

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly. Vol. 17 No. 1c

We are Westmount

January 24, 2023

Old-fashioned sleigh rides, sugar shack, campfire...

City gears up for traditional winter carnival, Feb. 1 and 3-4

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Billed as Westmount's 38th winter carnival, this year's rendition revives the time-honoured format that existed before the onset of COVID restrictions.

"We're back to our usual carnival after three years," said Andrew Maislin, operations manager for the Westmount recreation centre (WRC), in presenting the activities for all ages. These kick off with a

seniors' craft session at the Contactivity Centre on Wednesday, February 1.

This will be followed Friday evening, February 3, at Victoria Hall by a pyjama party including a film screening of *Buzz Lightyear* and then on Saturday the traditional day-long outdoor events for all at King George (Murray) Park.

These will feature old-fashioned sleigh rides, a winter classic M7 hockey game for ages under 7, an inflatable game, winter games, chuck-a-puck contest and skating with city mascots, all taking place at times listed in a program to be delivered to all homes.

A campfire from 10 am to 3 pm will include free hot chocolate and cookies while free hotdogs are to be served over the lunch-hour from 12 noon to 1:30 pm.

Remembering
John Bridgman
p. 11

Winter, winter, winter



From left, Matilde, Sandrine and Elise blast off down the toboggan run in King George (Murray Hill) Park on January 2.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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No applications received for referendum

It's a go! 4216 Dorchester Blvd. gets final council approval

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

After no applications were received from eligible voters to hold a referendum register for the re-development project at 4216 Dorchester, city council at its meeting January 16 gave the nod of approval to a final resolution for the proposal.

This was the last step in a long process to build a non-conforming residential

building of five storeys with a stepped-back sixth floor on the roof.

It is to contain 11 units on a vacant site just west of Greene.

Since this project requires a number of variances from the site's current R6-35-01 zoning, it had already made its way through changes in configuration and architectural details presented in public and

continued on p. 4



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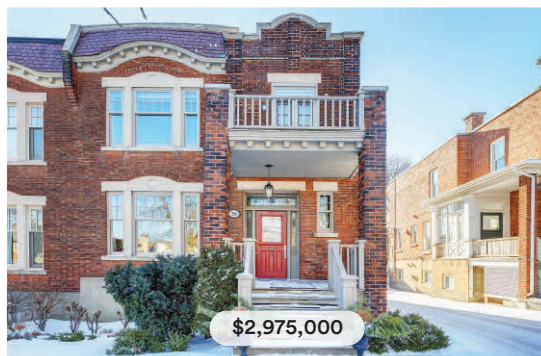
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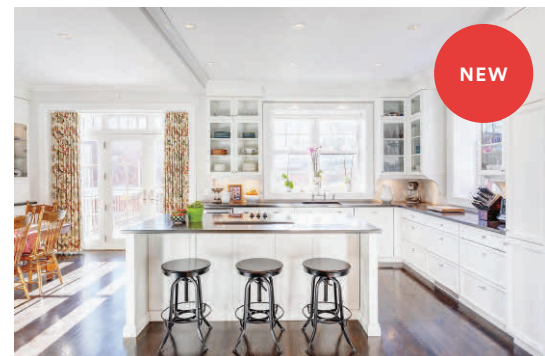
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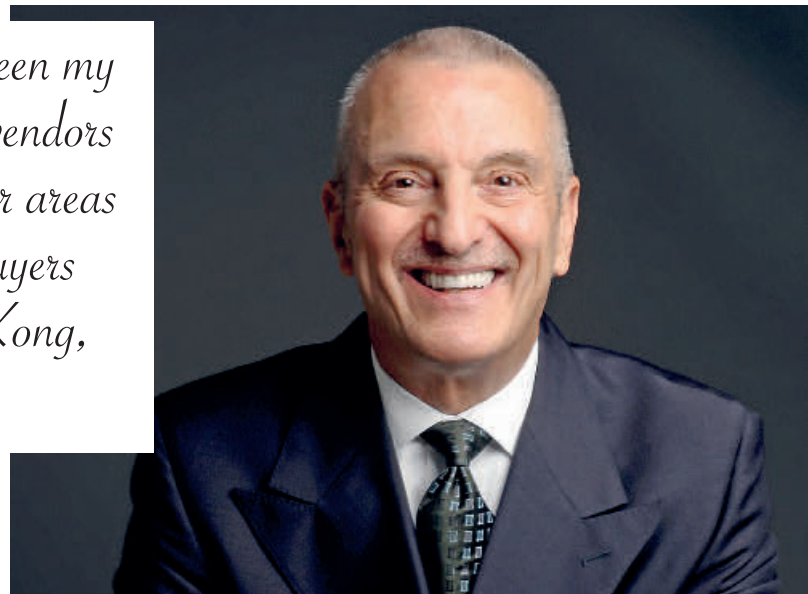
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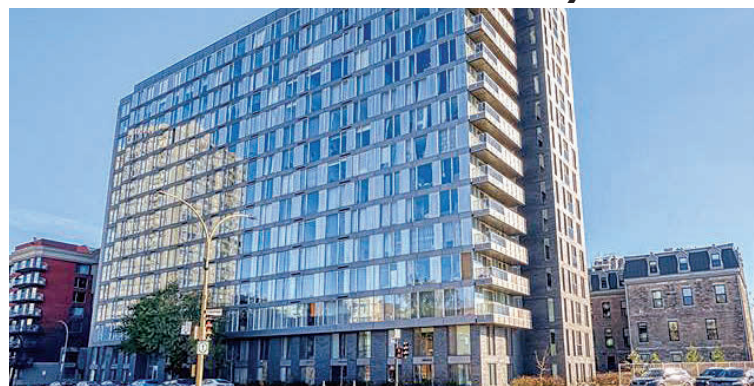
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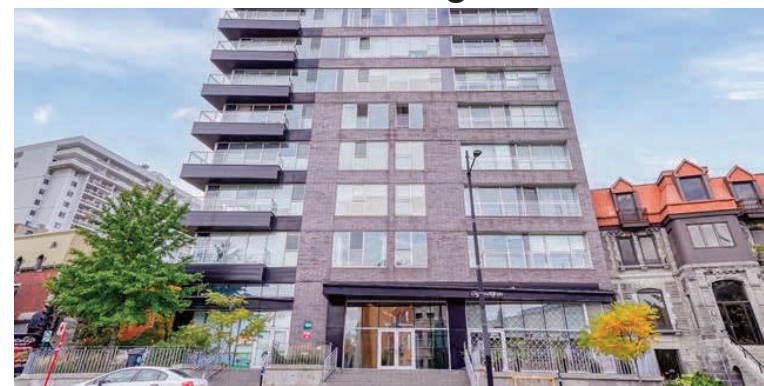
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Don't take a chance: Public Security

