

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly Vol. 19 No. 12a

We are Westmount

December 2, 2025

Threshold got stricter in 2021 – 78 tested homes of 125 passed this year – More testing coming

What is going on with lead in Westmount water?

How bad are results at ‘failed’ sites?

By JENNIFER BALL

The newly constituted city council, meeting for the first time November 17,

This issue is the second-to-last one before our usual Christmas break

Issue: December 9

No issues: December 16, 23 & 30 and January 6

Weekly issues begin again: January 13

received a flurry of questions on the same theme: lead concentration in Westmount’s drinking water. It prompted the *Independent* to reach out to Julie Mandeville, the city’s director general (chief unelected employee), on November 19 to address the concerns of questioners Annie Jolicoeur, Helaine Kliger and Dana Even.

A November 21 statement from Mandeville explained that today the population is much less exposed to lead than in the past. “Over the past few decades, stricter standards have resulted in lead being almost completely eliminated from gasoline ... [and] various other materials and consumer products.”

Regarding test results from 2025, Mandeville said on November 28:

- The highest reading during the initial test (first sampling) was 42.8 µg/l, or micrograms per liter. The highest reading recorded during the subsequent sequential testing at the same address was 70.2µg/l. The current regulatory maximum threshold is 5 µg/l. It has been higher in the past (see box on p. 8).
- Of the 125 residences tested (all built before 1971), 78 were conforming, 42 non-conforming and 5 were inconclusive.
- For all 125 homes tested, the average concentration was with- in a range from 5.08 continued on p. 8

Newly elected politicians greet new residents



At the city’s fall flower show November 26, David Vanneck of Abbott Ave. and his one-year-old daughter Cleo were among the newcomers invited (see stories p. 26). PHOTO: LAUREEN SWEENEY.

Audio documentary/walk on/in Library to be launched December 3

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Something new has come to Westmount Public Library. It’s an audio documentary of the library being unveiled this Wednesday, December 3 at 2 pm. The documentary gives people “the ability to tune in to a program using earphones,” explains Donna Lach, assistant director of the library and community events.

In collaboration with Portrait Sonore, it’s about the history and architecture of

the library that people can listen to. It comprises six chapters. Each has an ideal “listening point” in the library or just outside the entrances that include signage or QR codes for people to scan at each point of listening, she explains. “Once they scan the code, they can listen to the capsule that matches their location.”

The other option is to download the Portrait Sonore app on their phones, she says.

“The app includes a map and some archival continued on p. 9

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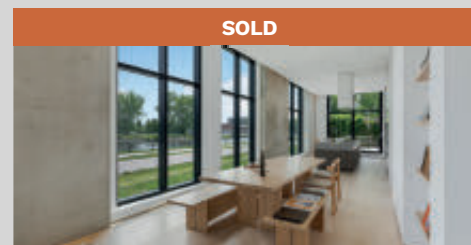
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Santa hitches a ride



As seen December 1 on Grosvenor above Westmount Ave. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Call for food drive pick-up

Residents who have been unable to drop off non-perishable donations to Public Security’s holiday food drive still have the opportunity to donate at a collection point outside Les 5 Saisons on Greene Ave. on Thursday, December 4 from 11 am to 5 pm, according to organizer Kimberley Col-

quhoun, assistant Public Security director. As well, she said, gift cards and monetary donations are accepted. “Anyone wishing to have a donation picked up can contact 514.989.5222 (option 3) for community relations and we can arrange a pick-up.” – LS.

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- Westmount A-dog-tions, p. 24
- 9 Lives, p. 26
- Social Notes: Yes turns 30, p. 29

Starting on p. 15

Holiday Gift Guide

Local boutiques and businesses give you ideas for everyone!



Wishing you all Happy Holidays!

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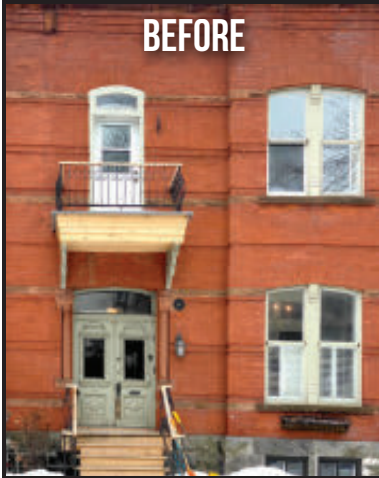


