

Proposals: Ban non-resident dogs, reduce parking Alleged 'abuse' of Summit Woods by dogs dominates long meeting

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Increased enforcement of dog regulations in Summit Woods and boosting amounts of related fines were among a number of suggestions city council heard from residents at its meeting March 18 to deal with preventing off-trail use, increased parking and dogs scaring some people.

It was even suggested that non-resident dogs be prohibited from using the urban forest in what is officially a bird and fauna sanctuary but where dogs are allowed off leash at certain times. By issuing licences to non-Westmounters, "Why are we encouraging other municipalities to close their runs?" asked one questioner.

Concerns for the use by off-leash dogs consumed much of the first hour of what became a three-hour council session.

"A lot of residents are concerned with

the state of the woods and the lack of respect for the summit (by dog owners)," explained Councillor Antonio D'Amico, who represents the district and spoke to some of their concerns. "I hear both sides. It's a balancing act."

Over the years, while the city proposed closing off portions of various trails and redundant paths to allow for regeneration of the woods, this continues to be requested by John Fretz of Lansdowne Ave., though little action had been reported recently. Fretz later thanked D'Amico for his "voice" at the meeting.

In the early 1990s, landscape architect Sandra Donaldson was commissioned by the city to undertake a restoration of the woods. The project tackled issues such as erosion and preservation of biodiversity by closing off redundant paths (see letter June 18, 2019, p. 8).

Greek independence, two PMs and a Westmount cannon



On March 24, the re-enactors of the Westmount Battery brought one of Westmount's two cannon to the parade in Park Extension celebrating Greek independence, which took place one day before the official day. The prime minister of Greece, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, at top right, were grand marshals. Coincidentally, the Westmount cannon were made in 1810, not too far in time from the War of Greek Independence (1821-32), and their type was in use until 1860. They are also from the United Kingdom, which supported the Greeks against the Ottoman Empire. The battery also marched with a World War II-era howitzer. PHOTO COURTESY OF DOMINIC VARVARO.

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Cutting down on regular council meetings leads to 3-hour session

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

While the March 18 council meeting was somewhat delayed by schools' March breaks, it also reflected the plan to reduce the number of "regular" sessions to one per month even though "special" or "extraordinary" ones have so far been added.

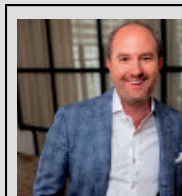
The length of the recent meeting also resulted from a longer than usual opening question period.

While rules governing council question periods in By-law 1464 limit the opening one to 60 minutes "at the discretion of the mayor," this one preceded an agenda of 51 items extending the meeting to three hours counting a closing question period of 30 minutes.

The business items included notice of motions to adopt six (draft) by-law amendments, all subject to public consultation. These are to

continued on p. 4

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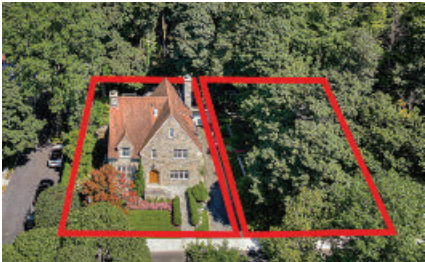
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Man breaks ankle in fall near bike path in Westmount Park

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A 75-year-old Westmount man was reported to have fallen on or beside the bike path in Westmount Park March 12, according to Public Security officials. Patrolers who received a call to help him at 3:37 pm assessed his injuries, moved him from “a muddy puddle” to a park bench and made him as comfortable as possible.

While it was believed he had slipped on the mud that later heavily covered the assisting officer, it was not clear whether he was trying to cross the bike path or walking alongside it.

He was “confirmed” to have broken an ankle and was taken to the Montreal General Hospital by Urgences Santé.

Door-to-door solicitors spotted, warned

Public safety officers spotted two 20-year-old men calling at doors on Carleton

north of Westmount Ave. March 16 at 2:15 pm, Public Security officials report. They were asked to stop and warned against soliciting without being registered to do so.

Public Security assists injured woman who trips at Metro grocery

An 83-year-old woman who fell inside the Metro grocery store March 21 was reported to have tripped on a carpet at the entrance, Public Security officials said. She was reported to have put out her right arm to protect herself. In doing so, she appeared to have suffered a dislocated shoulder and a cut above the eyes from sunglasses she wore.

Officers left after arrival of an ambulance. She was reported as living in Westmount and had been wearing flat shoes, but no other details were provided.

Council approves \$80,000 to help merchant groups

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The city’s two non-profit merchant associations were awarded \$40,000 each at the city council meeting March 18. These are to help maintain their viability.

The resolution moved by Councillor Matt Aronson, whose commissionership includes economic development, who specified the grants are conditional on the groups providing financial statements for the year ending 2023 and a breakdown and allocation of funds.

“This is a one-year grant,” that enables the local merchants to provide activities that encourage people to shop locally, he

explained. “It’s a tough time for merchants.”

The Westmount Victoria Village Merchants Association, at the west end, and the Greene Merchants’ Association, to the east, will once again hold street festivals among these activities, according to Cynthia Lulham, the general manager of both.

Their respective annual meetings will take place this week, she told the *Independent*.