Drivers reminded not to block driveways, \$207 tickets plus towing

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In one week, January 11-17, Public Security issued three \$207 tickets for cars reported to have been blocking entrances to driveways, according to department director Greg McBain. The tickets included fines plus the cost of towing.

In all cases, the driveways were easily visible to the parkers and not obstructed by snow, he said.

"This is a reminder to drivers not to take a chance when going to the bank or getting something to eat," he explained. "Go around the block and find a parking space. At this time of year, also take care not to block a sidewalk or park in a snow-removal zone."

One of the three reported tickets was issued January 12 to a car in front of the entrance to the garage of the condo building at 1250 Greene after a call was received from the doorman. When the owner of the car could not be located on arrival of officers, a tow truck was called and the car moved to 1232 Greene. Police were informed of its whereabouts.

The previous day at 9:04 am, a blue Lancer had been found blocking an entrance at 3401 St. Antoine. A photo was taken of previous damage to the car before a tow truck moved it back some 20 feet.

On January 17, however, when a call was received from a tenant at 4032 St. Catherine (the former Subaru dealership), the owner of the blocking car arrived on the scene just as a tow truck was lifting it for removal. A ticket was issued nevertheless.

Woman rescued from balcony while shovelling snow

A woman was rescued from the balcony of a house on The Boulevard January 16 after locking herself out while shovelling snow, Public Security officials said. Patrolers responding to the call for help just

after 11:17 am tried all doors, including one to the garage, but could not gain entry.

A ladder was sought in vain from neighbours.

Owing to the cold temperature (minus 10 degrees), a blanket was thrown up to the woman, and firefighters were called as well as a locksmith. On arrival, firefighters helped the woman down a ladder and she was sheltered at neighbours until gaining entry.

Man targets parkers with anti-immigrant abuse

A man pushing a shopping cart accosted two people paying for parking outside 245 Victoria the morning of January 20. At first, he was asking for a dollar, but he soon became verbally abusive and spat in their vicinity. A northbound pedestrian passed the trio at this point, but doubled back on the other (west) side of the street as the aggressor became very loud and began throwing around office furniture left out as garbage.

The aggressor also began asking the pair why Canada had let them into the country and said, "Go back to India."

The pedestrian, now on the west side of the street in line with the altercation, called 911, but the aggressor disengaged while the phone call was in progress and proceeded south on Victoria and then east on St. Catherine St. The 911 operator asked if the man was intoxicated or mentally ill, and the pedestrian guessed the latter.

The police called the pedestrian later to say that they had not found the aggressor, but invited him to call again if he saw him.

"I have always been impressed when I have called 911," the pedestrian told the *Independent*, "including this time. I thought it was very smart to ask about the suspect's mental state to give the police all possible information to bring about a good outcome for everybody." – WI.

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Table of Contents

Letters, p. 4

Police Report, p. 4

Pet page, p. 10

Social Notes:
Museum ball, p. 12

Nate Cohen is Sports
and Rec's hockey player of
the month for December! p. 7

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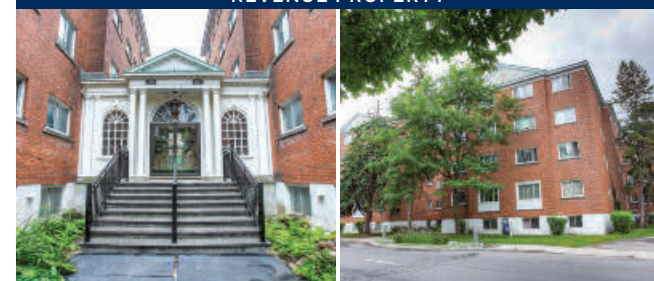
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SPEND MORE, YES – BUT
PAY AS YOU GO

In his letter published in last week's *In-dependent* (p. 6), Mr. Biro brings up two distinct but related points.

First of all, he fears the city of Westmount is not spending enough each year on capital works (loosely, "infrastructure"). Secondly, as for financing this investment, he feels Westmount should put aside its pay-as-you-go policy and start borrowing for routine capital works.

I'm inclined to agree with Mr. Biro on his first point. Still, Westmount has been steadily increasing capital expenditures since we got out of the Montreal megacity – during which benighted period we hit an all-time low of \$2 million in capital works investment for the year 2005.

From 2006 to 2011, we were spending, on average, roughly \$10 million a year. After we had increased our engineering capacity to execute capital works and had finished building the Westmount recreation centre (WRC) in 2013, we then managed to average roughly \$15 million a year in the period 2012 to 2017, and \$20 million a year from 2018 to 2022.

