

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly Vol. 18 No. 6b

We are Westmount

June 11, 2024



Sun, snacks, summer

Despite rain at other times of the day, it was a beautiful morning in King George (Murray Hill) Park June 7. Mum Celina and her two daughters, almost two-year-old Ava (pink dress) and her three-and-a-half-year-old sister Eve (white and green dress) were having lots of fun on the play equipment, followed by a tasty muffin. At right, the girls were also interested in the photographer's dog Ciara, a two-year-old Irish wheaten terrier.

PHOTOS: RALPH THOMPSON.



Summit Woods dog-leash discussion continues at June 3 council meeting, p. 6



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New position includes being substitute for director Lapointe

Veteran WRC operations manager Maislin appointed head of division in Sports and Rec.

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

In recent updates regarding Sports and Recreation, city council June 3 appointed Andrew Maislin to the position of head of division – operations and sports facilities of the Sports and Recreation department. Maislin, who was not attending the meeting, was congratulated by Mayor Christina Smith.

Well known in the community for his

coordination of youth soccer, baseball and hockey in his previous role as operations manager for the Westmount recreation centre (WRC), Maislin has also been president of the Westmount Minor Hockey Association and vice-president of the regional Lac St. Louis Hockey League.

Along with retaining some of his previous responsibilities as WRC operations manager, Maislin will be taking over the position of *continued on p. 4*

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Suspect tries to enter parked cars

Public Security apprehends, tickets midnight 'proowler'

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Eyes were watching as a man was reported to be trying to gain entry to parked cars just after midnight June 3, according to Public Security reports.

Seen by a resident who reported someone trying to gain entry to parked cars at 12:10 am, the man was described as a thin person wearing what appeared to be a black and turquoise jacket.

All units were dispatched, but initially no suspect could be found. Then, a patroler spotted someone matching the description in two driveways in the lane north of Sherbrooke between Elm and Wood.

Apparently not noticing the officer, the suspect "continued about his business" trying to gain access to a Mercedes. It was also noticed that the dome light of a car beside it was on as if entry might have been gained to that vehicle.

A suspect was apprehended and police called. In the meantime, the initial caller confirmed that the suspect was the one originally seen. A 37-year-old man was issued two tickets for \$156 each for prowling on private property and left in the hands of police.

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Pool emptying pours water onto Edgehill

Water was found "pouring" onto Edgehill Rd. June 5 during the improper draining of a backyard pool, Public Security officials said. A call alerting patrollers to the water was received at 8:39 am. It was being poured into a drain in the backyard rather than through a hose directly to the drain at front, according to a report.

The contractor was described as very cooperative, turned off the water immediately and was not issued a ticket. The water was described as flowing over a retaining wall like a waterfall.

Public Security's dunk tank raises \$746 for food drive

Public Security personnel – parking inspectors, PSOs and park cadets – were splashed into a "dunk tank" at Family Day May 25 when the attraction raised a total of \$746.55.

The proceeds were generated by people tossing a ball to hit a bull's eye trigger that sent a member of the force splashing into the water from a seat above. The event generated donations for Public Security's holiday food drive coming up in December, according to department director Greg McBain.

Overheard

Woman to woman in the Metro grocery store on Victoria, June 2 at 7 pm:

"Now I'm like a maniac and I fill out all the surveys."

*

Man to man at Nick's restaurant on Greene, June 7 at 12 noon:

"Ma cousine était spéciale. Elle était nouvelle un peu."

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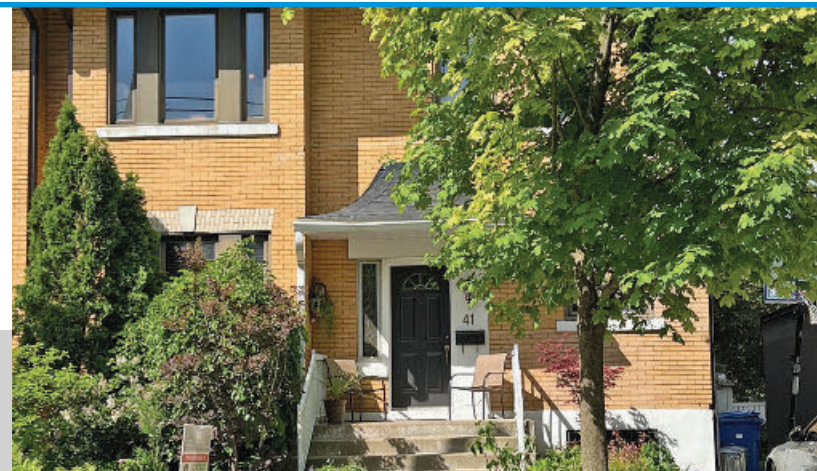


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Earn applause from other attendees

Students ask council for bike path on The Blvd.

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council June 3 heard a request from four young students for a bike path along The Boulevard. The four, who attend St. George’s elementary school campus at The Boulevard near Aberdeen, earned applause from the audience.

They were identified by school officials as Yuvi Barnea (grade 6), and Sophie Mantha, Sophia Zimmerman and Jonah Victor (grade 4).

“Thank you for coming,” Mayor Christina Smith replied, adding that she had visited the school May 15 and that “the good news is that we’re going to be doing work around The Boulevard” that has four schools nearby over the two-kilometre stretch. This work is scheduled for 2025 and 2026.

‘Priority is safety’ – mayor

“Our priority is your safety,” she added, saying that public consultation would take place before this reconstruction.”

The Boulevard has been discussed from time to time but because of its arterial situation affecting both Westmount and parts of the city of Montreal’s infrastructure, it has been classified as a major challenge. In particular, any work would involve underground networks of both municipalities such as water works.

Public consultations coming

Public consultations are scheduled for later in 2024, with subterranean work in 2025 and roadwork beginning in 2026, according to Councillor Conrad Peart, whose commissionership includes infrastructure and urban planning. This is based, he told the *Independent*, on the city’s three-year capital works budgets.

“As always, these dates are provisional and may be revised over time.”

From left are St. George’s students Sophie Mantha, Sophia Zimmerman, Yuvi Barnea and Jonah Victor.

Maislin, cont’d from p. 1

facilities manager long held by Bruce Stacey, who recently retired.

With his new appointment, Maislin will no longer be involved with the city’s hockey program, according to Dave Lapointe, director of the division of Culture, Sports, Recreation and Social Development. He will, however, “assume all responsibility for Sports and Recreation in my absence.”

◀ Andrew Maislin at the WRC on June 29, 2022. He had just been appointed VP of Hockey Lac St. Louis.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Overheard

Caregiver to two young children as they start to explore and “garden” in a front yard at Prince Albert and de Maisonneuve, May 22 at 4:30 pm:

“This is somebody else’s garden. I don’t know if they want us to be in it.”