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Inside

Police Report, p. 6

Letters to the Editor, p. 7

9 Lives, p. 14

Westmount A-dog-tions, p. 14

Social Notes:

Cedars fundraiser, p. 17

InfoWestmount, p. 12



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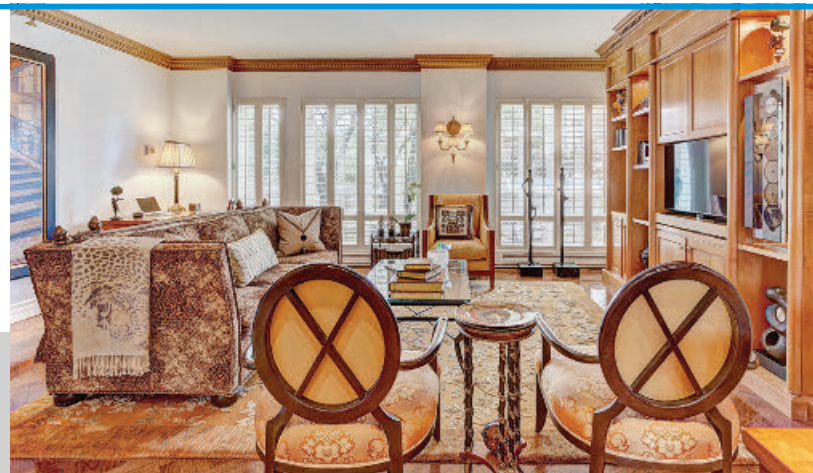
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Looking down Surrey Gardens from Gordon Crescent on March 12 at 7:15 pm. St. Joseph's Oratory, centre, is a National Historic Site of Canada and the country's largest church.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Sinking like a sunset

Council meeting, cont'd from p. 1

establish an increase in tariffs (draft 1615), govern the city's planning program regarding "heat islands" (1616), waste management (1617), electricity rates (1618) and the supply of electricity (number 1619).

Also of interest to some residents was a new by-law (1620) to authorize a loan for \$7,737,426 for reconstruction work on Upper Lansdowne and replacement of its water main (see story January 30, p. 1).

Three other by-laws were ones adopted to establish a Westmount Heritage Council (1607), amend the Planning Advisory Community (1608) and demolish buildings (1609).


Along with these were approval of several seasonal contracts: for spring planting as well to clean catchbasins, maintain clay tennis courts, maintain playing fields, pro-

vide structural lining for water mains, and purchase two new gasoline-powered pickups.

Aronson votes against new gas pickups

In keeping with his tradition to promote the use of electric vehicles as commissioner of sustainability, Councillor Matt Aronson voted March 18 against the council's approval to purchase two 4x4 crew cab utility pickups with gasoline engines.


Among other vehicles Aronson has opposed on this principle were a full-size pickup truck in July 2023 and three pickups in July 2022. In both cases, electric versions were unavailable and he described his opposition vote as "symbolic" and "a harbinger of what's to come" (see story July 4, 2022, p. 5).



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Library's 125th anniversary lecture focuses on history of 'modern' libraries

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The histories of libraries and museums are intricately linked, according to Karina Cahill, a seasoned academic researcher who is a reference librarian at Westmount Public Library.

The Westmount Public Library is in the midst of celebrating its 125th anniversary.

On March 15, a lecture was attended by around 40 people and offered a general look at libraries, with emphasis on their development in France, England and North America, starting at the end of the medieval period.

Although the sharing of books goes back to antiquity, the concept of a library as we know it is more recent, said Cahill, who traced library history from the Renaissance to more modern times.

Cahill has masters degrees in philosophy, French literature and library sciences, as



On March 15, Westmount Public Library reference librarian Karina Cahill spoke to about 40 people on the history of public libraries in France, England and North America.

well as a graduate degree from Université de Paris, where she wrote a thesis on theatre under Louis XIV. She also gave a lecture at the library last March on opera during Louis XIV's reign.

The "codex," made up of sheets of bound parchment made of treated animal skin, was the historical ancestor of the modern book. According to Cahill, Italian Renaissance scholar and poet Petrarch's donation of his personal collection of books was one of the first instances of a publicly-accessible library being created during the period in question.

After the introduction into 13th century Europe of paper-making knowledge from China, followed by the invention of the printing press in the 15th century, some of the first public libraries began to spring up in churches, said Cahill, while adding that these books con-

sisted mostly of religious texts.

She said some of the most outstanding examples of early libraries in France belonged to religious congregations or wealthy patrons. "These libraries were open a few hours a week and people could come and visit them," she said.

"The history of libraries and museums are intricately linked," she continued, noting that early libraries often displayed objects one might normally find today in museums.

"There you could find ancient medals, or costumes from faraway countries, or objects of natural science like skeletons, animals. And so, they functioned very much like a museum. So, many people went there at opening hours not to read books, but actually to visit the library as one would do a museum."

In England, some of the first libraries were set up by mine workers eager to advance their learning. In France, the propagation of new philosophical ideas through libraries is believed to have played a significant role in creating the conditions that contributed to the outbreak of the French Revolution.

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Police Report

Crime up – Police arrest Atwater stabbing suspect

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Following several weeks of relative tranquility, police at Station 12 responded to nearly a half-dozen incidents in Westmount last week, including a stolen car, several household break-ins, and an armed assault culminating with the hospitalization of the victim.

Around 8 pm on March 18, officers from Station 12 were summoned to the corner of Atwater Ave. and de Maisonneuve Blvd. where a verbal confrontation between two male individuals degenerated to violence when one stabbed the other with a knife.

The victim “was taken to hospital,” said Cst. Mike Yigit, Station 12’s community relations officer.

Yigit, who is also a foot patrol officer, told the *Independent* that the suspect was arrested on March 19 in Alexis Nihon Plaza.

Yigit was able to identify the suspect from images of the stabbing incident taken by nearby security cameras. He said an “active search” was undertaken to locate the suspect, following which “I happened to cross him at Alexis Nihon where we proceeded with his arrest,” he added.

After being taken into custody, the suspect was driven downtown to a Montreal police detention centre, where he was questioned by investigators and processed for charges pending a court appearance.

SUV stolen

On March 19, there was yet another theft in Westmount of a high-end vehicle. A Jaguar F-Pace compact luxury SUV was stolen in broad daylight from a private driveway on Claremont Ave.

In a complaint filed with the police, the owner reported that he parked around 4 pm and by 6 pm it was missing. There was no tell-tale evidence of a forced entry into the vehicle, such as broken glass on the ground.

As previously reported in the *Independent*, a Jaguar F-Pace was stolen on January 21 from a parking spot near the corner of Forden and Montrose avenues. These incidents took place as a major wave of vehicle thefts continues in Quebec and across Canada.