All these figures have been adjusted for inflation. They do not include Hydro Westmount's capital works and especially do not include the cost of building the WRC – the debt for which, by the way, was long ago paid off. In fact, when I stepped down as

mayor, Westmount had no net debt and had managed to complete \$25 million of capital investment during the year 2016 – in today's dollars. And all this was accomplished using pay-as-you-go financing.

Back in 2016, we calculated the "steady state" cost of replacing, restoring, or rehabilitating existing infrastructure – that is, "routine" stuff – was, in today's dollars, about \$20 million a year. This amount does not include most of the impact of the recent hyperinflation in construction costs, which, if history is a guide, will settle down. Westmount homeowners who have had construction work done of late have also seen costs go through the – er – roof.

And here's a point that I'm sure Mr. Biro will agree with: if we don't spend that whole \$20 million in one year, the shortfall must be added to next year's capital budget in order to keep respecting the "steady-state" amount.

For example, Westmount is forecasting it will only spend \$16.3 million of its \$20.7 million 2022 capital budget. The unspent amount should have, but has not, been added to the 2023 capital budget. However, I suspect that at least some of the massive and unprecedented budgeted increases in 2023 operating expenses should have been treated as capital items.

Now, as to the question of pay-as-you-go. There are two reasons why Westmount uses this method of financing: 1) a mature city with no population growth should not

be borrowing for routine capital expenditures and thereby passing on the debt to future residents. 2) With pay-as-you-go, the saving in yearly interest payments is very

substantial, especially with today's skyrocketing interest rates.

PETER F. TRENT,
CÔTE ST. ANTOINE RD.

Police Report

Suspect sought after Westmount
Square tunnel incident

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Investigators from the Montreal police's Station 12 are currently searching for a suspect believed to have been involved in a recent armed robbery attempt at the Westmount end of the tunnel that runs between Westmount Square and Alexis Nihon Plaza.

Around 2:45 pm on January 13, two women (a mother and her daughter), were approaching the escalator and stairs near the Westmount Square entrance to the tunnel, when they were confronted by a man who attempted to yank a handbag away.

"The plaintiff was holding the bag, did not want to give it," Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Adalbert Pimentel explained. After the victims resisted giving up the purse, the suspect took out a knife and pointed it towards them while remaining silent.

According to an account the two plaintiffs gave to the police afterwards, a stranger who happened to be passing at that moment approached the scene of the confrontation to intervene. Upon seeing this, the suspect let go of the handbag and ran off.

"There were no injuries, nothing stolen," said Pimentel, noting that the identity of the stranger who intervened remains unknown as he left shortly after the suspect fled the scene.

After the incident, as the two women were making their way eastward through the tunnel towards Alexis Nihon Plaza, one of them spotted the suspect loitering out-

side a store, and she proceeded to take his picture with her cell phone.

They then went to the plaza's security desk where they described what had just happened to them, after which security personnel called 9-1-1 to summon the police.

Although the investigators at Station 12 have the photo of the suspect submitted by the victims, Pimentel said he wasn't authorized to release it to the media.

GPS fails to help police

Since their integration into automotive security systems, GPS-based vehicle tracking units have been a godsend for the police when trying to locate stolen vehicles.

That all depends, of course, on whether the GPS unit is working.

Early last week, investigators at Station 12 found themselves unable to get far in their attempts to resolve the theft of a Jeep Wrangler that was stolen from a parking spot in lower Westmount sometime between 11:30 pm on January 15 and 6 am on January 16.

According to the police report, the on-board vehicle recovery system kept reporting that the stolen Jeep remained parked outside the owner's house near the corner of Dorchester Blvd. and Columbia Ave., although police officers who searched the neighbourhood couldn't find it.

"The police officers looked through the whole area but the vehicle was not there," said Pimentel. "We don't know whether it was a system delay or a malfunction, only that they did look and they couldn't find the vehicle."

4216 Dorchester, cont'd from p. 1

neighbourhood consultations.

When Councillor Conrad Peart, commissioner of urban planning, reported the lack of applications to seek a register, the final approval was adopted unanimously by the council.

Councillor Kathleen Kez, the District 8 representative, later told the *Independent* that this was not surprising given the number of changes and meetings that had already taken place and that the new build-

ing with new families would be much better than an empty lot.

The site's previous occupant, a three-storey apartment building, had been razed by a fire in 1998 and its vermin-infested remnants subsequently demolished (see story September 15, 2015, p. 9).

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One resident attends in person Council meeting kicks off 2023, only 2 questions asked

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The first city council meeting of the new year took place January 16 with a full agenda but ended in less than an hour with only one member of the public attending and two questions asked.

The first question was submitted online by Denis Biro, of Burton, asking what had been done in 2022 on updating the city's renovation guidelines "a process started more than six years ago." He also asked what was planned in this regard for 2023. This related to the city's strategic development plan for updating renovation guidelines.

"I wish we were farther ahead," replied Councillor Conrad Peart, whose commissionership includes urban planning. The city had been "short of human resources"

and didn't have them dedicated to that task, he explained.

As a result, Peart said, the development of an inventory of heritage building stock must be undertaken this year as a keystone to the updating.

The second question was asked in person by John Fretz of Lansdowne, who had also attended the budget meeting on December 19. He asked, however, what the tax increases would be in 2023. He was told it would be 6.4 percent for the average single-family unit.

While Fretz had in fact attended the budget meeting, he later told the *Independent* he had been disappointed not to have received a paper copy of the budget to follow and later had had difficulty finding the budget and presentation on the city's website.

Westmount city hall cyberattack update

BY JENNIFER BALL

The city of Westmount was a victim of a cyberattack when a group hacked into its servers over the November 19-20 weekend. The cyberattack did not affect all the servers and at the time it was not made clear whether the city would negotiate with the perpetrators.

