

Increase of \$208k is third in 14 months

New 'unforeseen' costs push greenhouse contract to \$6.3M

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Execution of the work to restore the city's heritage greenhouses has now risen to more than \$6.3 million, as approved by city council February 21 in a resolution adopted unanimously.

This latest increase of \$207,749 including taxes is the third since the original contract was awarded December 21, 2020 to St-Denis Thompson for \$5,687,813, including taxes. It brings the total with all modifications to \$6,313,473.

While the reasons for the latest increase were not mentioned at the meeting, they were provided to the *Independent* by the city director general's office from the Engineering department as relating to the extension of the project schedule by some 20 weeks incurring associated labour, insurance and winter construction costs.

The council resolution listed the two previous increases as raising the contract

progressively to \$5,858,447 (June 7, 2021) and \$6,085,960 (October 4, 2021), all including taxes.

In those cases, the reasons had been explained as including the discovery of drains, a basement wall found to have no foundation, a new staircase access to the basement required to ensure code compliance, modifications to a ramp, and rotted wooden frames found during the installation of new glass panes. These contributed to the extension of the project.

The only comment during the recent meeting on the additional cost came from Mayor Christina Smith saying that that "we are getting close to the end" of the work – believed to be next month.

► The city of Westmount's greenhouse on February 26. It is between the library and Victoria Hall. One worker told the *Independent* that some mouldings are costing \$1,000 each.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



Gersovitz retires after 8 years as chair

Council appoints, re-appoints, PAC's professional members

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council approved changes to the city's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) February 7, bidding farewell with gratitude to Julia Gersovitz, the long-serving chair of the city committee that reviews and recommends permits regarding exterior work.

Councillor Conrad Peart, the city's com-

missioner of urban planning and infrastructure, cited Gersovitz, an architect and world authority in heritage preservation, for serving as the PAC chair for the last eight years and for her "strong commitment to the city."

Gersovitz, who served a previous stint as chair during 2002-2008 was also involved at the time of the building of the West- *continued on p. 4*



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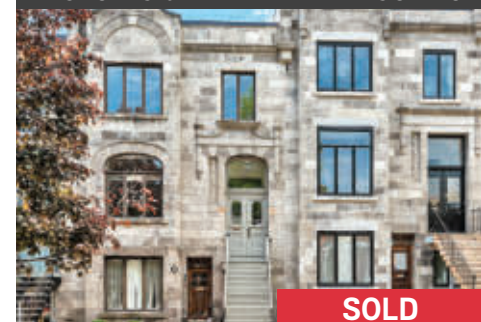
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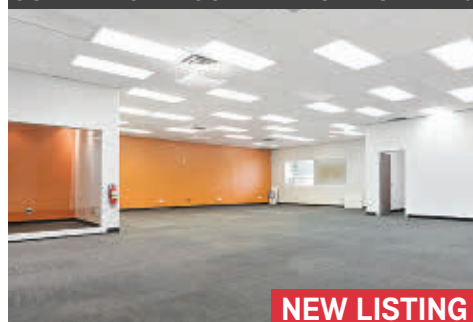
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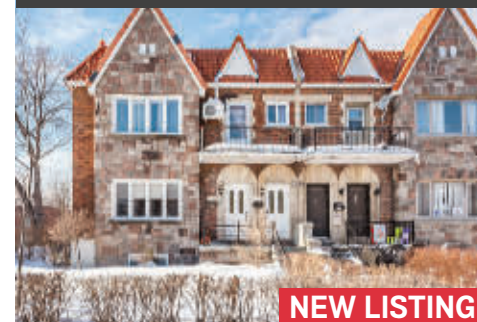
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Public Security catches bird in bedroom

A woman left a message February 21 saying there was a bird in her upstairs bedroom and she did not know what to do, Public Security officials said. Officers responded to the home, found the bird believed to have come down the chimney and caught it using a net from a patrol vehicle. It was believed to be a starling.

Missing boy knows where to find help

Public safety officers responded to a call for a missing 9-year-old child who disappeared somewhere near Victoria Hall February 22. Armed with a description from his mother, officers were unable to find him, Public Security officials said. The reason eventually became apparent. Word was received that the boy had made his way to local police station 12 on Stanton and the search was called off.

Traffic, fire trucks rerouted at busy intersection

The intersection of Côte St. Antoine and Stanton St. can be a busy spot at the best of times as the main exit and entry points for the fire, police and Public Security vehicles and the school crossing for Selwyn House as well as traffic to and from Akiva School.

But when a major water main ruptured on February 22 requiring emergency repairs, Public Security officials said last week they had to block off the Côte Rd. at Argyle and reroute people dropping off and picking up children at the school. The area was projected to be re-opened at the end of the week.

We welcome your letters

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. email us at: editor@westmountindependent.com

Stanton boil-water advisory lifted

A resident called the *Independent* last week about a boil-water advisory that had been in place for some time on Stanton St., perhaps in connection with the water main break near Côte St. Antoine and Stanton on February 22 (see “Traffic, fire trucks rerouted,” below left). Details about the advisory’s nature and length were not available by press time, but Catherine Skinner, assistant to Westmount director general Hadi Hakim, did tell the *Independent* by email on February 25 that the boil water advisory had been lifted. – DP.

Eight-foot icicles hang from church roof

Icicles spotted hanging from the roof of St. Mathias’ Church February 23 were considered to present a danger to passers-by on Côte St. Antoine and Church Hill and those sidewalks had to be blocked off, Public Security officials said.

The owners of cars parked nearby were notified to move them and church officials informed of the danger. Some of the ice was described as hanging down eight feet.

Pipe breaks on Wood Ave. fire hydrant

A fire hydrant’s pipe broke on Wood Ave. February 3, Catherine Skinner, assistant to Westmount director general Hadi Hakim, confirmed to the *Independent* by email February 25. “The clean-up process required a wheel loader to scrape some of the ice and snow off the street and sidewalk. It also required Public Works to spread some salt. The fire department was on site also assisting to some residents.”

The city will not know the kind of break it was until it excavates the hydrant. “We suspect the fire hydrant pipe may have disconnected from the elbow below. This may be caused by a broken flange or broken pipe.” – DP.

PSOs take dog home after man falls in park

A man walking his dog on a foot path in Westmount Park near Melville fell February 21 around noontime, hitting his head, Public Security officials said. The call came from the fire department whose first responder unit was on the scene along with Urgences Santé tending to the head injury.

When he was taken to the hospital, the man, who lived on de Maisonneuve, gave public safety officers his house keys to take the dog home. Once the dog was delivered, the keys were returned to the man at the hospital.