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Did you catch the lagoon lights?



If not, you missed your chance. The “new” lights under the three waterfalls of the Westmount Park lagoon have been de-activated by the city since the evening of June 4 after a popular outcry. This photo is of the ones upstream from the bridge on June 2.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

The sweet taste of summer



@lucy_and_tyson

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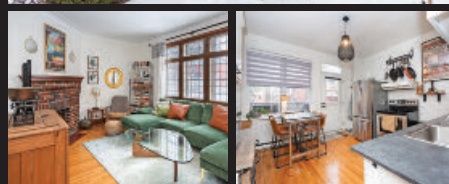
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Councillor worries about court case finding Potton in Eastern Townships liable in dog-biting case

D’Amico urges city to delay June 16 off-leash period in Summit Woods

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

The issue of leash regulations in Summit Woods resulted in a number of questions at the city council meeting June 3 that erupted into a debate between two councillors until Mayor Christina Smith stepped in to say “That’s enough!”

As a long line-up at the mic for question period formed through the overflow audience, Councillor Antonio D’Amico asked the city to delay implementing the June 16 date when mandatory leashing is no longer required after the annual spring nesting period in the woods.

D’Amico, Aronson clash

If a dog causes problems in Summit Woods or bites a person, “it is the owner who is responsible,” stated Councillor Matt Aronson.

“Not so,” maintained D’Amico, who is the city’s finance commissioner.

As the two went back and forth, D’Amico stated he felt an obligation to protect “the public purse,” citing a Quebec Superior

Court ruling dated May 15, 2024 against Potton, which is located in the Eastern Townships on the west shore of Lake Memphremagog. Owl’s Head and Mansonville lie within its borders.

In the ruling he had received from Quebec’s ministry of Municipal Affairs, D’Amico said the municipality had gone against the province’s required leashing of dogs in unfenced public areas and had been sued when someone was bitten by the dog of an uninsured owner.

According to media reports, the Potton case involved three dogs known by the municipality to be dangerous as a result of three previous incidents.

Request letter from insurers?

To protect Westmount taxpayers, he told the *Independent* in repeating his request at the council meeting, an option proposed by a ministry official was for Westmount to obtain a letter from its insurers stating they would cover the city against a similar claim.

He also asked for a public consultation

meeting on the issue such as those that had taken place for road reconstruction projects.

In a statement to the *Independent*, he said, “As you know, the issues of public health, public order, and the protection of the public purse are very dear to my heart. As discussed at council yesterday, I (had) contacted the provincial government to seek guidance on the appropriate actions to complete my due diligence on (the city’s) revised By-law 1522.” This included, among other changes, increased fines for by-law violations (see story on amendments, May 14, p. 13).

D’Amico lone dissenter

The option of insurance coverage would have required the council to postpone approving the amendments at the May 6 meeting. The by-law, however, was adopted with D’Amico the lone dissenter.

D’Amico had previously sought information directly from Quebec’s ministry of Agriculture on the province’s dog regulations (see story April 23, p. 1). As a result,

he said the Municipal Affairs ministry was already familiar with the Summit Woods issues.

Mayor Smith repeated during the June meeting what she had previously been saying that “the province gives the power to the municipality” in such issues and that the majority of residents she had heard from favoured the balance the city was trying to strike in Summit Woods between times when dogs could be leashed and/or unleashed under control of their owner/keeper. This balance continues “a long tradition.”

Resident Cuttler: ‘World has changed’

“The world has changed,” and the time has come for increased protection in Summit Woods, stated Lansdowne resident Maxine Cuttler.

Dogs deemed “dangerous” – of which there are six in Westmount – must be leashed and muzzled at all times, the mayor pointed out. Anyone experiencing problems with a dog should call Public Security, she stated.

Police Report

Three car thefts, one break-and-enter

By MARTIN C. BARRY

A trio of vehicle thefts committed in Westmount over a period of about three days recently suggests police have yet to get a handle on a more widespread car theft wave that has been sweeping Quebec and the rest of the country for months now.

In the first of the three incidents, a 2020 Dodge Ram pick-up truck was stolen during the early morning hours on May 29 on Clarke Ave.

The Dodge Ram ranked second on a 2022 top-10 list of most stolen vehicles in Canada compiled by the insurance industry trade group Canadian Underwriter.

Out of more than 508,000 Rams insured nationally in 2022, 2,600 ended up being stolen, according to the agency.

According to Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit, this particular Ram theft fit a classic pattern. “He left it parked overnight and when he woke up the next day it was gone,” he said.

On May 30, a Toyota RAV4 (which ranked seventh on a 2023 Ontario most-stolen-car list) was stolen in the middle of the night on Sherbrooke St. in Westmount.

According to the Toronto region insu-

rance brokerage firm that issued the list, the RAV4’s widespread usage and its value on the second-hand market contribute to its attractiveness among thieves.

Finally, on June 1 on Lansdowne Ave., a Mazda CX-5, which appears on a list as one of North America’s least stolen vehicles, was driven away illegally around 2:30 in the morning.

A preliminary examination of security camera images by the police revealed the presence of two suspects close by around the time it was stolen.

Break-and-enter

With the exception of these stolen vehicles, there was just one significant incident on Station 12’s territory during the same period.

According to security camera evidence obtained by the police, a house on Lansdowne Ave. was forcibly entered around 10 pm on May 31.

In a report on the incident, a car pulled up on the street, after which several suspects got out and proceeded to the back yard where they succeeded in entering the house after compromising a back-door window.

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Councillor's column

MATT ARONSON
DISTRICT 7

Please show up for southeast sector June 12, and tell us what you think

city council sees these problems, and we're taking action to turn these challenges into opportunities for our community.

Special planning program under way

Under the leadership of Mayor Smith, we've launched a special planning project to revitalize the area, and to serve as a catalyst to developing the southeast sector into the gateway we want and deserve – a place that can be a solution to many of our more pressing problems.

It can be an area that reflects our values, and that we can have pride in. We have a chance to champion affordable housing, more green space, teaching and office space for our academic and community organizations, perhaps even the long-awaited and much in-demand public indoor pool. All these possibilities exist – and we're throwing the doors open wide to hear from our stakeholders – residents, businesses, institutions and organizations, landlords and even visitors, to be sure we

put the emphasis on the right things as we move forward.

Wednesday, June 12 at 6 pm at Vic Hall

The first big public consultation of this process will be this week – Wednesday, June 12, from 6 pm to 9 pm at Victoria Hall – and I want you to be there.

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create the southeast sector we deserve, but we can't do it without the input and contributions of our community. As I frequently say to my own kids – "Decisions get made by the people who show up."

This is our chance – I hope you join me, Mayor Smith and our city council in seizing it. If you miss this meeting, don't worry, there will be more opportunities to be heard – you can find more information at engage.westmount.org/westmount-southeast ... but this is the start and I want you in on the ground floor.