The cyberattack was first reported by *La Presse*, which said the hacker group Lockbit had gained access to 14 terabytes of data and demanded a ransom to be paid, otherwise the files would be published in two weeks.

On January 6, a spokesman for the city, Mugisha Rutishisha, the division chief of the city's Communication department in-

dictated that "there is no additional information that we can share at this time. We are still restoring all of our systems."

By the second week of January, Rutishisha came back to say that "the city regained control over its systems before the end of 2022. They are all up and running. This was accomplished without contacting or negotiating with the hackers. We are still working with the cybersecurity firm VARS to monitor the situation."

There is an ongoing criminal investigation and there was no response from Rutishisha as to when any information will be shared about any breach of residents' data. He indicated on December 1 that "as soon as the situation permits will give out more information."



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Pilot project began with children's dept.

Westmount Public Library joins fine-free movement after council approval

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Quietly and without comment, city council removed all fines for overdue material from the Westmount Public Library January 16 along with a number of other annual updates to the city's tariffs by-law. By doing so, the city joined an international movement to remove all library fines for overdue material.

According to Anne-Marie Lacombe, di-

rector of the library and community events, instead of fines to encourage the return of all books, periodicals and audio visual material, members' accounts will be blocked for further borrowing until the material is returned.

"The Westmount Public Library is now proud to be a part of the fine-free library movement that originated in the US, spread throughout North America and is now part of an international movement. In

Quebec, she said, 56 percent of all public libraries are now fine free."

The new practice in Westmount began with a pilot project in the children's section in January 2020. "This program has proven effective, and it has not had an effect on the library being able to get documents returned," she explained.

Removing fines had been found to reduce barriers to service, ensure a visit to the library and interaction with staff is the

most positive possible, provides more constructive use of library resources and, locally, supports the library's mission "to enrich the community by providing a welcoming environment in which to read, learn and discover."

The new fine-free program does not apply to fees related to lost or damaged items or administrative fees. Fines were not a significant source of revenue for the library, according to Lacombe.

Sou exhibits at Victoria Hall, first of year

The Gallery at Victoria Hall held its first vernissage of 2023 for the solo exhibition of Westmount artist Fung Sou on January 12.

"Sou's works are full of possibilities, stories and experiences but they are also unique to all those who look at them," assistant director Library and Community Events director Donna Lach wrote to the *Independent* by email the next day. The exhibit runs until February 10.

► From left, artist Fung Sou and curator Ève-Catherine Champoux.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE WESTMOUNT PUBLIC LIBRARY.



Cites design and knowledgeable, friendly staff

Magazine rates Westmount's library in top 6 in Canada

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A travel magazine called *DRIFT* has

rated Westmount Public Library among the top six public libraries in Canada to study in, Councillor Elisabeth Roux told

the city council meeting at its start January 16. Roux is the commissioner of the library and community events.

The five other libraries rated were the Vancouver Public Library (Central Branch), Whistler Public Library, Toronto Public Library, Mississauga Central Library and Halifax Central Library.

Library director Anne-Marie Lacombe told the *Independent* she had not been asked for information on the Westmount facility nor known about the article. Someone, she said, had read it and informed Roux.

It mentions Westmount's "stunning design" and the "impressive children's section" and adds "but what sets the WPL apart is its friendly and knowledgeable staff. They are always happy to help and are an invaluable resource for all your reading needs."

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'Great listener, team player': Maislin

Cohen named player of the month for December

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The city's hockey player of the month for December for the Westmount Minor Hockey Association is Nate Cohen, described as a "team player through and through" by Andrew Maislin, operations manager for the Westmount recreation centre.

In announcing the choice last week, he said that 8-year-old Nate, who plays for the M9-1 Wings team, is "one of the new breed of hockey players who are starting out in Westmount: eager to learn, grow and develop as a player, teammate and leader."

He arrives early, with a big smile on his face and brings a lot of energy in the locker room and on the ice, Maislin explained,

adding that he can be seen in practices wanting to improve his game, willing to listen and work hard without complaining. "He is the ideal hockey player who will do what the coaches ask of him."

Maislin told the *Independent* that Dominic Plante, coach of the M9-1 and M13-A teams described Nate as having "a great personality and it is fun coaching him."

The recognition program was launched in 2019, not only to highlight the contributions of players, but also to acknowledge the opportunities and skills that minor hockey, and sports as a whole, can offer young people, Maislin explained at the time.

► Nate Cohen

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT SPORTS AND RECREATION.



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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Application to open a registry in view of approval by way of referendum