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Pet Page, p. 19

Dodge on
September real estate, p. 14

Retail Watch:
Hogg turns 30!, p. 21

Police Report, p. 22





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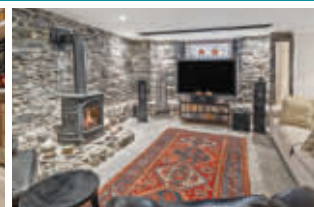
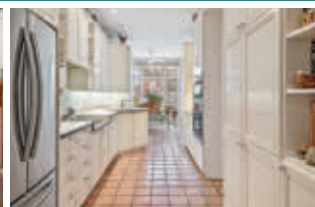
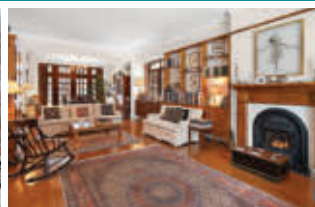
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To support services to the community

Seven groups share \$145,000 in this year's grants

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council February 21 increased the total amount it provides annually as supporting grants to non-profit community organizations and groups to help with operating costs related to their services to residents not offered by the city.

This year, the city increased the total envelope to \$145,000 from last year's \$130,000. The \$15,000 difference was allocated to an additional amount for the Atwater Library and Computer Centre (up \$10,000) and for a first-time donation of \$5,000 to the Westmount Battery military re-enactment group. This was for maintenance of the city's 1810 cannon and purchase of historically accurate uniforms (see story November 2, p. 1)

In presenting the resolution, approved unanimously, Councillor Elisabeth Roux, commissioner of library and community events, explained that "according to the city's policies for recreation and cultural grants, all applications for 2022 supporting grants received from local community groups and organizations have been reviewed by the administration."

A breakdown of the supporting grants

as awarded in listing order:

- Atwater Library \$35,560;
- Centre Greene, \$10,000;
- Contactivity seniors' centre, \$75,000;
- Visual Arts Centre, \$4,823
- Westmount Battery, \$5,000;
- Westmount Historical Association, \$3,375;
- YMCAs of Quebec - Westmount, \$11,742.

The \$75,000 grant for Contactivity was "very much appreciated," said executive director Benita Goldin. "We value the partnership with the city and the grant enables us to provide services and programs for seniors which we could not otherwise

offer."

As well, said Atwater Library's executive director Lynn Verge, the \$35,560 "will fund important programs and services for Westmounters: digital literacy, financial literacy, educational events, media-making workshops and more. After taking a hit last year with respect to funding from the city, we welcome the decision of the mayor and council to restore our supporting grant to a more deserving level."

The Atwater Library received city support at the council meeting February 7 for the renewal of its application to the Quebec Municipal Commission for non-profit status (see story February 22, p. 3).

PAC, cont'd from p. 1

mount recreation centre (WRC), opened in 2013. She was appointed an officer of the Order of Canada three years ago for her work in heritage conservation (see story February 26, 2019, p. 10).

Named as the PAC's new chair for one year was its continuing member Clément Demers, urban planner and architect. Architect Carole Scheffer was appointed to the committee to serve as its vice-chair for two years. She has previously served as

PAC chair at the time of the building of the WRC.

Architect Gerald Soiferman was reappointed as a member for one year while urban planner David Hanna and planner Brian Karasick were appointed for two-year terms.

Members' terms are staggered to provide continuity, Peart explained.

Councillor Mary Gallery, along with Peart, represents city council on the PAC.

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EDITORIAL

Maccarone delivers for Astra-mRNA-mRNA constituents, all Quebecers

As careful readers of this newspaper will already know, I found myself between the cracks of Quebec’s vaccination system in January, unable to receive a booster because I had received an “extra” Astra-Zeneca dose. The frequent warnings about the waning effectiveness of vaccines over time did not translate into booster access for people in my position.

(In spring 2021, GenXers – broadly speaking – were asked by the Quebec government to take up Astra doses unused by Baby Boomers in order to help with the overall vaccination effort, even though everyone knew that better Moderna/Pfizer doses were soon to be available. mRNA vaccines soon arrived in large quantities. Once others had benefitted from them, we were treated well and allowed a first and a second Moderna/Pfizer dose, so that we had one full series of a vaccine as prescribed by the manufacturer. Also, because this full series was either Moderna or Pfizer, we had a regimen that would be useful for travel to places that did not recognize Astra.)

According to the rules in place at the start of this year, a general “three-dose” maximum meant “any three doses” – even if the most recent dose was from the end of this Astra-mRNA-mRNA series five or six months before.

Before and after my editorials (January 18, p. 6, February 1, p. 6), I got to know a little network of people in the same situation, all of whom expressed feelings of dismay and/or abandonment by the Quebec government, after having done what it had asked.

I thank each of them for the information and advice offered to me and to readers of this newspaper.

Enter Maccarone

I appealed to our provincial legislator, Jennifer Maccarone, for help. In all honesty, I was very pessimistic. Maccarone is a provincial Liberal and in opposition. The government of Quebec is not famous for its ... responsiveness. More in the name of journalistic thoroughness than optimism, I wrote to her. She said she would work on it.

And then, in my inbox on February 23, came an email from her saying that the policy had been “clarified” and that we would be able to receive a shot if three months had passed since our last one.

(I think she is being modest. I went twice to vaccination centres for a booster shot and was told “no” twice, as were others of my acquaintance. The policy was not *clarified*. It was *changed* – thanks to her, in my judgement.)

So, I say this: thank you, Jennifer Maccarone. You came through for a small, but not immaterial, group of your constituents and, indeed, for all Quebecers in the same boat and for everyone who will come into contact with them in the weeks and months to come.

Maybe some people, directly or indirectly impacted by this change, will avoid sickness, serious illness or death because of you.

David Price is the editor of the Independent.

How Astra-mRNA-mRNA recipients can get their booster shot

I advise Astra-mRNA-mRNA recipients whose last dose was three months or longer ago and who want to get their fourth/booster shot to print up the relevant webpage and bring it to the vaccination centre. I had to show it and explain the new policy twice when I went.

The relevant page is: www.quebec.ca/sante/problemes-de-sante/a-z/coronavirus-2019/deroulement-vaccination-contre-la-covid-19/se-faire-vacciner-covid-19/dose-rappel-vaccin-contre-covid-19

(Reach it by going to www.quebec.ca, then “Santé,” then “Problèmes de santé,” then “A à Z,” then “Coronavirus (COVID 19),” then “Se faire vacciner,” then “Dose

de rappel.”)