I'll be there – I hope you will be, too.

District 7 city councillor Matt Aronson is the commissioner for citizen engagement and economic development.

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REFERRED FOR A REASON

Green Coalition holds AGM at Westmount Park United

BY JENNIFER BALL

The Green Coalition of Montreal environmental group held its annual general meeting (AGM) in a fitting location: Westmount Park United Church, which has been called the greenest church in the greater Montreal area.

The event took place on May 23. The church is on the corner of de Maisonneuve and Lansdowne Ave.

The Green Coalition is a non-profit association of groups and individuals with a mandate to promote the conservation, protection and restoration of the environment as well as the rational use of green and "blue" (i.e. water-covered) spaces.

The event was hosted by Reverend Neil Whitehouse of the church, himself a well-known local environmentalist (see April 23, 2024, p. 18, February 8, 2022, p. 20 and November 28, 2023, p. 13).

Sylvia Oljemark and David Fletcher are the founding members of the Green Coalition. Oljemark started with the group in 1987 and Westmounter Patrick Barnard; a member of the Green Coalition, credits Oljemark with "doing the most amazing advocacy for the Technoparc wetlands."

The Technoparc, out by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau (Dorval) airport, is considered the last significant intact wetlands on the island of Montreal. Environmentalists have

long called for the protection of the entire area, saying that essential ecosystems cannot survive when surrounded by development.

"I believe that Sylvia has been absolutely key in talking to the three levels of governments about the importance of preserving the Technoparc wetlands," Barnard said.

Media reporting published after the coalition's meeting suggested that a purchase of the land by the city of Montreal is imminent.

History back to 1987

Oljemark disclosed that she leapt into action decades ago because "we had just seen the city [of Montreal] adopt their first urban plan in 1987 but there was no greenspace conservation program at all..."

"How could you have an urban plan without any greenspace component?"

Oljemark continued, "I would think that most people would appreciate having nature around their communities. I do not know why elected people seem to take themselves out of that equation right away."

Attendee Tim Thomas provided a clue.

Thomas is the mayor of the city of Pointe Claire and he was delivering the keynote address that evening. "Even if a politician wants to commit to green causes, they may *continued on p. 14*

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

APPRECIATING MUNICIPAL POLITICIANS, CITY’S DG

This is a shout-out to our [District 8] councillor, Kathleen Kez, the mayor, the council and the DG for fighting to help us conserve the garbage and compost collection in the alley behind Clandeboye. It was under serious threat, but we dodged this bullet thanks to our representatives and the citizens of Clandeboye/Prospect.

Our political officials are not often appreciated these days and abuse seems to come their way regularly. Here is one citizen writing to say that we appreciate what you did for us.

MICHAEL POLAK, PROSPECT ST.

LET’S RE-THINK LOCAL TOUR DE L’ÎLE DECISIONS, AND SOME OTHERS

I was impressed that the *Independent* was so quickly able to include coverage of the Tour de l’Île into its June 4 issue (p. 25). Well done!

While I was walking down the Glen Rd. that Sunday morning, I came upon the aftermath of one of the two spills mentioned in your article. It was rather more serious than imagined [by some]. For at least one cyclist, the injuries were dire enough to be taken away by ambulance on a wheeled stretcher.

I have no idea what caused the two accidents you witnessed but it is easy to imagine several possibilities:

- trying to negotiate a downhill curve at speed,
- The Glen Rd. is not as wide as Lansdowne, resulting in a crush of people vying for a tighter space,
- the problem of negotiating unexpected bollards on both sides of the street where none existed on Lansdowne,
- the poor quality of the roadbed where, for example, there are depressions large enough to trap a bicycle tire between the road and the sidewalk.*

The whole notion of having the cyclists, many quite young, accelerating on the two steep downhill sections from Côte St. Antoine to St. Henri was a bad decision and a recipe for disaster, not only for the cyclists themselves, but for the pedestrians and bikers using Sherbrooke, de Maisonneuve and St. Catherine. They had to wait for a monitor to try to hold up the downhill cyclists from time to time to allow passage on these streets. Not every Tour de l’Île cyclist was willing to abort their hard-earned coasting. I witnessed some near misses while going to the library along Sherbrooke.

Now don’t get me wrong. I am an avid cyclist, but even with many years of experience, I approach the Glen Rd. with trepidation. I love the Tour de l’Île and participated in it a few times when my children were young. However never again should Westmount allow the route to include streets running north-south; east-west routes only, please.



A tram rail coming through the asphalt on Glen Rd. south of the railway bridge, as seen June 3. Hand added by *Independent*. PHOTO: D. PRICE.

Later that day, I passed by the new safe drug consumption site near Atwater Market [outside of Westmount]. I witnessed a man smoking what I presume to be crystal meth or possibly crack cocaine by the playground fence. A bad decision to open the facility in that location.

Lastly, is it too late to reverse the decision to install those garish blue lights on the waterfalls in the Westmount Park lagoon? They are completely out of place and disrupt whatever serenity is left in the park.**

HUGH RAY, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

Editor’s replies: *I agree. On a similar note, here is my photo from June 3 (the day after) of the tram rails coming up through the asphalt just south of the Glen railway bridge, which photographer Ralph Thompson had mentioned to me as a possible cause of the crashes.

**It is not. They have been de-activated. See story, p. 5. – DP.

WHO’S COVERING THE COVERS?

I live near Westmount Park. Almost daily, I walk from Melbourne, across Melville and continue diagonally past the sprinkler pad toward Sherbrooke as I head to the YMCA, the Visual Arts Centre or to



An askew irrigation cover in Westmount Park on June 4.

run west-bound errands. Oftentimes, I walk home the same way – in reverse. I also play cross-country bocce in this section of the park throughout all four seasons.

Given my frequency in the described location, I am able to say with confidence that for the past number of years, these three irrigation “covers” are occasionally not in their proper positions – they are not safely covering what they are supposed to be covering. In addition, the plastic edging is damaged on one, and another is made of (badly disintegrating) plywood. When I do see them out of place, I put them back as best as I can.

Today’s walk home was the final straw. “That’s it,” I thought, “It’s time to take action. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

With the Westmount Park playground currently closed, many more tiny, small, medium and large feet will be in this area of the park. Images of toddlers breaking their ankles while running after a ball or an adult racing to catch a Frisbee and screaming in pain are floating around in my head.

I strongly urge the city to fix this situation immediately as several accidents are right around the corner (or the hole...) – just like summertime.

LISA L. OSTERLAND, MELBOURNE AVE.

DOWN WITH BILL C-63

The Trudeau government introduced Bill C-63 and it has received a great deal of criticism due to its serious potential for censorship.