SCAOPI – 1-3 Hillside Avenue – Second Draft Resolution

1. At its regular meeting held on Monday, January 16, 2023, the Municipal Council adopted, by resolution, the second draft resolution No. 2023-01-13 concerning an immovable bearing the civic address 1-3 Hillside Avenue located on lot 4 142 847 of the Quebec cadastre.
2. This second draft resolution contains ten (10) provisions subject to approval by way of referendum:
 - a) Grant a variance to By-law No. 1303 of the City of Westmount, entitled *Zoning By-law*, by allowing, notwithstanding the maximum height of three (3) storeys permitted for a building appearing in the physical and spatial specifications grid for the Zone R6-34-14 of the zoning plan, a building with a maximum height of 6 storeys (including the storey of the above-roof structure for mechanical equipment and for roof access);
 - b) Grant a variance to By-law No. 1303 of the City of Westmount, entitled *Zoning By-law*, by allowing, notwithstanding the imposed dimension of 35'-0" for the maximum height of a building appearing in the physical and spatial specifications grid for Zone R6-34-14 of the zoning plan, a building with a maximum height of 77'-0";
 - c) Grant a variance to By-law No. 1303 of the City of Westmount, entitled *Zoning By-law*, by allowing, notwithstanding the maximum floor area ratio of 2 allowed in the physical and spatial specifications grid for Zone R6-34-14 of the zoning plan, a floor area ratio of 3.7;
 - d) Grant a variance to By-law No. 1303 of the City of Westmount, entitled *Zoning By-law*, by allowing, notwithstanding the maximum site ratio of 65% permitted in the physical and spatial specifications grid for Zone R6-34-14 of the zoning plan, a site ratio of 83%;
 - e) Grant a variance to Subdivision 5.2.3 of By-law No. 1303 of the City of Westmount, entitled *Zoning By-law*, by allowing the placement of the front wall (facing Hillside Avenue) at a minimum distance of 6'-0" from the front lot line and the placement of the underground parking lot at a distance of up to 0'-0" from said front lot line, whereas an open space of 10'-0" is required between the building line on Hillside Avenue and the front lot line;
 - f) Grant a variance to Subdivision 5.2.3 of By-law No. 1303 of the City of Westmount, entitled *Zoning By-law*, by allowing the placement of front stairs (facing Hillside Avenue) up to 0'-0" from the front lot line, whereas a minimum distance of 6'-0" from the front lot line is required;
 - g) Grant a variance to Subdivision 5.2.3 of By-law No. 1303 of the City of Westmount, entitled *Zoning By-law*, by allowing the placement of the building at a minimum distance of 8'-0" (at the rear wall of the turret) from the rear lot line and at a minimum distance of 11'-0" (at the main rear wall) from said rear lot line, whereas a minimum open space of 35'-0" is required in the case of a rear wall of more than 45'-0";
 - h) Grant a variance to Section 5.5.9.2 of By-law No. 1303 of the City of Westmount, entitled *Zoning By-law*, by allowing a minimum percentage of vegetated area of 41% in the rear yard, while vegetated areas must occupy at least 60% of the rear yard area;
 - i) Grant a variance to Section 5.5.9.2 of By-law No. 1303 of the City of Westmount, entitled *Zoning By-law*, by allowing a minimum percentage of planted area of 63% in the front yard, whereas planted areas must occupy at least 70% of the front yard area;
 - j) Grant a variance to Section 5.5.3.4 of By-law No. 1303 of the City of Westmount, entitled *Zoning By-law*, by allowing a driveway with a maximum width of 18'-2", while the maximum driveway width is 10'-0".
3. Interested persons may submit to the City Clerk's Office, no later than **February 1, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.**, an application to open a registry in view of submitting the provision of the second draft resolution to the approval of certain qualified votes.
4. The legal notice relating to the foregoing is available at: <https://westmount.org/en/resident-zone/legal-services-city-clerks-office/public-notice/>

Would like to volunteer in animal rescue

Ron Harris retires after 27 years as ‘mainstay’ at Vic Hall

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Ron Harris, one of the city’s most well-known employees, will retire February 3 after 27 years as building attendant at Victoria Hall – or, one might say, the mainstay of the community centre. It’s Harris who has been setting up and helping to have everything ready to go for the many afternoon and evening meetings, programs and social events.

Jack-of-all-trades

“He’s a jack-of-all-trades and has taken so much pride in his work for so long that it’s really hard to believe he’s leaving,” said Donna Lach, assistant director of the library and community events. “He goes out of his way to be such a help that he’s become a friend to many.”

“He knows Victoria Hall like the back of his hand and has even been heard calling it his home,” said then-library director Julie Anne Cardella when she officially welcomed him into the city Quarter Century Club in 2020 after 25 years of service.

She had described him at the time as a “super-friendly and really sociable guy, a talented photographer who remains calm



At the city’s 2022 Quarter Century Club banquet October 6, Ron Harris, left, reminisces with retiree Aldo Cipriani, right, the person he replaced at Victoria Hall.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF R. HARRIS

under pressure, makes the best brownies and is a tremendous asset” to the city.

All in the family

The city has been a part of his family. Ron’s father, George Harris, worked for Public Works as a member of the tree gang and a driver. Ron himself began working part-time with the city, giving him a total of 32 years’ employment, though the part-time work is not credited in his seniority. “It just passed in a flash,” he says. “It’s been a great place to work. I want to thank the whole city.”

While he has no plans for the future, “I’d like to work with animals, ideally in animal rescue. Maybe as a volunteer in animal rescue such as at the Ecomuseum.” This is where he has previously volunteered.

Taking over Harris’ position is Nathan Palmer from Sports and Recreation.

Comin’ Up

Sunday, February 5

“Get to know Summit Woods” hike with Westmount Park United Church. 4695 de Maisonneuve Blvd. 9 am.