\$1,800 bike stolen

Around 5 am on March 18, a suspect

gained access to the parking garage in a Kensington Ave. apartment building where he stole an electric-powered bicycle with an estimated value of around \$1,800.

An overall piece of advice to apartment tenants from the police is that they should carefully secure stored valuables such as bicycles with a solid lock and a strong chain, even if they seem secure in a garage or basement locker.

Front door shattered

Sometime between 2 and 4 am on March 22, the glass front door at a multi-unit residential building on Clarke Ave. was shattered, although none of the apartments inside was reported to have been broken into.

According to Cst. Yigit, police officers who responded to the scene questioned residents on several floors, although they “didn’t hear anything or see anything” and none of the units had been broken into, he said.

Wallet stolen from office

Complaints regarding two theft incidents on the same day in the same area of

eastern Westmount were filed with police at Station 12 last week.

Around 2:30 pm on March 19, a male suspect who had been seen wandering around the offices at the Dawson College campus at the corner of Atwater Ave. and Sherbrooke St. was arrested and charged with theft after a wallet went missing.

“You know, this often happens at office and public buildings where a lot of people leave their doors unlocked and there is a lot of movement and nobody is sure of who is an employee,” commented Cst. Yigit.

He suggested that the best prevention is to lock your office door each time you step out, no matter how briefly.

Purse stolen from office

A few hours later across de Maisonneuve Blvd. at the IGA supermarket in Alexis Nihon Plaza, a purse containing personal possessions belonging to an administration employee was reported as stolen.

The employee had stepped out for a while during the afternoon. Upon returning, the employee noticed that someone appeared to have searched through the office and that the purse was missing.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CONSIDER UNIVERSAL DESIGN APPROACH FOR PARKS

I was excited to see the cover story March 19 (p. 1) that announced refurbishment of the Westmount Park walking paths.

The paths in this park (and please don't forget about King George Park!) are literally crumbling and pose fall/injury risks to those using them.

I intended to suggest an age-friendly design approach to ensure older adults can utilize the paths with ease, but perhaps universal design is best. A universal design approach ensures that anyone, no matter their age or ability, can use the paths safely and enjoy the experience. Material choice, path width and durability are hopefully all being considered.

For example, vehicles that maintain the parks are wider than our current paths, leading to frequent muddy tire tracks alongside them – both messy and an eyesore.

Ensuring even surfaces can increase walking safety. Proper drainage is crucial as currently some paths get overtaken by puddles or ice. Additional benches placed strategically along these paths would promote walking and allow for rest stops.

I also hope that the path refurbishment is part of a master plan by the city that both maintains the park's intended design integrity and ensures its ongoing upkeep.

DIANA ANDERSON, VICTORIA AVE.

VERBALLY ABUSED REFS SHOULD STOP GAMES

Hockey Canada's chairman Jonathan Goldbloom's February 28 speech at Selwyn House (March 12, p. 15) mentioned parents' abusive behaviour towards volunteer refs and coaches at amateur hockey games. I have even heard reports (on CBC radio) of these volunteer officials being "approached" (to put it politely) in the parking lot after a game.

The obvious solution to this problem is simple: the moment verbal or other abuse is hurled at a ref or coach, all s/he has to

do is stop the game and walk off the ice, thereby bringing the match to an end. If everyone, parents and players alike, knew that this would be the result of their abuse, surely this would put a stop to it.

Of course, there will always be bad calls during a hockey match, or any other sport for that matter, be it professional or amateur, but that's inevitable: we're all human (well, most of us anyway!) and make mistakes. Presumably consistent poor refereeing/coaching is dealt with simply by withdrawing the offender permanently.

For the record, I have no interest whatsoever in sport of any kind; I just hate to see volunteer officials being abused by ignorant adults who should know better.

WILFRID DE FREITAS, KITCHENER AVE.

MANY SUMMIT WOODS DOGS UN- (OR SELECTIVELY) LEASHED

Through pretty much all our four seasons, I walk up to Summit Woods daily and head around the back side. I frequently see pet owners putting leashes on dogs once exiting the woods as they return to their cars.

But more and more often, dogs still run free, not only back to parked cars but left off leash as owners continue walking around the back side. I saw an owner see me this past week, quickly leash the dog and, once I passed by, let the dog run free again with its leash trailing on the ground. Some are catching on.

To be perfectly honest, I have never seen Westmount Security patrolling on the less travelled backside of Westmount summit, but perhaps they're only doing surveillance in the [principal] woods.

DOUGLAS PRICE, ROSEMOUNT AVE.

LESS SALT, MORE PLANTS, PLEASE

It is March 24 and we just had a little snow over the past couple of days, with mild temperatures ahead, and I really would like to know what possesses this city to put down SO MUCH SALT.

We had some snow, which the city cleared. The forecast is for mild temperatures for the next several days SO WHY THE MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF SALT? I love the fact that this city provides lip service about the environment but it does not do one thing to practise what it preaches!

*

I was also surprised to see that the city is spending* over \$3 million on more playground equipment as well as \$1.4 million on a memorial park that takes away green space and replaces it with more concrete* structures (March 19, p. 1). All these expenditures truly do not help our community.

What would help our community is seeing the three [work] greenhouses rebuilt behind Victoria Hall [and the newly refurbished conservatory] and use them for seeding and growing plants to use in our parks, instead of buying the majority each spring from nurseries.

It would be ideal to use these spaces for learning centres and programs for the young, old and everyone in between, teaching the importance of plants and how to grow them.

I just do not understand this administration's thinking and why these important community-building steps are not being taken. Still looking at our city to be great

stewards of the planet and continuing to be disappointed.

ALLAN GOLDBERG, LANSDOWNE AVE.

***Editor's note:** In our coverage, I see maximum total amounts of \$844,484 (including design) for the memorial park and \$2,674,400 for the playground equipment. Also, to be strictly accurate, I think the majority of the memorial garden will be in gravel, not concrete. – DP.