On the webpage, the relevant paragraph is two paragraphs above the blue box that says: “Prendre un rendez-vous pour la dose de rappel.” It reads:

Une dose de rappel du vaccin est également offerte aux personnes ayant reçu le vaccin AstraZeneca, puis un vaccin à ARN messager (Pfizer ou Moderna), même si ces personnes ont déjà reçu un total de trois doses de vaccin contre la COVID-19. La dose de rappel est offerte trois mois après la dernière dose reçue.

There is also an English version of this paragraph. Get to it by clicking “English” at the extreme top right of the page. –DP

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MAYOR: ONE-TIME GRANTS HELP OFFSET ATWATER’S (COMPULSORY) PERMIT FEES

I was disappointed to see the comments from the Atwater Library in last week’s paper (p. 3), which was published just after council once again voted to support the programs of the library with a grant of \$35,000.

It was in fact our interim director general who helped the Atwater Library with this process for tax exemption this summer. It was also stated that we had charged them permit fees. We are required by law to do this, but what was not made clear by the library and some of its board members when they were very critical of the city of Westmount is that we have supported the Atwater Library with one-time grants to help offset the costs of renovating their building. The Atwater Library has received

funding for its programs for several years and help to offset the costs of permits when renovating its building. It is unfortunate that these facts are often omitted.

The Atwater Library is not a municipal library and we do not manage any part of the programs or the building but have supported some programs that they offer that the city does not. The grants given to non-profits are evaluated yearly. The pandemic has been difficult for many not-for-profit organizations and I wish the Atwater Library all the best as they re-open their building and return to more in-person activities.

CHRISTINA SMITH, MAYOR OF WESTMOUNT

CITY NEEDS WAY TO COLLABORATE WITH DEVELOPERS

For anyone watching the Hillside armory demolition hearing, it was evident that there is still much to be done to get the city’s planning process to function more effectively with developers.

In approving the requested 87-percent demolition, council rejected the unfavourable recommendation of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC). A favourable opinion from PAC once used to be key to

Artist is Junko

The statue photographed by residents George and Beryl Bowser and published in last week’s paper (p. 8) is by Junko, three readers inform us. It is called “Earth Dragon.”

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Editor

David Price: 514.935.4537
editor@westmountindependent.com

Chief reporter

Laureen Sweeney

Graphics

Ted Sancton

Advertising sales

Arleen Candiotti: 514.223.3567
advertising@westmountindependent.com

Classified ads

www.westendclassifieds.com

Accounting

Beth Hudson: 514.223.6138
office@westmountindependent.com

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

any project. Apparently, no longer. After three years of planning and discussion with the city, the Hillside developer likely believed that the odds for the needed recommendation from PAC would be higher if some of the masonry was retained. They were mistaken.

Our PAC remained unimpressed with the developer's effort and unequivocally opposed the demolition on all evaluation criteria. Even our council appeared unconvinced as they stated that, although 13 percent of the facade was retained, they still viewed it as a complete demolition and not a restoration.

One got the sense that the developer was not quite pleased as construction will now be more difficult and costly, impeded by the remaining 13 percent of the old brick exterior. Guess who will now pick up the tab for the time lost and the additional cost? The 27 families moving into the proposed building – that's who.

Why does our city's urban planning process end up needlessly burdening these new residents? The remaining facade should be removed. At this point, it provides no significant value, heritage or otherwise but adds pointless cost.

Hillside is the latest in a string of problematic development projects within the city. We have to figure out a way to work more collaboratively with developers, provide clear direction and reconcile differences at an early stage. Our community will be better off for it.

DENIS BIRO, BURTON AVE.

'FREEDOM' MEANS INDEPENDENT THOUGHT

I would like to offer a different perspective on Anthony Walter's letter of February 15 (p. 6) regarding the trucker protest in Ottawa.

From my understanding, the truckers are not against vaccines; in fact, the great majority of them are vaccinated.

Like the people who joined them in Ottawa – ordinary, vaxxed and unvaxxed, peace-loving Canadian families of all ethnicities and from all walks of life, including farmers, firefighters and veterans – what they want is medical freedom and an end to mandates and lockdowns.

Eminent doctors and scientists who took part in the truckers' rally – Dr. Roger Hodgkinson, Dr. Paul Alexander and Dr. Byram Bridle – shared their findings and asked Canadian public health officials to meet with them for an open discussion.

The response? After three weeks of peaceful gatherings and living out in the cold, no discussion of any kind. Instead, the invocation of the Emergencies Act.

Is this freedom?

Dr. Alexander was a member of the COVID-19 response team that advised the US government at the start of the pandemic to opt for prevention and early treatment to ensure hospitals would not be overwhelmed. Shockingly, the government ignored that advice.

Dr. Mike Yeadon, a vaccine developer and former Pfizer vice president, and Dr. Robert Malone, inventor of mRNA platform, have also raised concerns about the safety of the COVID-19 vaccines, as did the late Dr. Luc Montagnier, 2008 Nobel laureate for his co-discovery of HIV.

Many of the professionals who have spoken out against the narrative presented by the government and the mainstream media have had their reputations smeared, have lost their licences and have been threatened. But they have done so because they feel duty bound to uphold the Hippocratic Oath and its promise to "first do no harm."

It is imperative that we not merely read Wikipedia or rely on so-called fact checkers who have unjustifiably dismissed many of these doctors and scientists as spreaders of disinformation. It is always sound research practice to go directly to the source.

And now we have a year's worth of data on the effects of these mRNA vaccines in the US government's Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System (VAERS), with clear evidence that the vaccines are not especially safe or effective.

The FDA's own fact sheets list severe side effects, such as myocarditis, pericarditis, blood clots, Bell's palsy and Guillain-Barré syndrome.

Why risk injury or death when the COVID-19 survival rate is more than 99 percent?

Moreover, it seems a little suspect that in 1986 the US government gave immunity to vaccine manufacturers. They cannot be sued by anyone who is harmed or killed by their vaccines.

Of course, you could submit a claim under Canada's national vaccine injury compensation program and possibly be successful in arguing your case. But guess who foots the bill for any damages awarded? Not the vax manufacturers, but the taxpayer.

The lockdowns have also been extremely harmful. Fortunately, I don't know of anyone who has died from COVID-19, but I do know of people who have died from the effects of the lockdowns or have suffered mentally, physically, emotionally and financially, with long-lasting repercussions. The official data seem to confirm these outcomes.

Interestingly, the Freedom Convoy's message of love, joy and unity has sparked movements worldwide, with people

around the world rooting for Canadians. Who knew Canadians would become regarded as heroic leaders of a worldwide freedom movement?