Some weeks ago, I emailed our MP, Anna Gainey, to ask whether she supports C-63. No reply. So I emailed her twice more. No reply.

About 10 days ago, I called Gainey’s riding office and spoke to a staffer. He really didn’t want to deal with my question, eventually telling me that they would get back to me. I asked when that would happen. He couldn’t say. And nothing since.

C-63 is one rotten, dangerous bill. And when the general election arrives in 2025, I will not be voting for Anna Gainey.

ALEX SIMONELIS, SHERBROOKE ST.

HUMAN LITTER TOO OFTEN FORGOTTEN

Even though I agree with picking up after your dog and that fines should be increased for this offence, I find that so much goes on in our community that is ignored and has a greater impact on our environment, health and well-being as a community.

I walk my dog everywhere in this city logging at least 7 km and up to 12 km a day

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

and I am appalled by how many people sit in their cars while the engine idles, and how many move their bags of lawn clippings and sometimes garbage off their property and into an area where it does not get picked up. I am disturbed by how much litter is spewed all over the place either by someone finishing something and not having a garbage close enough, whether there is one 10 feet away or a kilometre down the road! I am bothered by how many people overload their recycling so that the pick-up drops some of it before it gets into the truck and the people just leave it lying on the sidewalk or road in front of their property.

It is a shame walking in the summit or around the city seeing so much tissue is littered everywhere, which you may not see it as my dog does a great job eating it all.

We love our dogs and 99 percent of us pick up after them, leaving no traces. I wish I can say the same for so many citizens who don't find it necessary to clean up after themselves and in turn treat the city as one big garbage dump. Please raise fines for these infractions and stop making such an issue over our pets that give us unconditional love and a healthy life!

End the discussions, controversy and heated discussions [about unleashed dogs

in Summit Woods]! Animal sanctuaries have fences around them. Properties are fenced off. If the law to have an area as an unleashed dog run is the law...THEN JUST PUT A FENCE AROUND IT!

Time to get on with enjoying life with our pets and for others. It is just time to get on with life

ALLAN GOLDBERG, LANSDOWNE AVE.

LEGISLATE AS THOUGH ANYONE COULD BE ANYBODY

The reaction from many attendees at the May 6 city council discussion of dog leash/Summit Woods was one of astonished dismay. Here was a council meeting where reasoned arguments representing large sectors of the population were simply brushed aside in favour of a pre-ordained outcome. The elected officials (minus Mr. D'Amico) simply proceeded to codify legacy privileges of unleashed dog walkers into a new by-law.

The reality is that there are three major stakeholders for the use of Summit Woods. One group consists of the legacy off-leash dog walkers, who have virtually all rights for the use of the park. The second group are the humans (*sans* dogs) who cannot understand why they have to deal with the

free-running dogs during all the normal times for human (aka families) park use. The third group is the park itself, which by any standards has been deeply neglected and eroded, and is full of detritus and invasive plant species

A solution to the Summit Woods problem would require the city representatives to follow the rules of political theorist John Rawls. He would say you should acknowledge the strong interests by all three groups. Now design a solution for all, with the idea that you do not know in which group you will be a member. If you took this approach, you would never simply (and lazily) just find for one group and tell the others they have no agency here.

The mayor and councillors do not understand that the loss of meaningful use of the park by the public is not an issue that will go away. Nor will the continued neglect of the park ever be acceptable. The mayor made a comment that there is always an election in 2025. For democracy's sake, we will need to take her at her word.

BRIAN COPP, SHORNCLIFFE AVE.

LONE DUCKLING FOUND, BROUGHT TO POND

I was quite saddened to read the articles

by Laureen Sweeney and Heather Black in the June 4 *Independent* about how ducklings in Westmount Park are being put at risk.

It might explain why last week on May 28, I found a lone duckling wandering in my lane, which is just south of Westmount Park.

I was quite distraught as I left for work seeing a little duckling walking in in the middle of the lane in front of my car, clearly lost and alone. I called Westmount Security to see if there was something I should do, and I was told very flatly, "It's a wild animal. Leave it alone."

Well, I couldn't bring myself to leave this helpless being completely to itself.

continued on p. 10

Indie's summer schedule

June 18 & 25, July 2 & 9: issues

July 16, 23 & 30 and August 6: no issues

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MUHC names research building after Gold

The Montreal General Hospital Foundation recently announced the naming of the pavilion that houses the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre (RI-MUHC) at the Montreal General Hospital in honour of Westmounter Dr. Phil Gold.

According to a June 6 press release, Gold is a renowned clinician-scientist who, along with Dr. Samuel Freedman, discovered the first biomarker for cancer in 1965. It is found in 70 percent of cancer patients.

“His exceptional 60-year career at the MGH is an immense source of pride,” it stated.

The RI-MUHC pavilion at the Montreal General was built using funds from the sale of his blood test to Roche in 1973.

Gold is a recipient of numerous international awards and a host of honours, and he has been elected to many scientific organizations.

“We are truly pleased to see Dr. Gold honoured in this fashion because he is the epitome of a builder. Not only is he a former physician-in-chief at the Montreal General Hospital, professor in the faculty of medicine and health sciences at McGill University, and scientist who revolution-



From left, Stephanie Riddell, the CEO of the MGH Foundation; Dr. Phil Gold and Dr. Louise Pilote, the deputy director of the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre on June 5.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MUHC.

ized the field of oncology, but he has also been a caring physician and a generous leader who placed Montreal on the world

stage for cancer research and shaped the RI-MUHC,” Dr. Lucie Opatrny, president and executive director of the MUHC, is

quoted as saying in the release.

The naming of the building is part of the “Honouring Dr. Phil Gold campaign: 60 Years of Discovery, Innovation and Care.” The targetted \$6.5 million to be raised aims to ensure that his “outstanding legacy lives on for years to come in the work of those he has trained and mentored.”


.....
Letters to the editor, cont'd from p. 9

So I was able to place it in a container, without handling or harming it, and drove to Westmount Park. I found that the water in the pond was drained, but luckily there was a small amount of water in the upper pond where there was a family of ducklings. I let the duckling go join the others, who seemed to accept her easily. I hope the little one survives along with her newly adopted family.

We are not alone in this city. We share this place with the wildlife around us. We need to take the time to care for all beings, and remember to allow them to have a space in our city.

And for those beings who have created their homes in our ponds and parks, it is our responsibility to ensure they can live safely without fear of losing their home.

MIRA KATNICK, ABBOTT AVE.



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Bortoluzzi wants to bring ‘Viva Vittoria’ to Montreal, and Westmount

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

After seeing an inspiring event in Italy last year to combat violence against women, Nori Bortoluzzi is determined to bring it to Montreal and Westmount.

Inspired by the successful Viva Vittoria project in Brescia, Italy in 2015, the initiative has spread since then to 34 cities across Europe, with plans to expand to four additional ones in 2025.