More information: Chintz 'open to the trade' only

The *Independent* learned March 25 that Chintz & Collections at 4257 St. Catherine St. is "open to the trade" only. This means that members of the public cannot buy goods at store. It was mentioned in the Retail Watch column of March 19 (p. SL-20). – DP

Correction: 18-lb dog kicked over a year ago

Two details in "Jogger kicks dog in Summit Woods" (February 27, p. 1) need correcting: the dog in question was 18 pounds and the incident took place over a year ago. – DP

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Guest column

Remember the invisible children among us

By HEIDY VERMEULEN

The children are still visible; their pain is not. The pain manifests itself in their anti-social behaviour. These children have labels: foster children, children in care, wards of the crown.

“Shawna” (not her real name) was five years old when she arrived at my home after a breakdown in her former foster home. Shawna needed more attention than the foster parents could give her. They had two small children of their own, and Shawna was often aggressive towards them.

My home was her third placement. There were times when her family was doing all right with the support from family services: when Father was out of jail, when Mother was stable and cooperating with the “system,” when they were there to help keep their children from harm and to provide a safe and nurturing home.

And then it all fell apart again. Dad was involved in a fight, charged with assault and incarcerated again. Mom went back to her “old ways” and left her children in the care of questionable relatives.

Wards of the crown

There was plenty of evidence that the children were neglected, and not provided with the necessities of life. But this time there was no second or third chance given to the parents. The courts had decided: The

children became wards of “the crown.” Parental interactions with the children were to be supervised.

It was in the fall and Shawna was convinced that Mom was in town. Shawna wanted to see her. She was not asking for much, just to see her, just to know that she was around.

The child protection agency tried to find out her whereabouts from her relatives in order to set up visits with the children.

I tried to comfort the sobbing child, held her in my lap, promising that we would drive around the next day, maybe we would find Mom’s battered van.

Even when Mom was in town, every time living at another address, when the child protection agency was able to locate her, when they made arrangements for a visit, Mom seldom showed up.

Different responses

It is not a surprise that the children responded in many different ways, ranging from anger, frustration, withdrawal and sadness, such deep feelings result in anti-social behaviour, inability to focus, to learn in school, to trust the adult world.

Visits were arranged with the other siblings who were also in foster care, but these visits seldom went well. The children never had the opportunity to know each other, to develop relationships and social behaviours with each other. They had to compete

for the little bit of attention from the adults in their lives. They had to survive. They wanted and needed their parents.

Shawna stayed with me for eight years. After the first year, her younger sibling was also placed in my home after the two previous placements in other foster homes failed. Over these years, I got to know the parents a little bit. The agency gave me permission to supervise the visits, and instead of the visits taking place at the agency, Mom could meet Shawna and her sibling at a beloved coffee shop. We managed to celebrate a few birthdays at my house too, sometimes with some of the siblings, and once even with Mom and Dad attending.

The parents were not “bad” people. I believe that they truly loved their children, but they were unable to parent them. They were barely able to manage their own lives.

You see, the childhood of the parents was very much the same. Mom did not have a mother who was a good role model. They were both involved with the various government “systems” trying to help. They had very little schooling, but they have what we call “street smarts,” and they had a deep mistrust of government services. They felt themselves as being victims.

During the years that Shawna and her little sibling were in my care, they received every possible help from the “system” such as therapy, remedial help at school, they were involved in dancing, soccer, learned swimming and went to summer camps. Both wanted to belong to a faith community and attended Sunday school.

Great hopes

Shawna was very protective towards her little sibling, she had a special gift to deal with animals, she could make them calm, and she had a special aptitude for fixing and putting together household gadgets. I had great hopes that Shawna could “make it” in this world. But she continued to struggle in school and have serious outbursts of aggression.

In her teen years her aggressions became worse. She assaulted a teacher, was the leader in a gang beating another child and set fire to a small outbuilding in our neighbourhood. There was so much anger. Anger that stemmed from feelings of abandonment, of injustice, of odds being stacked against her from the moment she was born. Anger from not having what other children have, what she should have a right to have: real parents, responsible parents, caring parents.

Loyal, forgiving

Shawna, like most children, was very

loyal, very forgiving toward her parents. So, she directed her anger towards everybody else. There were a few times when Shawna did not come home for her curfew. Agency staff and sometimes the police would find her in the neighbourhood where friends of her parents and relatives lived, a neighbourhood that was not safe for a child.

When I asked Shawna why she was doing these things, her answer was: “This is what I have to do to get attention from my mother.” After Shawna was charged with assault, the agency felt that Shawna needed to be placed in a more secure and safe environment, in a group home.

It was a sad day when Shawna left our home. I never felt unsafe, never felt threatened by Shawna.

The group home that she was placed in was far away from our town. I do not know if she ever did see her mother until she was released at the age of 16.

I saw Shawna again a few years later when she was back in town. She was with her mom. She seemed embarrassed to see me, but told me that she was working with her mom. According to statistics, a very large percentage of children in care later return to their families.

As for me, I take comfort in knowing that I had the opportunity to parent, protect, and care for Shawna during her most vulnerable years of her life. But:

- No matter how well educated, how compassionate the social workers are,
 - No matter how skilled the therapists are,
 - No matter how caring, or even “saintly” foster parents are,
- for a child to be safe, nurtured to become the best it can be:
- It needs responsible, loving “real” parents.

- “What can we do?” you ask.
 - We can support shelters for women,
 - We can support programs that help underprivileged children such as sports and after-school activities,
 - We can ensure that care workers are properly paid, in order that being a child-care worker is not an “entry-level job.” It is important for a child to have the same worker for a long period of time in order to form a trusting relationship,
 - We can teach our own children to be compassionate towards the “awkward” child, the one who is often absent, often in trouble,
 - We must demand that “parenting” is part of the curriculum in high school,
 - We must teach and instill in young people the responsibility of parenting, should they decide to create a new life.
- For most people, parenting is the most important job they will ever have!

Heidy Vermeulen lives on Metcalfe Ave.