I am also grateful to the *Westmount Independent* for providing a platform for uncensored discussion.

For me, freedom means being able to discuss and to think freely so that we can not only achieve our great human potential but also ensure freedom for our children and longevity for the human race.

PAT CHANG, DOWNTOWN

Editor's note: I am happy to publish a few letters on this topic, including a defence of COVID vaccination, but I counsel BOTH sides that this municipally focused newspaper is not the ideal forum for this discussion. You will NOT find the truth here or convince the other side.

– David Price, editor & "graduate" of grade 9 biology (or grade 8 – it is so long ago that I forget).

QUEBEC, NOT CANADA

In your February 22 issue (p. 3), you state that the Atwater Library houses, inter alia, the Canadian Writers Federation. It should read: the Quebec Writers [sic] Federation, which has done tremendous work in promoting English language writing in Quebec over the years.

MAYA KHANKHOJE, METCALFE AVE.

FLOWERS, FLAGS AND LEAVES

On January 21, 1948 at the parliament building in Quebec City, the Fleurs de Lis was officially adopted as the flag of Quebec. The elegance of Quebec's Fleurs de Lis with four snow white flowers on a sky-blue background largely contrasts with the huge, almost vulgar red maple leaf squatting in the middle of Canada's national flag.

For a couple of years and, even before last year's renovation of the Westmount Park Elementary School in Academy Rd., I have noticed the Canadian and Quebec

flags flying at its main entrance. Under federal protocol, Canada's Red Maple Leaf takes precedence when both flags are flying together.

But for very many years, I have noticed Quebec's Fleurs de Lis flying, flapping proudly at the top while, a picture of misery, Canada's Red Maple Leaf squats at the bottom of its mast.

And every time I cycle past on the Westmount Park bike path, I cannot help wondering who it is who is trying so delicately to make a political point?

STEPHEN CHIN, SHERBROOKE ST.

THANK YOU, CITY COUNCIL

On behalf of the board of the Atwater Library and Computer Centre, I want to express our deep appreciation to the city of Westmount for contributing so meaningfully to our operations with their generous operating grant. For us, it is more than a financial contribution: it is an expression of support and partnership to bring important services to the Westmount community, as we have been doing for over a hundred years when our organization moved into the city.

JOHN AYLEN, PRESIDENT – ATWATER LIBRARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Miriam D'Amico recognized as top speaker Quebec junior debating championships won by LCC team

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Westmount resident Miriam D'Amico, a grade 9 student at Lower Canada College, was recognized as the top speaker in the junior division of the Quebec provincial debating association's championships February 12.

Miriam, 14, along with her partner, Janice Huang, a grade 8 LCC student, were also named as junior provincial champions. The junior category is open to grades 7, 8 and 9.

As a team, they went through five rounds of debates in English against other school teams, but were also ranked individually.

It was the second year that Miriam had participated in the annual debates and she hopes, she said, to try out for the school team next year in the senior division with her eye on debating at the national level and eventually becoming a lawyer.

Among the topics the team addressed this year were prison abolition versus prison reform as well as the issue of doping at the Olympics.

Schools participating along with LCC, included Selwyn House, ECS, The Study, Trafalgar, Centennial and Alexander von Humboldt.

Timekeeper

Miriam has been the timekeeper for the last three Meet the Candidate debates presented by the Westmount Municipal Association at Victoria Hall.

She is the daughter of District 1 councillor Antonio D'Amico, finance commissioner, and Claudia D'Ignazio, both of whom said they were very proud of Miriam's achievement.



Miriam D'Amico on February 24. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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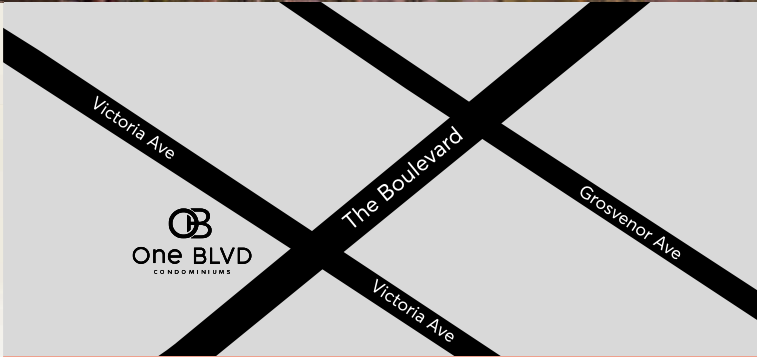
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Former councillor Cutler closes \$270M financing

Remote learning by ‘Paper’ tutoring company reaches 2 million students

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

While the pandemic may have been an economic disaster for some businesses, it has propelled to new heights an online tutorial service launched in 2014 by former Westmount city councillor Philip Cutler as GradeSlam and re-branded in 2020 as Paper.

“I could not have foreseen how it could have taken off so quickly in the last couple of years,” he told the *Independent* last week from his Westmount base, though most of Paper’s customers and two million students are in the US.

This “take-off,” he said, is because the remote learning service has been “a community solution” during COVID lockdowns and accelerated teacher burnout and by partnering with some 350 school districts in 30 US states.

This was made possible because federal funding to school districts in the US has enabled all students to have technological devices, he explained. This compares with Canada where these devices tend to be more prevalent in the private school sector.

“Paper puts personalized academic sup-

port within every student’s reach,” he said. “Most of the students needing support from Paper are in grades 4 and 5.

“It’s definitely a cutting-edge market that didn’t exist before,” he acknowledged.

And as the CEO of Paper, Cutler also attributes its success to his eight years’ experience on Westmount city council – from when he was the youngest-ever elected in 2013 at age 25 – up until last year when he decided not to seek re-election and devote his energies to his work.

Transferable skills

“It taught me skills that were transferable,” he said, namely the similar dynamics between how a municipality and a school board operate.”

Among Paper’s many school district partners, he said, is the Hillsborough County Public Schools in Florida, which he describes as the seventh largest in the country. “School districts contract with Paper for a fixed-price unlimited-usage



Philip Cutler at the time of his 2017 acclamation as city councillor, which began his second term.

model that uplifts their entire school community.”

Travels back and forth

While he operates the business from here, he said he has been able to travel easily back and forth across the US border for business during the COVID travel restrictions.

In a press release dated February 15, Cutler announced the closing of a US\$270 million financing for Paper, which was described as “a leading software provider of unlimited 24/7 academic support” which “further democratizes access to academic support.” It lists a number of investment partners.