According to Bortoluzzi, a longtime Westmounter, Montreal has been selected to stage a one-day Viva Vittoria event on Saturday, May 17 next year. Not only will it mark the first time the initiative takes place outside of Europe, but also the first time in North America.

In an interview with the *Independent*, she noted that Viva Vittoria Montreal will be happening on the same weekend as Knit City Montreal, a major professional and amateur gathering for Montrealers keenly interested in knitting, crocheting and textile arts.

“This presents a significant opportunity for our city to make a meaningful contribution to the global fight against gender-based violence,” she said.

Viva Vittoria involves adorning public spaces with knitted and crocheted blankets, symbolizing a stance against gender-based violence. The initiative has a dual impact: beyond its visual representation, the blankets



Seen here in Westmount Park on May 23, Westmount resident Nori Bortoluzzi says she's determined to bring Viva Vittoria, a one-day event raising awareness of violence against women, to Montreal and Westmount.

kets serve as a means of fundraising.

Four local shelters to benefit

The proceeds generated are directed to support programs aiding women in anti-violence centres, amplifying the project's meaning beyond its visual impact. The women's shelters in Montreal that will

benefit include Auberge Shalom, Chez Doris, Fondation Chânon, and the Native Women's Shelter.

Bortoluzzi first became aware of Viva Vittoria (named for a well-known public square in Brescia) in January last year while she was visiting the Italian city of Modena. “I was strolling and I came across

this window full of blankets and I was intrigued,” she said.

She worked for three months as one of 300 volunteers who helped to knit and stitch together nearly 5,000 blankets. They were eventually brought together and laid out to cover an equivalent number of square meters in the Piazza Grande in Modena.

Although Bortoluzzi initially approached the city of Westmount about the possibility of using a public green space here as the main staging area for Viva Vittoria Montreal, that was ruled out when she learned Westmount doesn't allow fundraising events in its public parks.

So now, while she's pinning her hopes on finding a public or private location in the city of Montreal (including Place Jacques Cartier in Old Montreal or the plaza outside Place Ville Marie downtown), Bortoluzzi also wants to include Westmount.

Her plan is to open a “pop-up” store for around six months at a vacant retail outlet in Westmount, where the blankets being knitted for Viva Vittoria Montreal could be displayed and information about the project would also be made available.

For the time being, she has her eye on the former Lululemon location at the corner of Sherbrooke and Greene because of the high visibility it would provide. More information about Viva Vittoria is available at: www.vivavittoria.it/en/.



T's Takes

RALPH THOMPSON

“Mud, mud, glorious mud, nothing quite like it for cooling the blood” (“The Hippopotamus Song” by Flanders and Swann) – unless you're a lover of Summit Woods, in which case it makes your blood boil.

We don't like to walk in mud with our new Nikes and they, lovers of the summit, don't want you to walk around it because the fragile plant life is destroyed by giant clodhoppers and energetic hounds.

This precious natural woodland is protected as part of the Mount Royal Heritage Zone created by the Quebec government in 2005, but now it's being unwittingly destroyed.

It's not new. Laureen Sweeney wrote about “Spring reveals erosion of Summit Woods” 13 years ago in the *Westmount Independent* (May 3, 2011, p. 10). The Fauteux et Associés report identified areas of degradation two years before (October 6-7, 2009, p. 8).

Mud is glorious, just not in Summit Woods

Why are some so concerned about a small patch of forest? Natural green space around Montreal is sadly inadequate.

In 2021, in a review of Canada's largest cities by Canada's *National Observer*, Montreal rated dead last in a ranking of parkland per capita. Urbanization and human population growth are quickly eating into the natural green spaces, wetlands and wooded shrines. Nature's remarkable ability to sustain using incredible survival feats is being overwhelmed, unconsciously by humans.

Example

Long before GPS technology was even thought about, 1.4 million migrating song birds, the Canada warbler (there are 300 species of warbler) established a 5,000-kilometre pathway between their breeding grounds in Canada's northern boreal forests (in the east and west) to its wintering grounds in South America.

Although they fly high over long distances, they do in fact spend most of their lives very close to or on the ground. They nest on the damp forest floors and feed off

small insects.

For many Canada warblers and countless other migrating and resident birds, the 23 hectares of Summit Woods is a vital feeding ground. Like a favourite McDonald's, migrants depend on a stop-over in Summit Woods. A raised woodland, rich in natural diversity, it is a crucial waypoint in their journey. They depend on huge quantities of beetles, flies, caterpillars, spiders and mosquitoes to continue on their journey further north in spring, and in reverse in the fall.

But this food supply only exists because of the healthy plant life, vegetation, the delicate flowers and undergrowth. This is being destroyed by thoughtless adventurers wandering off trail, large dogs charging through the fragile undergrowth, crushing life out of shrubs and foliage.

Venturing off trail, stomping through the brush and scrambling over fallen trees, building log shelters, we feel like David Livingstons. It's fun, its adventurous, but can this tiny natural environment survive this volume of freedom or will we finally end up with a bunch of trees standing amidst

trodden-down earth?

With due respect to everyone's right to freedom, we all see the clear signs of those who disrespect common decency everywhere, including Summit Woods. Garbage dropped on the street, single-use cartons left in the park, dog poo left on front lawns and the totally confounding example of dog poo picked up in a baggy then left by a lamp post. “Not my problem”!

Solutions

Thirty or 40 years ago and more, the summit was a well-kept secret. The lush growth and narrow trails were just taken for granted by locals. But the word got out and hordes arrived. It became popular with large groups, dog walkers and athletes.

The winding trails became six-lane mud-ways. Countless new trails appeared, flattening undergrowth. Many people are respectful; some are not. Is it ignorance, arrogance and simply “I don't care”? Unfortunately, nature does.

Some may argue, nature will survive. They are correct, I expect nature will long outlive the *continued on p. 12*

Santini considers nature, chosen for WILDLIFE



Art
VERONICA REDGRAVE

I have been in many artists' studios but never walked into a tree. Laura Santini's massive creation makes a statement in more ways than one. *Above and Beyond* (Sotto Sopra), a sculptural tree with ceiling-scraping branches and stretching roots, pushes the building's boundaries while inviting the viewer to enter the artist's message.

It is composed entirely of materials from the natural world. Untreated forest wood is covered with *papier-mâché* made of recycled newspapers. It has a marvellous rhythm: the root system is a reflection of the spreading branches.

The two systems are repetitive: something you see a lot in nature; a nature we have to protect. Although the sculpture is rather large, it is adjustable. It can be easily dismantled into smaller pieces. Suitable for an indoor public space, it triggers memories of all the trees we've known and loved.

"Forest bathing" has never been so pleasant.

Although *Above and Beyond* is created with natural materials, Santini usually works in bronze, casting in Italy as well as Canada. Her graceful *Ramazza* (Garden Broom) is a unique piece.