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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Quebec's film industry 'a lot to be proud of,' says Prupas, but no one can predict its future

By JENNIFER BALL

Emmy award nominated executive-producer Michael Prupas recently described the Quebec film industry as having a long history of success and failure, and its future is something that no one can currently predict. He spoke at a luncheon hosted by the Westmount Rotary club on March 20 about the history of the film industry in Montreal and its current trajectory.

Prupas, who is also a lawyer, has enjoyed a 40-year career in the film industry.

National Film Board important

He told Rotarians, who hold their meetings at Victoria Hall, that there is much to be proud of in our provincial film and television industry and that it starts with the creation of the National Film Board of Canada.

"The National Film Board of Canada was founded in Montreal in 1941 by [John] Grierson, who was somewhat controversial in his day" for his barbed social critiques, Prupas said. Grierson is often considered the father of British and Canadian documentary film.

Prupas described working alongside Denis Héroux as a privilege. Héroux is considered the grandfather of Quebec cinema, partly because he was the director of a film called *Valérie*.

Valérie was produced in 1969 and it was at that time the highest-grossing film in Canadian history. The narrative centers on an orphan girl who leaves a convent only to become a topless dancer then a prostitute.

Why was it so successful? Because it was the first time in Quebec history that a film exposed a woman's breasts. "Québécois men were lining up around the block to see this film..."



Michael Prupas at a meeting of the Westmount Rotary Club on March 20 at Victoria Hall.

(One of the two producers of *Valérie* was the late John Dunning, who was also a key member of its creative team, including as a writer. See November 25, 2014, p. 26 for coverage of his autobiography with Bill Brownstein.)

Prupas was film producer John Kemeny's entertainment lawyer when Kemeny joined forces with Héroux to create a film production company called International Cinema Inc. in the late 1960s.

Quest for Fire

Under this banner, Kemeny produced two films: *Atlantic City* and *Quest for Fire*. The former was directed by Louis Malle, and it was released in 1980. The film was nominated for Oscars in the category of

best picture, best director, best actor (for Lancaster), best actress (for Sarandon), and best original screenplay.

Prupas spoke about starting out in 1978 when the film industry was centered in Montreal. "There was a total of about 50 million dollars' worth of production that was done across Canada, of which two thirds was being done out of Montreal..."

"Things are quite different today. Today, the industry has become a \$4- to \$5-billion industry with major centers in Vancouver, Toronto, but less so in Montreal."

He said that there was about \$1.5 billion worth of production in Montreal in 2022, but about two thirds of that was special effects and animation work, not live action shooting.

He added that there was also about \$500 million worth of live action filmed in Montreal, driven by a very generous provincial tax credit and a very favourable Canadian dollar exchange rate that graces the US greenback.

He told the Rotarians that while he stays optimistic that the role of Montreal and Canada in the international audiovisual industry will grow over the coming years, there is a long history of both success and failure to consider.

"No one really knows what the future holds," he synopsized.

Prupas launched Muse Entertainment Enterprises in 1998 and Muse Distribution International in 2000. Muse Entertainment has become a major production house with facilities in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Los Angeles.

He executive produced *The Kennedys*, starring Greg Kinnear, Barry Pepper, Katie Holmes and Tom Wilkinson, and *The Pillars of the Earth*, starring Ian McShane, Eddie Redmayne and Hayley Atwell. Both were multiple Emmy award-winning event miniseries.



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Spring was NOT here



It was -13°C with the wind chill on Victoria Ave. March 23. From left, Catherine, Karen and Harry were out and about despite last week's topsy-turvy weather conditions, which included very cold nights and some snow. This week is expected to be much warmer (springlike?), with daytime temperatures forecast to be in the 8-12°C range.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



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infoWESTMOUNT

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NOUVELLES

PROCHAINE SÉANCE
DU CONSEIL

Lundi 8 avril

NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL
MEETING

Monday, April 8



Les résidus de jardins

Le dépôt du chemin Belvédère ouvre ses portes aux résidents et aux entrepreneurs disposant d'un permis, et la collecte des déchets de jardin en porte-à-porte **commence le lundi 15 avril**. Détails à westmount.org.



Garden Waste

Beginning **Monday, April 15**, the Belvedere Road depot opens for residents and contractors with a permit, and curbside garden waste collection resumes. Details at westmount.org.

Hydro Westmount : changement de tarifs d'électricité

Hausse du tarif résidentiel (3 %) et commercial (5,1 %) en vigueur le 1er avril 2024. Comme le prévoit la Loi visant à simplifier le processus d'établissement des tarifs de distribution d'électricité, cette augmentation correspond à la variation de l'indice des prix à la consommation au Québec.

Des Canadiennes inspirantes

Visitez l'exposition « Women Are Persons! » à l'hôtel de ville d'ici le 15 mai et soyez inspirés par les « Famous 5 » ! Détails à westmount.org.

Nettoyage des rues : à partir du 1er avril

Veuillez noter que le balai mécanique reprend du service. **À partir du 1er avril, des constats d'infraction pourront être donnés** pour tout véhicule stationné dans une zone de passage du balai mécanique. Assurez-vous de bien lire les panneaux avant de vous stationner.

Distribution spéciale d'arbres

Les résidents de Westmount peuvent obtenir gratuitement un arbre de la Ville. Cette année, les espèces indigènes sont privilégiées. Quantités limitées disponibles. Inscrivez-vous à westmount.org/arbreg gratuit

Hydro Westmount: change in electricity rates

Residential (3%) and commercial (5.1%) rate increases effective April 1st, 2024. As provided for in the Act to simplify the electricity distribution rate-setting process, this increase corresponds to the change in the Québec consumer price index.

Inspiring Canadian Women

Visit the "Women are Persons" exhibition at City Hall from now until May 15 and be inspired by the "Famous 5"! Details at westmount.org

Street Cleaning Starts April 1st

Please note that the street sweeper is back in service. **As of April 1st, tickets may be issued** for any vehicle parked in the sweeping zone. Please read the signs carefully before parking and leaving your vehicle.