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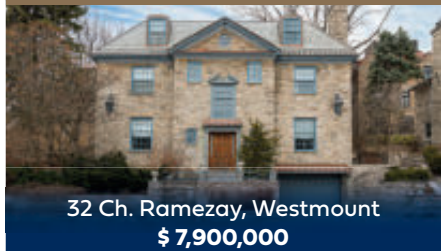
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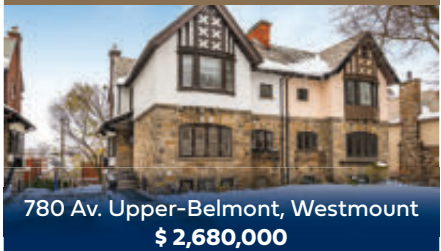
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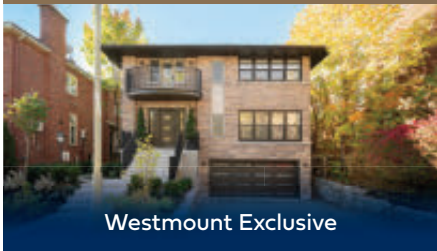
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Annual event held in Cape Ann, Massachusetts

Joint winners Goth, Vorozheykin named for new sportsmanship award

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

At the annual Sal Grasso Friendship hockey tournament between Westmount and Cape Ann, Massachusetts, November 7-9, Astrid Goth of the Westmount Wings M15A girls’ team and Nik Vorozheykin from Cape Ann were the winners of the new Daniel C. Juden Sr. Award for the players “who possess the utmost love for the game.”

They were reported to have demonstrated that, win or lose, “their heart lives and breathes the game of hockey.” This year, the event took place in Cape Ann after the 30th annual event took place at the Westmount recreation centre last year (see story November 19, 2024, p. 8).

Goth, described as “an exemplary sportsmanship player,” volunteers her time to coach Westmount’s M7 clinics for her sister and others who are just learning how to play. She has been involved with the Westmount program for the past three years after moving here from Sweden.

The new award is named after Daniel Juden, who was an active member of the Cape Ann Youth Hockey administration team and community. He was involved in the first exchange hockey tournament be-



From left, Nik Vorozheykin and coach Rob Parsons of Cape Ann, and Astrid Goth and coach Kai Duenez of Westmount.

PHOTO COURTESY OF WESTMOUNT SPORTS AND RECREATION.

tween Westmount and Cape Ann in 1987.

Westmount again won this year’s tournament, attended by those who accompanied the team.

Council rents 13 more trucks and operators

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

With more snow starting to fall and much more expected on the way, city council November 17 completed the city’s anticipated need to rent a total of 40 12-wheel trucks with operators for the winter season 2025-2026.

This resulted in 13 more trucks with operators needed for the loading and transporting of snow, to be added to the 27 already approved September 8.

According to the resolution, the lowest compliant bidder for the added ones came from Cooray Transport Inc., comprising \$68,195 for the remainder of the current year and a total of \$298,935 “taxes included.”



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THANK YOU, HYDRO WESTMOUNT

There was a power outage on Monday evening [November 17] as the transformer blew up behind my building.

The technicians arrived shortly after and they worked overnight non-stop to fix the problem. It was a cold and freezing night, and I can't imagine how hard it must have been for them. Eventually, the job was done by 6:30 am.

This is to thank them and to say that their efforts and sacrifices were not unnoticed.

MOHSEN AMREI, KENSINGTON AVE.

CIVILITY ON MUTE AT CITY HALL

In last week's *Westmount Independent* (p. 19), our mayor assured residents that he would be "the Mayor for all" and that his mandate would be guided by "continuous improvement, civility, and collaboration." Yet at his very first council meeting, moments after I spoke during question period, he muttered – apparently unaware that his microphone was still live – "fucking ass...."

We've witnessed public figures caught saying things they never intended the public to hear. While some have dismissed such remarks as "locker-room talk," these incidents are revealing: when leaders think no one is listening, their real character often emerges.

What happened that evening suggests how Mayor Stern regards challenges and dissent among ordinary residents. We've watched leaders elsewhere turn public service into a stage for ego, grievance and name-calling. Many of us believe our community holds itself to a higher standard. Our mayor's comment makes one wonder whether he shares that belief.

If Mayor Stern hopes to retain any credibility and respect, he must acknowledge what he said – plainly and without excuses. He owes me – and the community – a direct and unequivocal public apology. And if he cannot meet even that basic standard of civility, he should re-consider whether he is suited to hold the office he occupies.

RICHARD DUFOUR, ANWOTH RD.

CALLING OUT ALL INCIVILITY

While not condoning the "hot microphone" comments made by Mayor Stern (November 25, p. 19), I do take the strongest exception to the aggressive and uncivil attacks levelled by M. Dufour on Councillor Antonio D'Amico. When one chooses to attack the people on council, rather than the issues facing council, one might just be guilty of being exactly what was said into the microphone.

JOE RUSSO, SHERBROOKE ST.

WHERE'S YOUR CIVILITY, MAYOR STERN?