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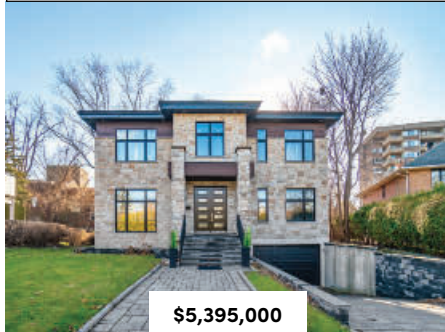
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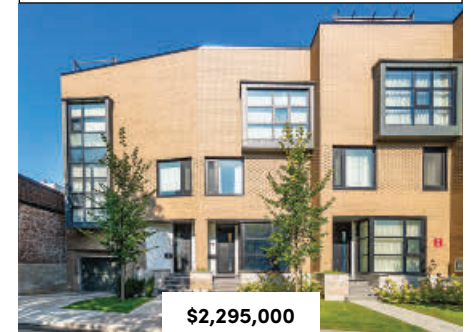
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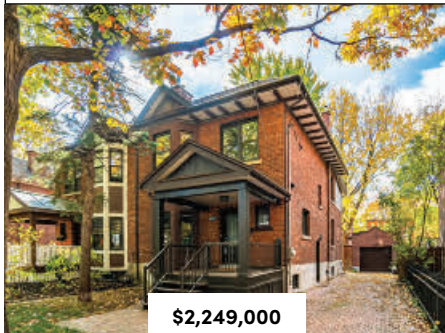
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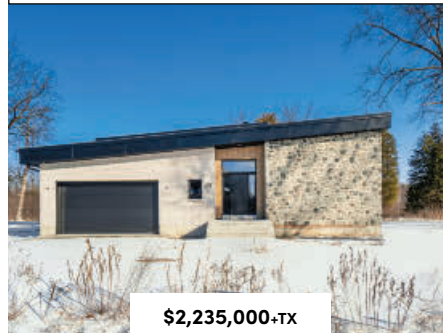
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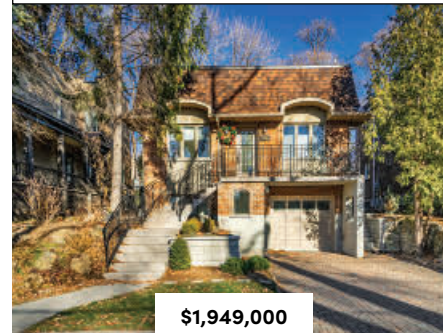
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9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

As you can see from this photograph, striking pearl-grey female Grizzly and hunky orange marmalade male Benji love each other and are a bonded pair.

They are up for adoption together from the Montreal SPCA cattery to join a Westmount family to bring much joy and companionship. They are eight years old, up to date with their inoculations, sterilized and microchipped.

Grizzly and Benji are very affectionate with all, cuddling together then sharing in



Westmount A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

Precious beyond words, Kaela is so pretty and affectionate. A small poodle type, her lovely white coat contrasts with her dark brown eyes beautifully.

Kaela is available for adoption from the Montreal SPCA kennel and I hope you can bring her home to join you soon. She is 13 years young, very healthy, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. Kaela is companionable and playful, enjoying walks and cuddles. A perfect friend to all, she came from a family with cats and integrates very easily in a group.

For more information on Kaela, please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, scroll to her information page using her identification number, 51837341, then click on the “Book a visit” button on the upper right-hand side of the page. This will link you to the adoption coordinators and, by providing your contact information and availability for a visit, they can then set up a meeting at the shelter

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Grizzly and Benji are bonded



their own individual ways with family members.

They are available for adoption through the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, with more information on them at their individual presentation page under their identification numbers: 31387111 for Grizzly and 31077713 for marmalade Benji. Please go to the “Book a visit” button on the upper right-hand side of their presentation pages, and click to fill out your contact information and organize a visit at the shelter to discuss adoption.

Please bring your carrier or you can purchase one on site at the accessory and nutrition boutique.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

Dear Kaela

soon to discuss adopting Kaela.

Pet insurance

My neighbour Sherry suggested that pet insurance policies are an important component of our pet care health plans, as it lifts a financial burden in regular care and emergency situations.

I was a bit embarrassed as I have always had rescue dogs and had this notion that they would not be insurable, so I never looked into pet health insurance coverage.

I just paid for treatments and never even asked the veterinarians who offered the policy booklets at the front counter.

I was quite wrong and now I know it ...

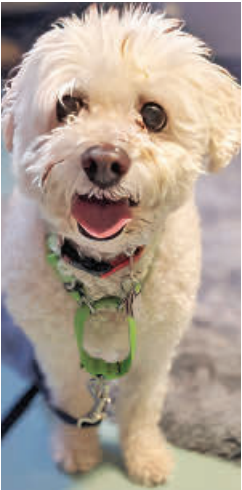
So I have done some research and have compared the different types of coverage offered directly from the insurance companies, through employers, retailer or service organization insurance plan offers, or financial institution insurance plan offers. This market has really grown as a

family insurance component. I have also enquired with veterinarians in our neighbourhood, as they present coverage offers for us to consider on the spot, and they have given their opinions.

Even the Montreal SPCA offers pet insurance coverage at their adoption centre. I was wondering what your experience has been, what you would feel is the best policy out there for families in our neighbourhood.

Please feel free to write to me at my email lysfow@gmail.com to share your experiences and your suggestions. Then I will report back on the best offers, based on the feedback we have shared.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



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John Bridgman (1940-2023) loved 'the tough issues'

'Very kind,' councillor cited for library legacy

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

John Bridgman, whose service as a city councillor and member of Westmount's finance and administration committee for two terms (1991 to 1999), died January 9 at age 82. A longtime resident of Bruce Ave., he represented District 8.

One of his legacies to the city is the role he played on the steering committee for the expansion project of the Westmount Public Library in its renewal project of 1995. It was made possible in large measure by Bridgman, an investment banker, said former mayor Peter Trent.

"He was one of the best councillors I had. He was always frank and perceptive." It was Bridgman, he recalled, who recruited then-retired Alcan president David Culver to chair the library's million-dollar fundraising effort and to bring David Johnston (later Canada's governor general), to head the special gifts portion.

"He was very kind," current District 8 councillor Kathleen Kez said of Bridgman, "a very kind man."

Born and raised in Westmount, Bridgman's great love was his farm on Bridgman Rd. in Richmond, Vermont where he spent



weekends tending the vegetable garden, working with his tractors, livestock and his maple syrup woodlot.

He attended Roslyn School, Lower Canada College, where he played football, and McGill, where he was a member of the Red Birds Ski Club. He played tennis year-round.

Bridgman started his financial career at the brokerage firm of Richardson Green-shields where he was senior vice-president and a director when he was first elected to city council in 1991 before moving on to RBC as a portfolio manager and then 3Macs. He liked the fast-moving pace of the corporate finance business.