Special Tree Distribution

Westmount residents can receive one free tree from the City. This year, native species are being highlighted. Limited quantities available. Register at westmount.org/freetree

BIBLIOTHÈQUE ET ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES



Préparez-vous à voir l'univers comme vous ne l'avez jamais vu avec l'auteur de *Cosmic Wonder*. Inscrivez-vous à westlib.org.

Galerie du Victoria Hall : exposition

Jusqu'au 28 mars. Œuvres de Tina Louise Jones et Wendy Hayden. westmount.org.

Appel aux artisans

Jusqu'au 5 avril. Les artisans confectionnant des œuvres à la main sont invités à participer à l'édition 2024 d'Artisans Westmount Informations et formulaire : westmount.org.

Appel de soumissions : concerts d'été

Jusqu'au 4 avril. Les musiciens sont invités à soumettre leur candidature afin de participer à la saison de Concerts d'été 2024. Informations et formulaire : westmount.org.

Appel de dossiers 2024

La Galerie du Victoria Hall
Jusqu'au 15 avril. Les artistes de Westmount sont invité.e.s à soumettre leur candidature pour la prochaine saison d'exposition. Informations et formulaire : westmount.org.

LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY EVENTS

Lecture — *Montreal: A Magnet for Railways 1836 - 1915*

Wednesday, April 10, 7 p.m., Library. With David B. Hanna, PhD, heritage expert, and former professor of urban planning. Register at westlib.org.

WestmountLit

Saturday, April 13, 7 p.m., Library. Meet four acclaimed authors from our community for a literary soirée of readings and discussion. Featuring authors Michelle Franklin, Rich Larson, Su J. Sokol, and Philippe Yong. Register at westlib.org.

Author Event: Nathan Hellner-Mestelman

Friday, April 26, 1 p.m., Library. Prepare to view the universe like you've never seen it before with the author of *Cosmic Wonder*. Register at westlib.org.

Gallery at Victoria Hall: Exhibition

Until March 28. Works by Tina Louise Jones and Wendy Hayden. westmount.org.

Calling All Artisans

Until April 5. Artisans are invited to submit their handmade work for inclusion in the 2024 edition of Artisans Westmount. Details and online form: westmount.org.



Call for submissions: Summer Concerts

Until April 4. Musicians are invited to submit their candidacy for inclusion in the 2024 Summer Concert Series. Details at westmount.org.

Call for proposals 2024
The Gallery at Victoria Hall

Until April 15. Westmount artists may submit proposals for the next exhibition season. Information: westmount.org.



Update on 2022 cyberattack of municipal government

City: No detection of Westmount data on dark web, but ‘we cannot be 100 percent certain’

BY JENNIFER BALL

In a recent reversal of fortune, the hackers who attempted to take the city hostage were themselves hacked. Given that our municipality was one of their victims, is this good news for Westmount?

And was citizens’ personal data ever released online, given that the city ignored hackers’ extortion requests?

For the past five years, the LockBit ransomware group has been hacking into thousands of businesses, schools, medical facilities and governments around the world – and getting extraordinarily rich in the process.

The Westmount breach took place on November 20, 2022 (see December 13, 2022, p. 14). Municipalities hold a trove of personal data. This makes them an alluring target to hackers as they try to steal sensitive data and threaten to leak it if victims do not pay.

According to a February 28 article by Matt Burgess in *Wired* magazine, LockBit’s capabilities were weakened in an international sting called Operation Cronos that was conducted in mid-February.

How have this development and time affected Westmount’s situation?

The city responds

Mugisha Rutishisha, division chief of communication and citizen experience at the city, was interviewed by the *Independent* on March 18.

Rutishisha was asked if there was evidence that LockBit exfiltrated data in the November 20, 2022 cyberattack, or was it only an attempt?

He said that the investigation by the city did not prove beyond any doubt that there

had been any data exfiltration. “It seems likely that the data exfiltration attempt by the LockBit group was unsuccessful,” he said.

Mayor Christina Smith said in her December 5, 2022 statement on the city’s website that most of the data LockBit claimed to have exfiltrated was already in the public domain.

Rutishisha was pressed on what data – which presumably appealed to LockBit when it chose to target the city – was not already in the public domain.

“As of today, elements of the investigation have not succeeded in demonstrating beyond any doubt that data that were outside or in the public domain were exfiltrated,” was his response.

No data found on dark web

In a statement by the city on the matter dated June 7, 2023, it was reported that no data had been detected on the dark web – this is where cyber criminal groups hawk stolen property.

But what about the months since?

Rutishisha said “since the attack, the city, in collaboration with cyber security experts, has been continuously monitoring the dark web. We have not detected any data publication for the moment.”

Would he agree that even though no data was found, it does not mean it isn’t available. “Based on the investigation’s results, we cannot be 100 percent certain...”

“However, the LockBit group repeatedly postponed the date of publication of the allegedly stolen data after the expiry of their ultimatums, which is not consistent with the hackers’ *modus operandi*. This would suggest that the data exfiltration attempt was unsuccessful.”

Any new breaches?

Have there been any added breaches since the security optimization of Westmount’s IT systems, following the November 20, 2022, attack?

“No intrusions have been carried out since the city’s IT systems were optimized,” was his response.

“The city has put in place a series of measures to ensure the security of its systems and data. These measures have been taken in accordance with Quebec’s legislative requirements on the protection of personal information (Bill 25). Residents can rest assured that the city is doing everything in its power to ensure the security of their data. City employees also receive training on best practice in data and information security as part of an awareness programme.”

Local police angle

In 2023, the city filed a formal report

with the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) in the aftermath of the cyberattack and the *Independent* wondered whatever came of it.

“To date, nothing,” Rutishisha said.

In addition to the seizing of technical infrastructure, the law enforcement team around Operation Cronos – that needed 11 international law enforcement agencies – is also applauding a recent sentencing.

One of the group’s high-ranking members, Mikhail Vasiliev, a 33-year-old Canadian-Russian national, was just sentenced to four years in prison and ordered to pay more than \$635,000 for his role in infecting over 1,000 systems with LockBit.