"I bought many, many brooms like this because they are hard to find. They are made completely of natural fibre – not plastic." Making her mold directly on the broom, she cast them larger than life to make a sweeping statement: "We have to keep our planet clean."

Recently, Santini's work was selected to be part of a juried exhibition in Toronto. Gallery J.B. Aird's online exhibition WILDLIFE features her bronze *Sea Turtle* wittily



Laura Santini with *Above and Beyond*.

designed with a found object: a colander.

Laura Santini's work is renowned in Westmount: Her *Veritas* sculpture stands outside Selwyn House School. She is also well known throughout Canada and Europe, having shown in Italy and exhibited at the 2022 Venice Biennale.

- T's Takes, cont'd from p. 11*
- careless human race. It will rebound long after man has destroyed itself. But in the meantime, a few small actions by the city, could make a significant impact on Summit Woods.
- Lay down wood chip on the main trails,
 - Block the many new trails (large logs, a short rustic fence to allow the vegetation to be re-established),
 - Dogs on leash at all times, no exceptions. There are other places in Westmount where more fenced-in dog runs could be created,
 - Full-time park wardens, dawn 'til dusk every day, for a year or two with authority to give significant fines and to help educate,
 - Clear, large signs at all entrances with the just-the-basic messages (not long rambling legal mumbo-jumbo, "stay on trails, dogs on leash, muzzle large dogs."

Conclusions

Plainly delimited trails and oversight will quickly establish a reasonable standard and mutually acceptable conduct. We all want to save Summit Woods but restrictions are necessary, just like ARRÊT signs and traffic lights.

The beauty of the summit will not survive with the status quo, the current volume of users and the disrespect for nature.

The past 20 years or so is clear evidence. Let the environment thrive, leave the mud patches in the naturally wild areas and stick to the designated trails.

Ralph Thompson has been a Westmounter since the late 1980s and has been a dog owner for over 30 years.



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Aislin visits Westmount Rotary to sign Expos book

BY JENNIFER BALL

Former Westmounter Terry Mosher (aka Aislin) visited the Rotary Club of Westmount for a book-signing event for his latest, and 55th, book: *Montreal Expos, A Cartoonist's Love Affair*.

The collection of cartoons, which includes a foreword by former Expos owner Charles Bronfman, showcases Aislin's typical brio: a satirical poke in the eye thinly veiled as social commentary.

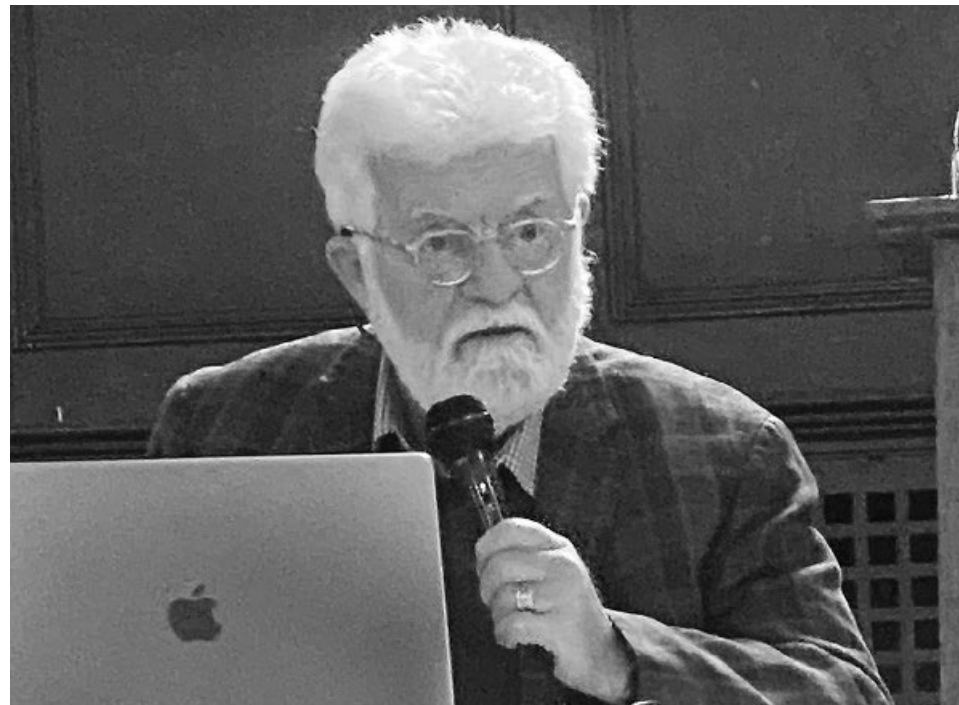
Mosher told Rotarians in Victoria Hall on May 15, "I started cartooning in 1967 and the Expos came in 1969. I have been a lifelong baseball fan, and I would draw cartoons on the editorial page. That was new, nobody had done it before."

He published cartoons during the reign of the Expos and a couple of years ago he toyed with the idea of participating in having a book of them published, he said.

"Not only the cartoons, but the writers that I admire and the photographers. To make it a whole collection, like a scrapbook, of the 36-year existence of the Montreal Expos."

Polite, not-so-polite mail

A *Gazette* reader wrote to Mosher, "I



Terry Mosher at the mic.

cannot wait to get my hands on a signed copy of this book. Aislin and the Montreal Expos are like peanut butter and jam. A part of what makes Montreal so special." Mosher admitted that he loved getting mail like that because "some of the letters are not quite as polite!"

For all his workdays, Mosher has shifted over to his drafting table after reading local and international news stories to pick up his tools.

"Who grows up wanting to be a cartoonist?" he asked the Rotarians in Victoria Hall on May 15, to frame a near 60-year career that no high school guidance counsellor helped him with – and he didn't graduate from one.

"Who believes that they can make a living doing it?" he continued.

"The proudest thing I've done in my life is to make a living drawing and put my kids through university because there are

only about 25,000 graphic artists in all of Canada and most of them make an average of \$20,000 a year and it's very difficult..."

Mosher said he has always only done



A trademark Aislin cartoon. Long before COVID, downtown Montreal was famous/infamous over several decades for its "for rent" signs.

what he wanted to do creatively. He never worked as an illustrator, illustrating other people's work, for instance. "I do what I want to do, and I get paid for it. How marvellous is that?"

Muse = Montreal's roads

In describing his muse, Mosher said "Montreal road conditions have been terrific to me..."