Cutler, who attended Roslyn and Selwyn House schools, sat in the McGill senate as a student representative for the education faculty and was the only undergraduate to be a member of the senate’s honorary degree selection committee.

He was born during the term of his grandmother, the late May Cutler (1987-1991), who was the first woman elected mayor of Westmount.



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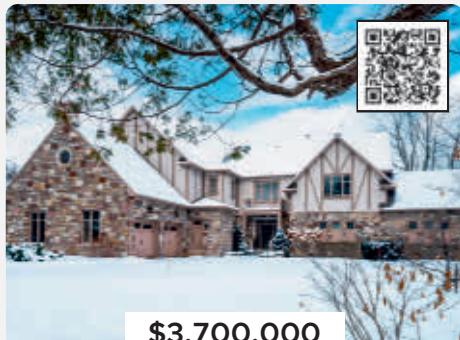
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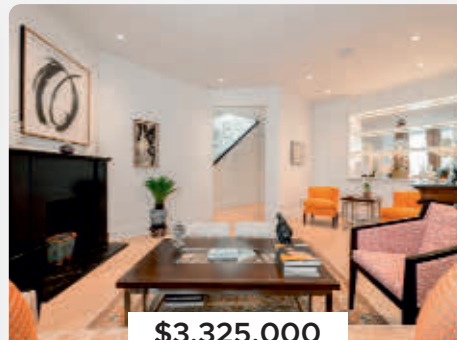


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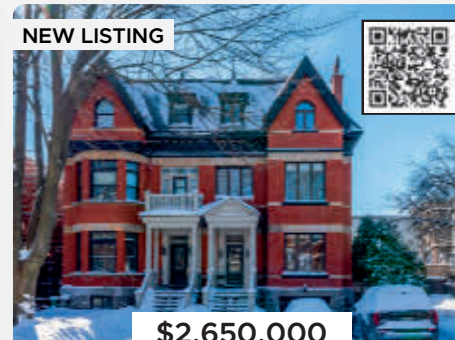
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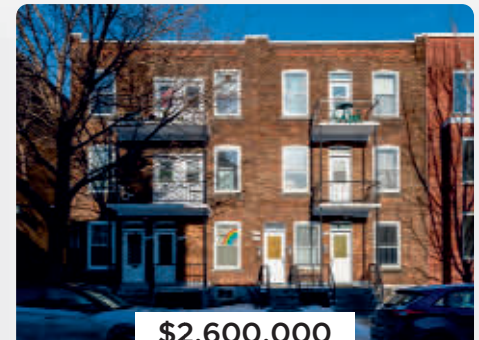


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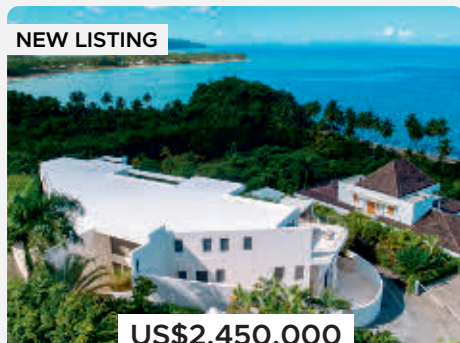
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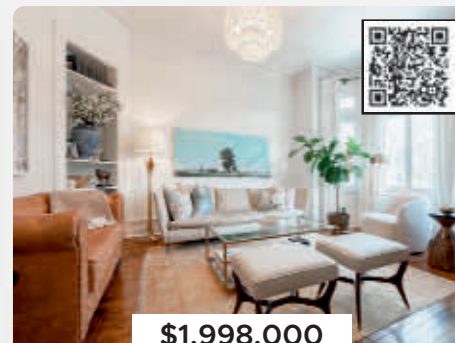


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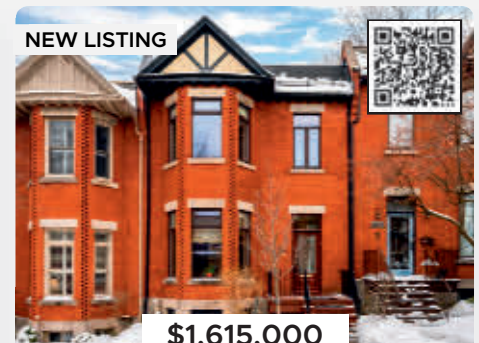
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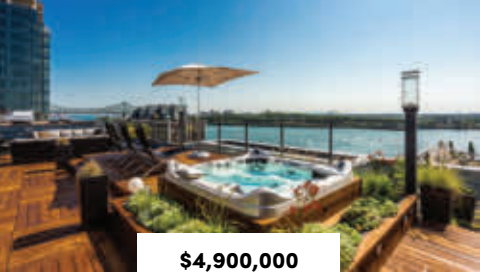
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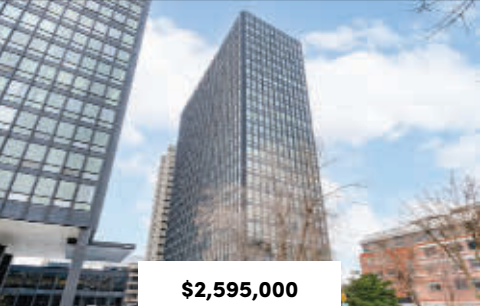
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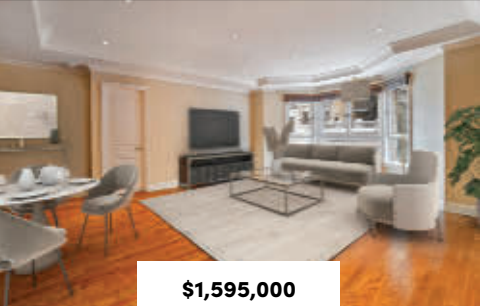
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MAJESTIC PENTHOUSE | 3 TERRACES | 2 GARAGES



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September transfers: Volume continues strong

highest ever for a Westmount house – but at least up to September, this house is the second-highest price of the year.)

Cordner's house at 718 Upper Lansdowne Ave. last sold in 2016 for \$1,825,000, only about half its municipal value, having been in the same family for 54 years. It was completely gutted and renovated after that sale. The most recent sale came in at 73 percent more than the latest valuation, one of the highest mark-ups in September.

Another totally renovated house that sold in September was the bungalow at 589 Côte St. Antoine Rd.; at \$3,400,000 this was more than triple its \$1,100,000 valuation, obviously the highest of the month, though six others had mark-ups of more than 50 percent. These all helped bring the average mark-up in September to 46.1 percent, by far the highest average for any month (to date) in the past two years.

Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in September 2021, gleaned from non-city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 15.

The elegant Tudor home built in 1929 for A. C. Cordner, who in the 1930s operated about 10 lunch counters in Montreal, sold in September last year for \$6,950,000, the highest-priced sale in Westmount since the \$11,700,000 price tag for Senator Leo Kolber's 100 Summit Circle property in February last year.

(Still to come in our coverage with the November 2021 transfers is the \$18.5 million paid out for 12-14 Sunnyside Ave. – the



8 Ingleside on February 22.

A total of 18 sales make up the September sales list, which includes the attached house at 8 Ingleside Ave. for \$1,576,000, lowest price of the month, and a semi-detached house at 693 Victoria Ave. between The Boulevard and Sunnyside Ave., which sold for only 7.4 percent above its valuation, the lowest mark-up of the month.

Condos

Only three condominium sales closed in September, but they teamed up with July and August registrations to make 19 sales in the third quarter of 2021, the most for any quarter since the second quarter of 2019. The average mark-up over valuation for the third quarter was 31.9 percent, the highest quarterly average mark-up based on the 2020 valuation roll.

The three September sales all involved mark-ups within two percent of that quarterly average.

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589 Côte St. Antoine on February 22.

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Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in September 2021

ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2020 VAL	RATIO (%)
76 Belvedere Place	Bianx S.E.C.	\$4,325,000	\$2,331,700	85.5%
158 Côte St. Antoine	Marfie-Josée Labelle & Farez Faruqi	\$2,198,000	\$1,659,000	32.5%
589 Côte St. Antoine	Sayed Farivar Heshemi & Stephanie Vallières	\$3,400,000	\$1,100,000	209.1%
4925 de Maisonneuve	Matthew Stotland & Sarah Shapiro	\$1,745,000	\$1,437,900	21.4%
460 Elm	Sylvie Laparé & Richard Payette	\$1,950,000	\$1,673,100	16.6%
8 Ingleside	Monique Tiarraz	\$1,576,000	\$1,087,100	45.0%
520 Lansdowne	Sharyn Katsof	\$3,025,000	\$2,462,000	22.9%
627 Lansdowne	Jean Durocher	\$1,830,000	\$1,650,000	10.9%
718 Upper Lansdowne	Robert Farber	\$6,950,000	\$4,018,700	72.9%
4306 Montrose	Mark Sinnett & Mya Pearle Chisholm-Nerenberg	\$3,065,000	\$1,784,000	71.8%
439 Mount Pleasant	Michèle Marchand	\$1,900,000	\$1,553,400	22.3%
446 Mount Stephen	Dominic Acocella	\$2,055,000	\$1,301,900	57.8%
655 Murray Hill	Christina Provost	\$2,235,000	\$1,922,200	16.3%
355 Olivier	Jianwei Zhang & Minyu Li	\$1,950,000	\$1,638,600	19.0%
431 Prince Albert	Oren Khedem	\$1,610,000	\$1,020,000	57.8%
17 Severn	Robert Anastaspoulos	\$1,873,000	\$1,647,900	13.7%
693 Victoria	Yves Bélanger & Christiane Corbeil	\$1,854,000	\$1,726,700	7.4%
4340 Westmount Ave.	Anling Wang	\$2,400,000	\$1,433,300	67.4%
CONDOMINIUMS				
343 Clarke #4	Arden Furlotte	\$830,000	\$624,000	33.0%
343 Clarke #3	Marc Crean & Maria Fernanda Barreto-Ribas	\$800,000	\$605,300	32.2%
11 Hillside #303	177724 Canada Inc. (Sergio Armano, pres.)	\$800,000	\$619,800	29.1%

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CAQ sought to purge PQ on French boards, says EMSB’s Feldman

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Why did the CAQ government want to abolish school commissions, beginning with French-language boards two years ago?

English Montreal School Board commissioner for Ward 3 Julien Feldman thinks he knows the answer: It may have been a ploy by the CAQ government to rid itself of potential rivals from the Parti Québécois.

The CAQ government’s Bill 40 abolished francophone school boards in 2020, but failed to accomplish the same with anglophone school boards because of minority guarantees in the Canadian constitution.

Addressing the Westmount Rotarians during their Wednesday noon-hour webcast on February 16, Feldman said Quebec now has the distinction of being the only jurisdiction in North America to have abolished elected school commissions.

“You know, I have my own feelings about why they wanted to do that,” he said.

“I know a lot of commissioners who were working in the French system. I know that there were a lot of PQ activists. And my suspicion has always been that the

CAQ saw an opportunity to displace or kick out a lot of PQ activists from the political process – starting in the school boards.”



EMSB Ward 3 commissioner Julien Feldman spoke to members of the Rotary Club of Westmount during their February 16 webcast.

While Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees minority French- and English- lan-

guage educational rights across Canada, Feldman noted that Section 23 cannot be overruled by the “notwithstanding” clause contained in the charter’s Section 33.

“As I always explain it to parents, I say it’s our kryptonite – it’s our secret weapon,” he said, adding that the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed in 1993 that elected representatives of linguistic minority school commissions have a right and an obligation to exercise management and control of their school boards.

The EMSB obtained a similarly favourable ruling in September 2020, when the Quebec Court of Appeal suspended Bill 40’s application to the province’s English-language school boards.

Feldman called Section 23 a “very powerful weapon that no province, no provincial government, has been able to up-end for decades. The CAQ government has tried on many different occasions. My feeling is that, essentially, they’ve given up.”

“It’s embarrassing every time they lose a case to us,” he continued. “And, unfortunately, they’ve moved onto their next scapegoat, which is CEGEPs. So, clearly they’ve gone after Dawson College and punished the anglophone community by taking away necessary infrastructure development.”

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More Institute webinar

What do native land acknowledgements mean? What does ‘Land Back’?

By MARTIN C. BARRY

For those who regularly attend public ceremonies or meetings, the reciting of a “land acknowledgement” statement at the beginning is something that has become as familiar as the prayer that was recited at one time at the start of gatherings by older generations.

“We want to begin by acknowledging that we are meeting on traditional territory,” is how many such land acknowledge-

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Jeff Corntassel, an associate professor of indigenous studies at University of Victoria, shed some light on the Land Back movement and “land acknowledgement” statements during a webinar on Feb. 18 hosted by the Thomas More Institute.

ment statements often begin, referring sometimes to lands that remained “unceded” when native peoples signed treaties with European settlers.

However, what do such declarations actually mean today in Canada – beyond their value as statements?

