used” items were donated and then given out, but since the advent of COVID that has not been allowed.

“Operation Winterize is a unique collaboration between social services and the Friends of the MUHC to outfit patients with clothing to combat the cold, from top to toe,” said a recent press release from the group. The campaign’s symbol is a fox.

“Expected to run until the end of October, our bargain-hunting board members have already started buying new clothing at great sale prices and big discounts. We will match all donations received to a total of \$10,000 and believe donors will respond very warmly to being able to choose what they would like their gift to buy.”

“We will have many new refugees who will be experiencing their first winter in Montreal,” Nancy Plaisir, manager of liaison nurses, adult sites, directorate of multidisciplinary services, is quoted as saying, “and when they receive new coats and boots, they will be feeling blessed beyond measure.”

To give, go to www.friendsmuhc.org and “follow the fox!”



Modelling a small selection of some of the winter wear already purchased for MUHC patients are, from left, JoAnne Booth; Westmounters Laura MacFarlane, Anthea Dawson and Mary Spencer; Joanne MacPhail and Westmounter Ana Maria Plata. They are all board members of the Friends of the MUHC.

PHOTO COURTESY OF A. DAWSON.

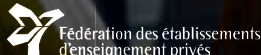


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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Weizmann Canada recently hosted experts for cocktails and conversation titled “Mission Imperative.” The September 12

Weizmann fights, gets ready for climate change

evening was about the climate crisis.

Game-changing scientific research that can lead to innovative solutions was presented. Held at the Grand Quai Port of Montreal – a fabulous event space – it coincided with the launch of the Weizmann Institute of Science’s Institute for Environmental Sustainability, with a goal of expedi-

ting research from the lab to the marketplace over the next 10 years.

The Grand Quai was specifically selected because of the site’s commitment to sustainability.

It has been a leader in adopting green and sustainable practices and technologies including waste-sorting stations, electric

car chargers, sustainable sprinkler systems and a large green roof that features a wooden terrace with over 24,000 flowering (edible perennials) and aromatic plants.

Weizmann Institute scientists and co-leaders of the newly launching institute, professors Ron Milo (expert in energy and carbon transformations) and Avi Levy (food security expert), were part of the food-focused panel that also included “fearless forager” and restaurant Candide chef John Winter Russell. CTV’s Cindy Sherwin was moderator.

Humanity needs to *continued on p. 26*



Ron Milo, Susan Stern, Cindy Sherwin, Avi Levy and John Winter Russell.

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Etti and Harvey Sands.



Valeria Rosenbloom, Michael Stern and Christopher Gillett.



Elinor Amar and Regine B. Ziri.

Social notes, cont'd from p. 25

feed a growing world population within a changing climate, protect plant biodiversity and reduce damage and pollution to air, soil and water. Weizmann's Institute

for Environmental Sustainability aims to tackle this through its unique bottom-up approach to research and global collaboration, which has led to world-renowned scientific excellence.

Westmounter Susan Stern, CEO Weizmann Canada, welcomed arriving guests.

Noted in the sold-out crowd were Etti and Harvey Sands, Weizmann Canada national board member, local res Adriana Arrillaga and her husband Najeeb Khalid, Sylvia Vogel, Elinor Amar, Valeria Rosenbloom and Michael Stern, Christopher Gillett and Regine Ziri.

Seal Productions' Danielle Bitton and Raphy Benbaron were responsible for the food and atmosphere.

Produce as décor was generously provided by Antonio Bono from Chenail Import-Export, which guests later took home to prepare their own meals. (What a great idea!)



Adriana Arrillaga and Najeeb Khalid.



Sylvia Vogel.

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May 8, 1922 – September 7, 2022

Isabella will be remembered at 10:30 mass on Sunday, October 23rd at the Church of the Ascension of our Lord in Westmount.

All welcome.

Comin' Up

Saturday, October 29

The Rotary Club of Westmount presents a Bowser & Blue comedy night fundraiser. \$43.75 at www.eventbrite.ca. Westmount High School auditorium, 4350 St. Catherine St. 8 pm.

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