LockBit’s technical infrastructure may have been severely disrupted in mid-February but a February 26 report by James Pearson of Reuters read that “it has restored its servers and is back in business.”

Lake Shakespeare recedes



“Lake Shakespeare” in Westmount Park appeared to have receded on March 19, above, versus a previous higher point on March 10 (see March 19, p. SL-15). While Lake Shakespeare is man-made, a man-made exit (in the mud at left) may have played a role in this lowering of the water level. It is located between the Shakespeare in the Park dell and the bike path.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

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9 Lives
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Miss Chichou is stunning, a domestic shorthair with huge gold-tone eyes. Her sculptural features are memorable. She is presently available for visits at the Montreal SPCA cattery, hoping for a home to call her own as soon as possible. Chichou's beauty is not skin deep, as she is a delightful companion who enjoys cuddling and playing. She has great energy and is quite funny in her silly games after her favourite roll – in catnip. She came from a quiet home and she enjoys company, but is not used to children and other pets. Chichou is a very healthy six-year-old, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. Please open the Montreal SPCA website page at www.sPCA.com, refer to her information



page from her identification number, 50673161, and make plans to come by the shelter for a visit with the adoption coordinators and Miss Chichou. The daily schedule from Monday to Friday is from 3 pm to 8 pm, then Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 6 pm. It is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4. Please bring a carrier or take some time to browse through the selection of models of cat carriers and accessories at the boutique on site. Chichou is waiting for her forever family, and offering so much love and companionship. Your neighbour, Lysanne

Affectionate Booba



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LYSANNE FOWLER

This cutest of little fellows is a great companion in the everyday family routine. A shih tzu-Lhasa apso type, he is elegant and affectionate. He enjoys his walkies and being best buddy to everyone at home. Booba is presently in a temporary foster placement for the Montreal SPCA, impressing by his social skills and cuddly nature. He is a very healthy 12-year-old, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. He is highly intelligent and has a good appetite while he is immersed in his little dog meal watch. If you would like more information on

him, please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, scroll to his information page from his identification number, 51313449, and click on the "Fill out the form" box on the right-hand side of the presentation. By filling out your contact information, a member of the adoption coordination team can contact you in return to discuss your interest and arrangements for adoption. Booba is a sweetheart. Please welcome him in your family. Your neighbour, Lysanne


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IMPORTANT NOTICE

- At its regular sitting held on March 18, 2024, the Municipal Council adopted, by resolution, the draft of By-law No. 1616 entitled "BY-LAW FURTHER AMENDING THE PLANNING PROGRAMME OF THE CITY OF WESTMOUNT - URBAN HEAT ISLANDS".
- Council will hold a public consultation meeting on **Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.**, in the Council Chamber of City Hall at 4333 Sherbrooke Street West in Westmount. The meeting will be broadcasted live online. To attend the meeting online, please use the following link: westmount.org/publicconsultation-up
- 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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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Seasonal saffron-bearing crocuses are stretching. Weary winter wardrobes are being cast aside. Sport your spring attire at these elegant events.

APRIL

Wednesday, April 10.

The World's Greatest Cantors presented by Shaar Hashomayim Music and Arts. The concert features cantors Shai Abramson, chief cantor of the Israel Defense Forces; Netanel Hershtik, The Hamptons Synagogue; Yanky Lemmer, Lincoln Square Synagogue; Azi Schwartz, Park Avenue Synagogue, and Gideon Zelermyer, Congregation Shaar Hashomayim. They will be accompanied by Raymond Goldstein (Jerusalem) and his trio. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Emotional Trauma & PTSD Centre of the Sourasky Medical Centre – Ichilov in Tel Aviv. 7:30 pm. Tickets: General admission \$50. Reserved \$100. Premium reserved \$200 (valet parking and post-concert reception with the artists). www.Showpass.com/cantors

Spring Social Calendar

or 514.937.9471 Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, 425 Metcalfe Ave., Westmount.

Wednesday, April 10.

Les Quatre Saisons de Vivaldi presented by the Festival Musique de Chambre Montréal. Cocktail dînatoire and concert. String ensemble featuring award-winning violinists Sirena Huang and Nathan Meltzer. Guests will enjoy the panoramic view from a unique private condominium on the 48th floor. Limited to 60 tickets. 6:30 pm. Tickets \$275. 514.489.7444. info@festivalmontreal.org.

April 12-15.

Plural Contemporary Art Fair. Grand Quay, 200 de la Commune. Plural.art/en

MAY

Wednesday, May 8.

Under the Tuscan Sun benefitting the Queen Elizabeth Health Complex Foundation (QEHC). Proceeds support the QEHC's Diabetes Education Program. The evening celebrates Miriam Green's exceptional contribution to the QEHC. Cocktails, dinner, silent auction and raffle. Tickets \$200. 514.485.5018. Qehcfoundation.org. Entrepôts Dominion, 3468 St. Ambroise.

(Paid parking available at lot behind.)

Friday, May 10.

Le Bal des tannants for The Children's. Honorary co-presidents Sandra Chartrand, president, Sandra and Alain Bouchard Foundation; and Julie Godin, board co-president and executive vp strategic planning and corporate development, CGI. Committee co-presidents Véronique Black, Sharon Stern and Jamie Silver. Dress: elegant with "a touch of brattiness." Information: fondationduchildren.com/HangarStarlinkAviation, 9025 Ryan Ave., Dorval, H9P 1A2.

Wednesday, May 15.

12 Angry Jurors. Cocktails, dinner and a play directed by Vittorio Rossi. Fundraiser for five Italian non-profit organizations. Corporate tables (10) \$3,500. Tickets \$250. Katrina Lorenzetti 438.880.1763. klorenzetti@magjusjen.ca. Sue Dabrowski 514.889.4126, sdabrowski@magjusjen.ca. Red carpet opening 5 pm. Seating for dinner 6:30 pm. Play 8 pm. Maison Principale, 872 rue Couvent. Valet parking.