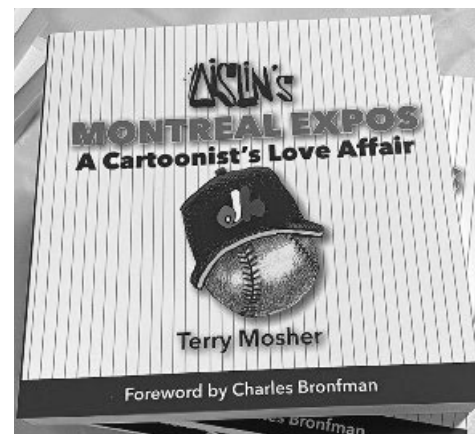
"When there is nothing to draw about, I draw road conditions and they are more popular than any politician I have ever nailed."

Mosher said he started on road cartoons in 2008. "This has been going on for a very long time!"

The biographical information that Mosher provided to the Rotary Club indicates that he has worked primarily with English-language newspaper the *Montreal Gazette*, where he started in 1972.

In 1967, he won entrance to a fine arts college, now part of UQAM, by forging his high school graduation certificate. It is still his favourite piece of work, he said.

Over the years, his work has appeared in numerous publications across Canada and internationally. He was made an officer of the Order of Canada as of May 2003 and four years later was awarded an honorary doctorate of letters from McGill University.



Terry Mosher's 55th book, *Montreal Expos, A Cartoonist's Love Affair*, at the Rotary Club's luncheon at Victoria Hall on May 15.

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Cesar and Cleo, brother-and-sister kittens



9 Lives
LYSANNE FOWLER

So sweet, Cesar and Cleopatra!
In the kitten world, they are siblings with a lot of love between them and towards people around them. These adorable one-year-old kittens are presently in foster care for the Montreal SPCA, doing very well in socialization and play.

Cesar is the stunning black-and-white kitten on the lower part of the photograph and smaller Cleo is a shade lighter, in tones of brown and white, on the upper part of the photograph.

They are both very healthy, up to date with their inoculation program, sterilized and microchipped.

For more information on them, please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, scroll to their information pages from their identification numbers, Cesar at 52725760 and Cleo at A0052725763.

Once there, please click on the “Fill out the form” black rectangle on the upper right-hand side of the screen to open the information request form.

By providing your contact information and interest, the adoption counsellors can contact you back, answer all your questions and move forward with their adoption process.

It would be wonderful if you could welcome these sibling kittens into the family,



a joy to share every day with.
Your neighbour,
Lysanne

not have the support of their council...
“It is hard to show performance because so much is against you. The entire system is biased against you. It is hard to show victories.”

Feta, a small puppy needing love



Westmount
A-dog-tions
LYSANNE FOWLER

The Montreal SPCA kennel is full, and here is a small puppy amongst them all.
Feta is five months old, and ready to be adopted and nestle in the arms of his new family.

He is a delightful Lhasa type with the softest white-and-cream coat, dark eyes and jellybean nose. Affectionate and intelligent, he is a perfect companion to all in the home.

Feta is very healthy, up to date with his inoculation program for his age, neutered and microchipped.

Please check on the Montreal SPCA website at their www.sPCA.com address, refer to Feta’s information page through his identification number, 2000138814, then prepare your visit at the shelter to see him and find out more about him.

The Montreal SPCA is open every day of the week, from Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm. It is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West in Côte-des-Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4.

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Green Coalition, cont'd from p. 7

Thomas said that he was helped by the city of Montreal to preserve the Fairview Forest in Pointe Claire. “I have a building freeze in place – which is a miracle – but besides that, on a daily basis I watch bad things happen.”

Complementing the business portion of the AGM were 11 presentations by groups under the umbrella of the Green Coalition:

- Save Fairview Forest by Genevieve Lussier,
- Legacy Fund for the Environment by Jason Prince,
- Sauvons la Falaise by David Gamper,
- UrbaNature by Lisa Mintz,
- RCPR by Tom Schwaib,
- Coalition de Golfe en Transition by Catherine Vallée,
- Les Amis du parc Meadowbrook by Deanna Delaney,
- Green and Quiet Neighbourhoods by Elaine Bander,
- Save the Park by Patrick Barnard,
- Hippo-coalition by Marc Lavertochere,
- Pincourt Vert by Carole Reed.



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Minor Exemption Application

1. The City of Westmount has received an application for a minor exemption for the property located at **396 Roslyn Avenue**;
2. The application will be reviewed at the regular sitting of the Municipal Council that will be held on **July 2nd, 2024, at 7:00 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/council-live.

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

www.westmount.org

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Art & artifacts at Greene's Galerie L'Artéfact



Retail Review

VERONICA REDGRAVE

There are lions rampant on Greene Ave. Traditionally part of a heraldic shield, in this case they surround the Galerie L'Artéfact logo, which also bears a crown. Long a destination for antiques, jewellery and art, the shop – formerly Lapidarius – has a new owner: Karim Bekhti.

With his pieces, one can add patrician *patine* to Ikea-furnished lofts, or use gorgeous porcelain sets for Uber-delivered dinners. Estate sales have long burnished homes.

And what a great way to recycle. The shop is an Aladdin's cave of discoveries: an outstanding range of heritage masterpieces. Graceful statues sit on polished tables; silverware shines. (Even if it has someone else's initials, that makes it more fun.)

My eye was caught by 16th century *argenterie*, a superb precious glass piece dated 200 AD, 19th century Murano glass, a magnificent Boulle piece and a signed Rodin bronze. His charming *netsuke* (Japanese miniature sculptures) are on my bucket list.

Along with the centuries old *antiquités*, 20th century Maurice Renoma chairs welcome admirers. The style is Louis XVI but the look is today.

The care of antique pieces takes time. But perhaps in a room full of tech screens and reproduction furniture it might be the moment to add the allure of some *grande bellezse*.

You can always pretend it's inherited. And then it's your turn to hand it on.

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Karim Bekhti at Galerie L'Artéfact on Greene above de Maisonneuve.