One of the questions that Jeff Corntassel, an associate professor of indigenous studies at University of Victoria, was asked to address during a webinar on the “Land Back” movement hosted by the Thomas More Institute on February 18 was the potential fear non-native people might feel about Land Back.

‘No calling for expulsion’

“We’re not calling for the expulsion of all non-Indigenous people from indigenous territories,” said Corntassel, who was

interviewed by Thomas More associates Mariela Tovar and Christine Jamieson.

While saying he couldn’t speak for all natives, he added, “For the most part, we’re talking about sharing the land, but sharing it with a common vision around how to best protect that land, and protect the sacred places, and honour the once-relational responsibilities to those places.”

Corntassel, who is currently completing a book examining native climate justice, food security and gender-based resurgence, said he has likened the Land Back movement to “the regeneration of Indigenous laws on Indigenous lands. So, I think of it as almost like more of a jurisdiction back.

“We’re getting our jurisdiction back, our jurisdictional authority, our forms of governance. We’re land-based peoples; we’re

water-based peoples, and so we’re place-based at the end of the day. And it’s those places that bring meaning to our lives, bring meaning to the way we express ourselves.”

Request for access

A member of the Cherokee nation, Corntassel said not all communities are calling for the direct return of lands, but rather for “access” to their lands and to their waters so that they can engage in ceremonies.

Regarding the use of the word “unceded,” he referred to the Supreme Court of Canada’s 1973 decision in the Calder v. British Columbia case, which marked the first time that Canadian law acknowledged that aboriginal title to land existed prior to the colonization of the country.

“When we talk about unceded, it means that Indigenous peoples have original title to the lands,” he said. “And what does that mean in terms of Land Back? It means that, you know, parklands, it means other lands, can be re-matriated to Indigenous nations.”

On the other hand, he added, “The long and the short of it is that ‘unceded’ means uncertainty,” in that the unceded status tends to discourage businesses from investing on territories that native peoples are attached to and wish to protect.

“Because you can’t have long-term investment on a territory that is unceded,” he said.

LOCAL CLASSIFIEDS

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Garden cleaning, Weeding, Adding Mulch, Yard Cleanup, Raking Leaves. Text / Message Vince at 514-294-5562.

Cleaning / Housekeeping

Westmount/NDG area: Reliable & thorough, I am available for cleaning and/or housekeeping at your home or office. References available, please call Karen 438.229.1173.

\$\$\$ INCOME TAX RETURN \$\$\$

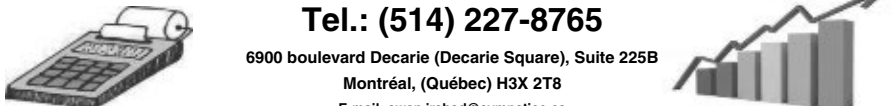
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Westmount A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Sweet Caps

busy and he joins in family activities, communicates well and is keen on being part of the daily routine.

Caps is a most happy senior at 12 years of age, very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

He is available for adoption by referring to the Montreal SPCA website, at www.sPCA.com, where you can then go to his information page at his identification number 49381916. Since he is in foster care, you can email the foster care group directly at pfa@spca.com for more information on him, news of his daily routine and great photographs.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

Katy Perry? No, Kate Purrry



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Precious Kate is a lovely white shorthair with a black cap and tail, and artistic markings on her back. A true original, yes, a star. Kate Purrry is delightful, most affectionate and playful with all.

She is at the Montreal SPCA cattery, waiting for a family to love and cuddle. She is a young three-year-old, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. Please refer to the Montreal SPCA website for her information page at www.sPCA.com, referring to her identification number 49645033 on the website. You can then book a visit by clicking on the red square and filling out the form provided to start the questionnaire process with an adoption counsellor.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



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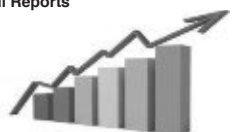


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Montréal, (Québec) H3X 2T8

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Guttman new CEO of ICRF

Stu Guttman has been appointed CEO of Montreal's Israel Cancer Research Fund (ICRF), according to a press release dated February 18. Guttman will be in charge of fundraising and research development. He started work at the Greene-headquartered group January 4.

"The board is very excited to welcome Stu Guttman to our organization," said Jeffrey Bernstein, co-president of ICRF.

Guttman has raised over \$50 million throughout his career, according to the release, including as the director of development for Summit School, the Montreal director of Chai Lifeline Canada and the director of Camp Massad.

"I am very proud and honoured to be part of this amazing international organization," said Guttman.


According to its website, the "ICRF is a non-profit organization consisting of physicians, scientists and volunteers who are dedicated to supporting innovative cancer research," and "ICRF Montreal funds cancer research both locally and in Israel with current fellows in place at the Jewish General Hospital, the Montreal General Hospital, the McGill University Health Centre and St. Justine/Maisonneuve-Rosemont hospitals."

Trench creates danger at St. Catherine and Clarke



Some drivers were driving very, very slowly through this deep trench on St. Catherine St. westbound west of Clarke February 24, including this one at top left. The car at top right is going east on the intact roadway of the eastbound lane. Other westbound drivers, bottom, were driving around the trench by going, at speed, into the *eastbound* lane, luckily with no oncoming traffic at the exact moment of these photos. The car and truck pictured doing so below were seen in the few minutes that the *Independent* viewed the scene from the northern sidewalk. The trench is at the site of a January 22 water main break (see February 1, p. 9) where work has been going on in recent weeks.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.



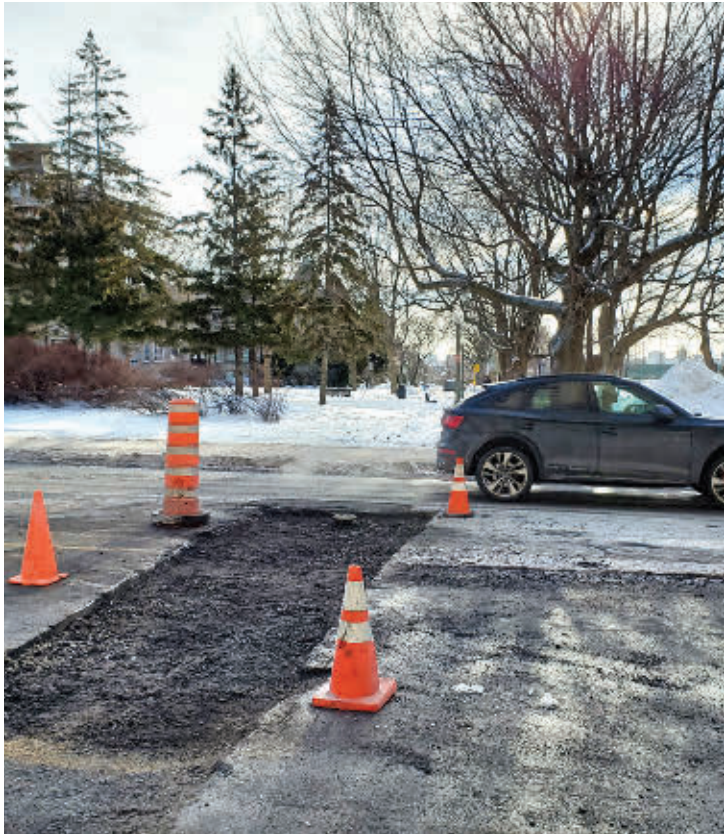
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Retail Watch

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Hogg Hardware celebrates 30 years!