May 22 – June 5.

Festival TransAmérique (FTA) Exciting programs of dance and theatre. Fta.ca.

Friday, May 31.

MUHC Le Bal Rouge celebrating the ground-breaking efforts of the MUHC'S Cancer Research Program and honouring the exceptional contribution of Dr. Peter Metrakos the program's leader. Tuscan theme. Co-chairs are Rosa Trunzo, CIBC's senior vp and region head Eastern Canada, and Kheng Ly, founder & CEO Brivia Group. Information, corporate sponsorships and tables contact events@muhcfoundation.com. lebalrouge.com. 6:30 pm. Windsor Station, 1100 Av. des Canadiens de Montréal. Valet parking.

Please send your upcoming event information to: veronica@redgravepr.com

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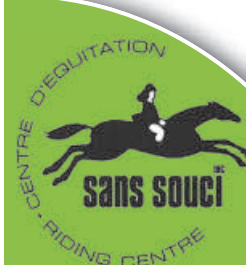
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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Cedars Auction and Raffle raises \$633k



Sophia Shamie, Jeff Shamie, Alexa Shamie, Daphne Tsadilas-Shamie and Francesca Shamie.

The 2023 edition of the annual Cedars Auction and Raffle was held in the glamorous Le Windsor Ballrooms. The much-anticipated event raised \$633,000 – and counting – for the psychosocial oncology program at the MUHC.

The specialized program helps patients deal with the emotional challenges that come with living and coping with cancer. It also offers support to family members who may suffer as a result of the illness or loss of a loved one.

“There is a lot of distress involved in a cancer diagnosis. Many patients and caregivers experience feelings of sadness, anger, anxiety, guilt and defeat,” explained **Dr. Justin Sanders**, director of the MUHC’s Supportive and Palliative Care Division, which oversees the psychosocial oncology program.

“Our team helps them work through these feelings. They also facilitate access to many community resources that can help them live and cope better.”

Hosted by comedian **Joe Cacchione** and **Ross Paperman**, renowned auctioneer *extraordi-*

continued on p. 18



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Social notes, cont'd from p. 17
naire, the event combined an auction and a raffle, during which cash prizes totalling \$50,000, as well as a pair of Omega watches valued at \$39,551, were won by lucky ticket holders.

“We’re committed to healing the whole person – not just the disease – and to helping patients and their loved ones at every step of their cancer journey,” said **Jeff Shamie**, Cedars CEO and Westmount city councillor, who attended with his wife **Daphne Tsadilas-Shamie** and daughters **Sophia**, **Alexa** and **Francesca**. Event co-chairs were **Stella Vassallo** (Groupe MACH) and **Chris Karambatsos** (partner



Stella Vassallo and Vincent Chiara.

KRB Lawyers), aided by committee members **Joanne Pizzino** and **Andrea Soueidan**.

Noted at the fun *soirée* were **Charles-Benoit Parent**, senior vp, CBRE; **Stephanie Decotis**; **Natasa Karambatsos**, managing partner KRB Lawyers; **Rayan Kaedbe**, Hematology, Jewish General Hospital; **Teresa Soda Cheaib**, **Sarah Stein**, **Tony Aksa**, vp strategic markets development, National Bank; **Martin Lieberman**, director BMHL Equities; **Christina Miller**, Christina Miller Real Estate Group/Profusion Immobilier; and **Adam Turner**, president Divco Ltd.

Presenting partners were Château d’Ivoire, Prestilux and Scotiabank. Restaurant partners were La Sirène de la Mer, Lagoon Seafood, Rib’N Reef, Petros, Ristorante Stellina, Yoko Luna, Bar George, Gentile Pizza Parlour, Les P’tits Enfants de Felice, Les Délices Lafrenaie, Pâtisserie Mahrousé, Lester’s Deli and Saputo.

The Cedars Cancer Foundation is a charitable organization that acts as the funding arm of the MUHC’s fight against cancer. Cedars supports the hospital’s cancer centre that bears its name, as well as the Cancer Research Program of the Research Institute of the MUHC.

Cedars is also a founding partner of the Rossy Cancer Network, which brings together McGill University and its teaching hospitals to improve the quality of every patient’s experience and care outcome.



Charles-Benoit Parent, Stephanie Decotis, Chris Karambatsos, Natasa Karambatsos and Dr. Rayan Kaedbe.



Tony Aksa and Martin Lieberman.



Christina Miller and Adam Turner.



Joanne Pizzino, Teresa Soda Cheaib, Sarah Stein and Emilia Cheaib.



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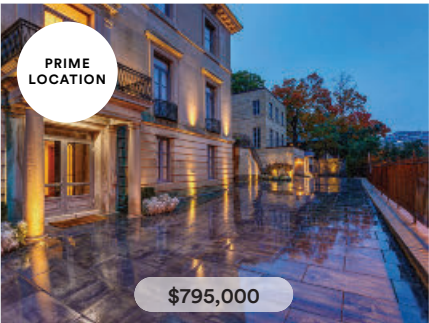
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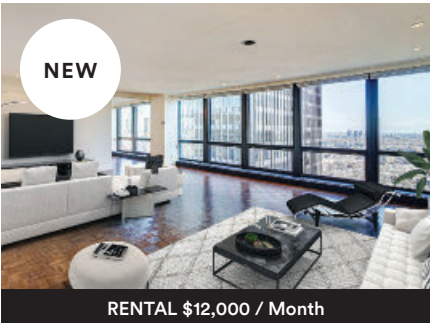
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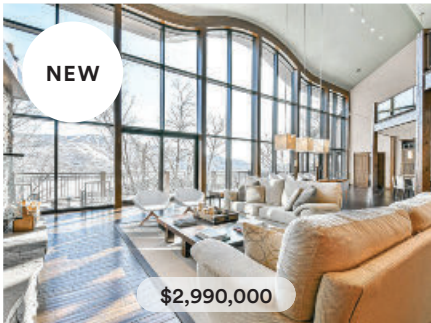
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