Frustrated by dilly dallying

"I'm not impatient, but I'm programmed, unfortunately, for instant decision-making," Bridgman had said in an interview on his role as a councillor. "When I go to city hall, I have to adjust myself to a different decision-making process and the tempo can get frustrating when the process starts to get boring and delayed by dilly dallying. People have said I'm blunt. I call a spade a spade."

He was most interested in the "tough issue" of building the library's addition.

Former mayor Karin Marks, with whom Bridgman served on council when both

were councillors, described him as "the kind of councillor who does a good job, busy with professional lives and intent on giving back to their community" (see story Oct. 20, 2009, 2021, p. 9).

Born John Harwood Bridgman on February 20, 1940, he passed away in Montreal on January 9, 2023 survived by his wife, Pen, and children, Mark and Zoe.

"Although I've known his son Mark since the mid-1980s," said *Independent* editor David Price, "I did not meet John until I was writing a book about working in finance in 2005. He did not know me from Adam, but he nevertheless graciously agreed to be profiled for the 'investment banking' section (which career preceded his work as a money manager).

"Later, after this newspaper was founded, he became a valued advertising client. He always had a big smile and a witty/worldly comment at the ready, and I always enjoyed seeing him. My condolences to Mark and the rest of the family."

In lieu of flowers, the family has suggested that donations can be made in his memory to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) at the Montreal General Hospital.

Cubs collect school supplies for needy

The 2nd Westmount Cub Scouts collected several bags of school supplies January 18 to donate to local students, said Scouting volunteer and organizer Virginia Elliott. "The notebooks, binders, pencils, backpacks, crayons, rulers and looseleaf will help supply students who need them. This is part of their 'Community' badge work that is part of this year's program for the 8- to 10-year-olds."

The Cubs will be doing a food drive and park clean-up later in the year. Formerly at Mountainside United Church, 2nd Westmount Cubs now meet weekly at Roslyn School as well as attending several camps throughout the year.

PHOTO COURTESY OF V. ELLIOTT.



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.

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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Montreal's prestigious museum ball was sold out. Again.

Named PRISMA, the 62nd edition of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) Ball, was a universe full of colour.

Presented by Scotiabank, the black-tie gala is always one of the most highly anticipated of the season. Honorary chair was **Maxime Ménard**, CEO Jarislowsky Fraser, attending with his wife **Vanessa Ménard**. Co-chair/president was **Jean-François Côté**, CEO of Sharethrough.

The evening celebrated guest of honour, the multidisciplinary artist **Françoise Sullivan**, an icon of Quebec culture. The spectacularly designed banquet rooms were created by **Anne-Séguin Poirier**, and event coordinators **Valentine Hinfrey** and **Alexandra Briand-Soucy**.

Guests had the opportunity to visit the ground-breaking exhibition *Seeing Loud: Basquiat and Music* before sitting down to a gourmet meal. Showcasing products from Quebec, the menu was devised by **Hugo Coudurier**, the re-
nowned chef of the Fair- continued on p. 13

Sold-out museum ball raises \$1.2 million



Jo-Anne Duchesne, André Dufour, Jean-François Côté, Maxime Ménard, Mary-Dailey Desmarais, Sylvie Demers, and Stéphane Aquin.



Premier François Legault and Isabelle Brais.



Laurence Nerbonne and Montreal mayor Valérie Plante.



Françoise Sullivan.



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Social Notes *cont'd from p. 12*

mont Le Château Frontenac hotel's Champlain restaurant and executed by the team from the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, under the direction of **Armando Arruda** and executive chef **Baptiste Peupion**.

Arriving guests included Quebec premier **François Legault** and **Isabelle Brais**; **Geneviève Guilbault**, deputy premier and minister of Transport, and ministers **Christian Dubé** (Health), **Éric Girard** (Finance and minister Responsible for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers), **Mathieu Lacombe** (Culture and Communications, and minister Responsible for Youth; and minister Responsible for the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Region and the Outaouais Region; and Montreal mayor **Valérie Plante**.

Present from the MMFA were **Stéphane Aquin**, director; the foundation's director general **Jo-Anne Duchesne**, and president **Sylvie Demers**; chief curator **Mary-Daily Desmarais**; **André Dufour**, chair of board of trustees MMFA and **Maude Béland**, media relations.

Noted amidst the glamour were local res **Julia** and **Stephen Reitman**, and **Dominique Bertrand** and **Jacques Maurice**, as well as **Pascale Bourbeau** and **Pierre-Karl Péladeau**, **Vanessa Ménard**, **France Margaret Bélanger**, president, Sports and



Stephen and Julia Reitman.



Geneviève Guilbault and Mathieu Lacombe.



Pascale Bourbeau and Pierre-Karl Péladeau.

Entertainment, CH Group; **Charles Emond**, CEO Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec; **Vincent Damphousse**, former professional hockey player and TV hockey analyst; **Mireille Deyglun**, actress; **Angèle Dubeau**, violinist; artists **Kent Monkman** and **Caroline Monnet**; and **Elisapie**, singer-

songwriter and director;

Isabèle Chevalier, **Vanessa Germain**, **Christian Larose** and singer **Laurence Nerbonne**.

The Museum After-Ball, an exclusive event organized specifically for donors of the Young Philanthropists' Circle and the

Angel Circle, was back and packed!

Over \$1.2 million was raised in support of the museum's top priorities: programming, enhancement of its collections, maintenance and development of educational and wellness programs, and accessibility.