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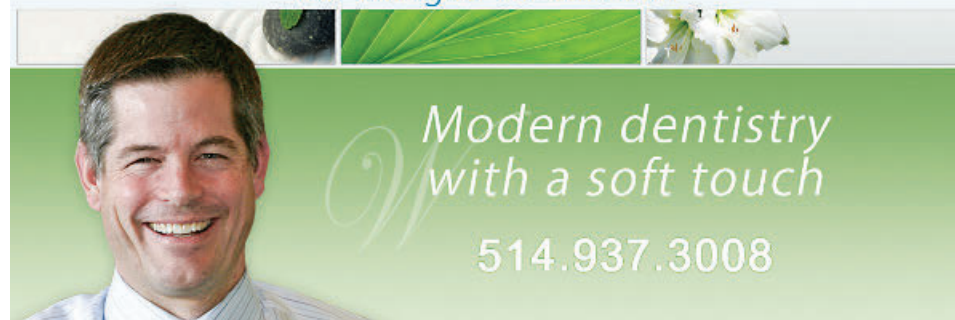
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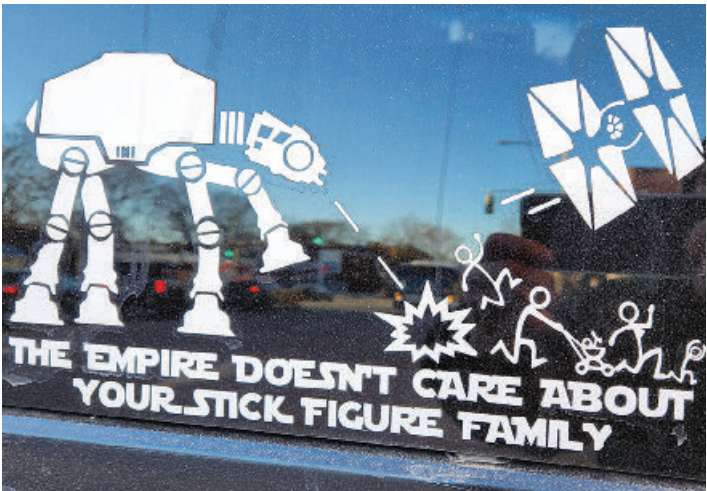
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Were you expecting this? Happy endings on de Maisonneuve – Darth days on Sherbrooke



As seen May 20 on de Maisonneuve near Grosvenor, left, and on Sherbrooke near Victoria February 6.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.



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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Tuscan Sun shines, despite the rainy weather



Miriam Green.



Committee members Alexandre Gagnon, David Birnbaum, Irene Tschernomor, François Campeau, John MacDonald and Tony Fagnoli.

“Hardly Tuscan weather!” was overheard from under the sea of umbrellas entering Under the Tuscan Sun, the fundraiser for the Queen Elizabeth Health

Complex (QEHC). Indeed, the late-day deluge meant extra coat racks had to be hurriedly put in place. However, inside Dominion Entrepôt all

was bright and beautiful with massive sunny sunflowers acting as mood enhancers. Yellow-and-black balloons echoed their colours.

The evening celebrated **Miriam Green** for her “exceptional contribution to the QEHC.” She was introduced by **Jonathan Gold-** *continued on p. 18*





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Social notes, cont'd from p. 17

bloom, board chair Hockey Canada. Inspired by the Italian theme, caterer Queen Elizabeth Fairmont offered anti-pasto, pastas and delicious arancini. However, the icing on the cake, as it were, was the dessert choice: mini cannelloni (yum!) amidst other classic Italian delights.

Many ladies said “yes to the dress” at this fun cocktail. Those in basic black were balanced by others in spring-like prints. Shoes, though damp, were strut-worthy. However, the seen-everywhere street trend that has moved onto runways and into cocktail parties also stood out: sneakers – white of course – were a comfy yet chic



François Campeau, Marie-Hélène Foucault and John MacDonald.



Sandy Cochrane and his wife Lynne Broderick.

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Alice and Jonathan Goldbloom.



Lilliana Simpson and Mila Mulroney.



Yelka Acimovic.



Nicole Senécal and Ann Baril.


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choice for many, including men. Using spring's first fashion moment to shift wardrobes, lovely outfits were noted everywhere. **Mila Mulroney** was Milano-chic in a stealth-wealth mini-check, accessorized with a gold handkerchief; **Lilliana Simpson** wore a gorgeous garden-inspired floral brooch; **Yelka Acimovic's** dress was a marvellous magnolia pink; **Tony Fargnoli's** colourful bowtie was echoed in his pocket square, and **Miriam Green's** shawl echoed regal red tulips.

Noted in the crowd were **Norma Mulder**, **Cornelia Nihon**, **Tanya Reeve**, **Nicole Senécal**, **Gisèle** and **Michael Lerch**, **Charlene Laprise**, **Alice Goldbloom**, **Ted Claxton**, **Diane** and **Doug Deruchie**, **Sue Khan**, **Ann Baril** and **Alexandra Goldbloom**, effectively handling the ease of the night as the QEHC's fundraising coordinator.

Hard-working committee members were **Alexandre Gagnon**, **David Birnbaum**, **Irene Tschernomor**, **François Campeau**, **Tony Fargoli** and **John MacDonald** QEHC president.

QEHC board members present were chair **Joanne Mastro**, **Irene Tschernomor**, **David Birnbaum**, **François Landry**, **Anastasia Roumbas** and **Reynold del Papa**.

Fun raffle tickets were sold, and the silent auction table was chock full of amazing offerings. My favourite? Fresh flowers for a year from Westmount Florist.

Local Scouts hit the streets



Westmount Scouting youth and volunteers will be out distributing this year's edition of the Lovell's phone directory in the coming weeks, and indeed have already started. Overseeing (in red) this posing pack June 5 on Belmont Ave. was 2nd Westmount Cub Scout leader Chris Hosein (aka "Shere Khan" from Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*). The directory, organized by name and by street, has been around since the 1840s.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA ELLIOTT.



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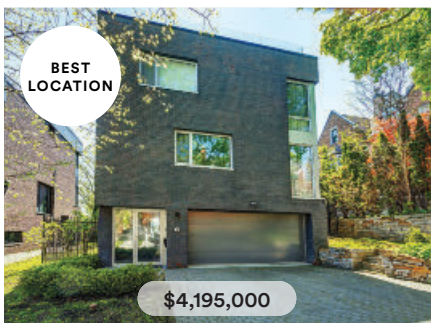
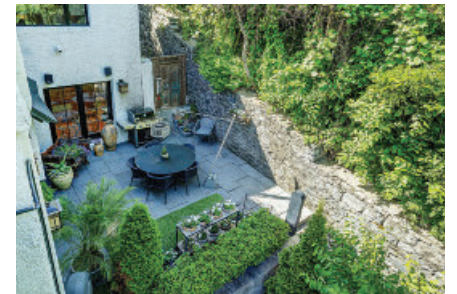
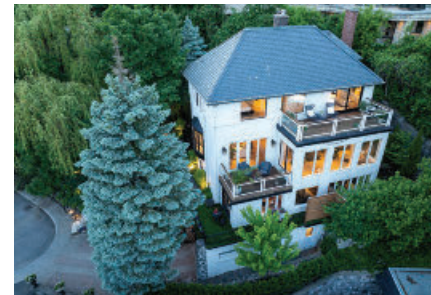
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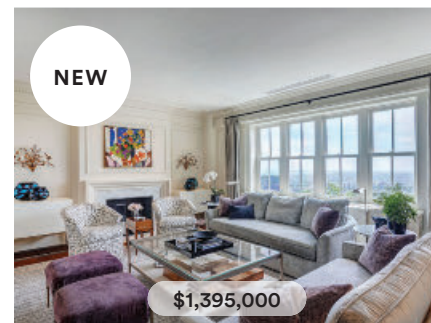
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