The Hogg family: Zoë, Alexander, Tyler, Gigi and George.

business partner Gigi Ross handles purchasing, and “all three of my kids are working with us: Alexander, Tyler and Zoe. My brother-in-law Russ Tisshaw, who is also a partner in the business, has been here since the beginning. My niece Megan works in the office with my sister-in-law Wendy Patchell. I also have two nephews working with us.”

Driving the brand even further, 15 years ago Hogg’s opened on Nuns’ Island. The name “Hogg Hardware” is curious as “we are not a traditional hardware store. When we opened our aim was to replace Pascal’s. The business grew well for the first five years.

“Then Home Depot opened and it affected us. We had limited parking and could not compete with them on selection or price. We struggled for a number of years while slowly changing what we were selling.

“The switch [of locations] with the SAQ really was the spark that set us on the right path. The rent was lower and the space was smaller and easier to fill. What we do is sell items of quality that we believe in. Many of the lines that we carry we have had for several years and they have proved to be reliable.”

I asked how the pan- *continued on p. 22*

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Police Report

Police dealing with a surge of ‘grandparent’ fraud incidents

By Martin C. Barry

The Montreal police department’s Station 12 is deploying more resources to deal with a wave of “grandparent” frauds perpetrated against retired Westmount residents following two recent related arrests.

The Stanton St. station’s community relations officer Adalbert Pimentel confirmed to the *Independent* this week that an increase in the number of such frauds in Westmount has been detected.

“It’s gaining momentum,” he said, while examining recent incident reports.

“There’s a concentration of this type of frauds going on right now in our sector, Station 12, and this is why the police officers are acting accordingly,” added Pimentel.

As part of the station’s efforts to deal with the fraud wave, Station 12 staff recently met with local bank branch officials, and investigations have been launched, while “resources are being put into this,” he said.

In grandparent fraud schemes, victims typically receive a phone call from someone claiming to be a grandchild who has been arrested by the police while on vacation. Victims are persuaded to send several thousand dollars to post bail.

In the two recent cases in Westmount, the perpetrators posed as RCMP officers acting as intermediaries. An accomplice was also sent to pick the money up in person at the home of a victim.

In a third recent grandparent fraud incident here, a Westmounter living near the corner of Sherbrooke St. and Grosvenor Ave. went to a local bank branch and with-

drew several thousand dollars, then sent it by courier to the suspects, in accordance with their instructions.

According to Pimentel, staff at the bank branch took the initiative to call Station 12 after judging the large withdrawal to be a “red flag” indicating a possible fraud attempt. When the victim returned to the bank branch to make a second withdrawal, the police intervened.

While the suspects succeeded in getting away with the first withdrawal, they were foiled as a result of the intervention. However, as of last week there had been no arrest related to this incident, although Pimentel said there is an active investigation.

Regarding the two previous arrests, Pimentel said two suspects were arraigned recently at Montreal’s Palais de Justice on several charges, and remained detained last week pending further legal procedures.

Retail Watch, cont’d from p. 21

demic has affected them. “COVID has been problematic for us with staffing issues. However, our customers have continued to support us.”

I left the store with the hard-to-find Bag Balm in its famous bright green tin. I used to use it on my horse and it is great for dog’s abraded paws, not to mention moisturizer for hands with dry skin from gardening. (We’re getting ready: we know those daffodils are spring-stretching under the ice.)

HOGG’S HARDWARE
4855 Sherbrooke St.
Monday to Friday: 9 am to 6 pm
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CP’s Greene rail bridge gets some TLC after strikes



Aided by flag personnel, workers were out painting the CP rail bridge over Greene between St. Antoine St. and Prospect February 24. The work was presumably ordered after the February 7 and February 14 vehicles strikes of the bridge (see February 15, p. 18).

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT



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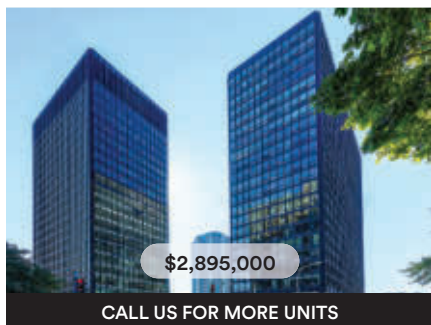
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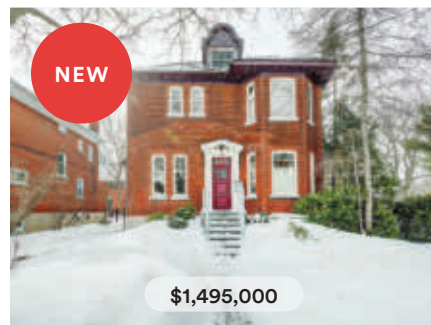


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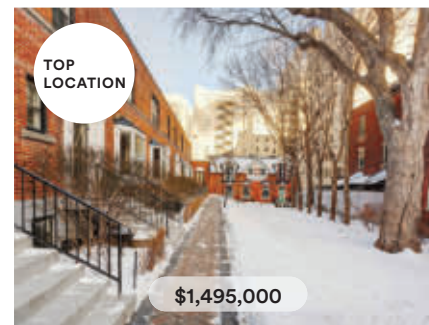
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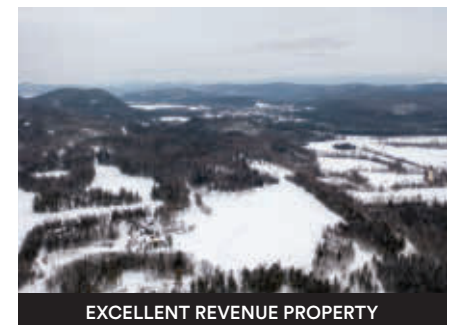
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