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Greene Ave. jewellery stores recount a precious 2022 selling season

By JENNIFER BALL

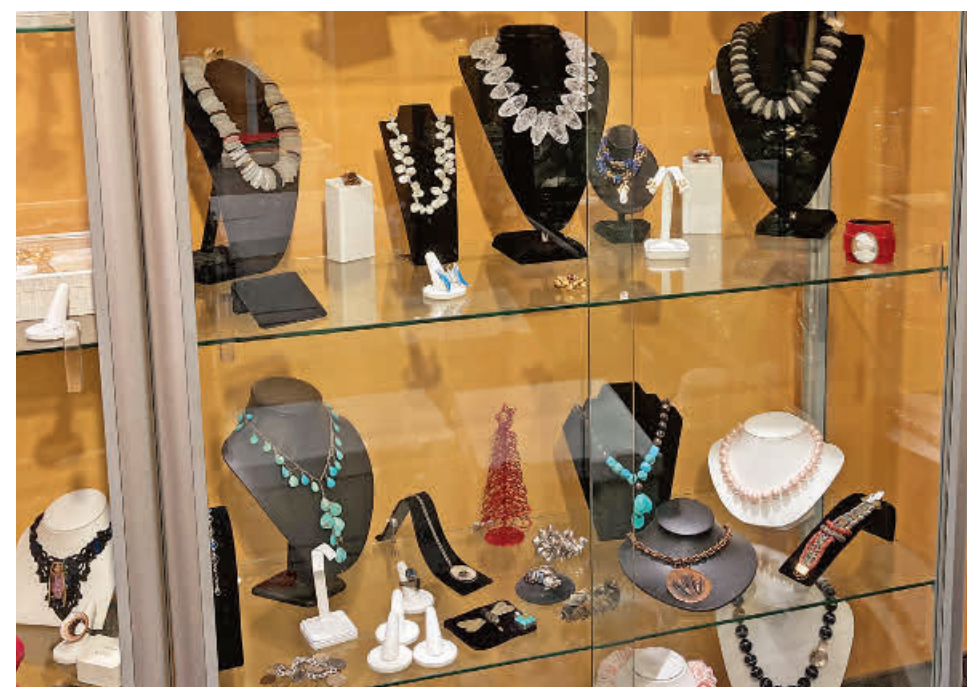
Gold loves uncertainty – something that is hardly missing from investment opportunities in the equity, bond and housing markets these days. Three Greene Ave. jewellery store owners say, though, that the desire to purchase the precious metal – or a precious gem – is as personal as it is keen.

“Gold is not a place that people really like to put money,” said Stewart Diamant, who owns S.P. Diamant at 1356 Greene Ave. “They put a little bit of money invested in gold but it is because it is talked about so much in society.”

On the opposite side of the street, Monica Savage and Jeff Pollock own Daisy Exclusive in the Westmount Square shopping concourse. Their operation buys and



Monica Savage (above left) of Daisy Exclusive in Westmount Square on January 3. Sheldon Diamant (above right) of S.P. Diamant displays some of his stock on January 11.



◀The serious and ▲ whimsical sides of Coach House on Greene Ave., as seen January 4.

sells gold, silver and precious gems.

The *Independent* wondered if Savage saw any trends in the purchasing habits of her customers in 2022? “They were pretty stable from 2021 to 2022. When people come in here to buy something for themselves with after-tax money, I think you have to be at a certain level already,” Savage said.

that they were doing during the first years of COVID, he said. “We were more innovative and increased our designs. I designed a lot personally; I had time to think about design. Whether it’s a person that’s spending \$5,000 or \$50,000, they want the same thing: something beautiful that they can look at, over and over again.”

Jewellery not an investment

Diamant is dubious about buying jewellery for investment: “The gold and diamonds that we sell, of course, is going to go up but nobody’s buying their jewellery to sell. They’re giving it to the children later on. There’s a psychological investment that has more value.”

Anna Kaufer and her partner Morris Zimelstern own the Coach House at 1331 Greene Ave., #200. Kaufer indicated that the lion’s share of her business is conducted online, which has expanded her sales well beyond the borders of Westmount.

“Let’s say [a customer] is looking online and they find something that they’re attracted to... it’s kind of the thrill of the hunt. People want to find certain things and if it takes their fancy, they go for it, if they can afford it,” Kaufer said.

“We all need pick-me-ups. There are a lot of people that just didn’t leave their houses for two years.”

Pocket watches sales up!

What was totally unexpected, she added, were purchases of gold in the form of pocket watches during the holiday shopping season. “We had not sold a gold pocket watch in years. We sold four in December. Four big, expensive ones.”

Savage is also a certified gemologist. “We’re always looking for one-carat diamonds. People like to get over that hump of an A1 carat diamond if they are going to buy one.”

Diamant’s clientele, on the other hand, is looking for a first purchase or an upgrade to three-carat diamonds or higher, he said. 2022 was a great sales year for the design firm and manufacturer “due to a combination of things,” Diamant said. “[Customers] found that in life you have to spend money to enjoy it and jewellery is a nice way for the ones that enjoy jewellery.”

Diamant started to adjust certain things



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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Minor Exemption Application

1. The City of Westmount has received an application for a minor exemption for the building located at **339, Olivier Avenue**;
2. The application will be reviewed at the regular sitting of the Municipal Council that will be held on February 6, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chamber of City Hall, located at 4333 Sherbrooke Street West, in Westmount and will be broadcast live on the City’s website. The link for the sitting will be available at the following address: www.westmount.org/seance-du-conseil-en-direct.

The legal notice relating to the foregoing is available at: <https://westmount.org/en/resident-zone/legal-services-city-clerks-office/public-notices/>

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It's time.

If you are seeking outstanding portfolio management and comprehensive wealth management, we would be pleased to discuss how we can put our experience to work for you.

To meet with us, please call:

Jean-François Dion,
Senior Portfolio Manager,
or Sholom Tabak,
Senior Wealth Advisor,
at 514-878-4216

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