I suffered a severe case of whiplash upon reading the November 25 edition of the *Independent*. On p. 5, I read Mayor Stern's message to Westmounters, in which he states: "Let us commit ourselves to continuous improvement, civility and collaboration." Then on p. 19, I read that Mayor Stern called a Westmount citizen and taxpayer a "fucking ass..." during the November 17 council meeting.

This is the same meeting where the mayor cut off Councillor Matt Aronson mid-sentence as Mr. Aronson was explaining his opposition to weekly garbage pick-up.

These two incidents illustrate a stunning level of hypocrisy from Mayor Stern. It would seem that his commitment to collaboration and civility extends only to people who agree with him.

Is this what the world needs right now: another trash-talking politician who thinks basic rules of civility don't apply to him?

ALAIN FORGET, ANWOTH RD.

PLEASE CHANGE & APOLOGIZE

November 25, p. 19, issue of the *Independent*: "At the first meeting of the newly elected city council, held November 17, Mayor Michael Stern muttered 'Fucking ass...' under his breath but into his live microphone after resident Richard Dufour had finished questioning Councillor Antonio D'Amico..."

It is very disappointing to see our new mayor show such disdain for a fellow

citizen. At the very least, a change in attitude and an unreserved apology are called for. I voted for you, Mr. Stern, and I expect better.

JOHN KOZAKIEWICZ, CLARKE AVE.

LET'S ALL WORK ON COUNCIL QUESTION PERIOD

Westmount resident Richard Dufour's disrespectful questioning of Councillor Antonio D'Amico followed by Mayor Stern's reflexive but inappropriate expletive (November 25, p. 19) were both unsurprising, an outcome of deep mistrust built up with the last council.

Over the years, Mr. Dufour has tirelessly promoted environmental sustainability at council and in this paper, but was concerned that it was going nowhere within the city administration and previous council (see his letter when he resigned from Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC), December 10, 2024, p. 4.). Apart from a simple but highly controversial reduction in the garbage collection schedule, the previous council's actions towards environmental sustainability were negligible. His frustration had reached its limit and boiled over at the last council meeting.

On the other side, Mayor Stern may not have been familiar with the often angry exchanges during question period between residents and council. Many times, I have seen the director of Public Safety sense that it was getting out of hand and slowly inch toward the questioner.

How did we get into this toxic situation? From my perspective, way too often the former mayor and some councillors responded to serious questions from residents by providing little information – mainly stories unsupported by factual evidence while still expecting residents to believe them. Residents felt disregarded and looked down on. Perfectly expressing this feeling a year ago, a resident forcefully told then mayor Christina Smith: "I am not stupid you know!"

This conflict can be easily fixed. An example to follow, Pointe Claire recently adopted new rules governing question period at council. Among many things, it disallows frivolous questions, the use of disrespectful language and engaging in debate. Only questions of public interest are to be permitted. In turn, to re-build trust, the Westmount community first requires council to be transparent, respectful and accountable at all times.

As a start, I would suggest that everyone follow as a mantra the phrase from the 1960s police show *Dragnet*: "All we want are the facts, ma'am."

DENIS BIRO, 5000 DE MAISONNEUVE, NDG

Water, cont'd from p. 1

µg/l to 6.24 µg/l (the lowest detectable concentration is 1 µg/l, so there is a range).

- Of the tests classified as non-conforming, the average concentration was 11.1µg/l and the median concentration was 9µg/l (based on the initial sampling).

Where does the lead come from?

But how does lead end up in our drinking water in the first place?

Mandeville explained, "When it flows through a lead service line – the pipe that

Quebec's history of regulatory standards for lead in drinking water:

- Prior to 2001, the provincial standard permitted a maximum lead concentration of 50 micrograms per liter,
- In 2001, the limit was reduced to 10 micrograms per liter,
- In 2019, Health Canada recommended further lowering the acceptable concentration to 5 micrograms per liter,
- In 2021, that standard came into effect in Quebec.

What building/property owners are responsible for:

- During capital service projects where public lead service lines are likely to be present, the city replaces the public portion of the water service line,
- Building owners remain responsible for the private portion of their service lines,
- To date, approximately 45 percent of public lead service lines have been replaced, with ongoing projects planned each year to continue.

Preventive measures to reduce the risks of exposure to lead:

- **Use cold-water** – Running your cold-water tap will draw fresh water directly from the network and flush any water that had remained stagnant in a lead service pipe. Let the water run for 1-2 minutes.
- **Regularly clean your faucet aerator** – Lead particles can break off from old pipes and get trapped in the faucet aerator.
- **Filter your water** – Use the pitcher type NSF/ANSI 53 compliant filter distributed by the city or a similar one that you have procured yourself, such as an under-sink water filter system that is certified for lead reduction.

SOURCE: CITY OF WESTMOUNT

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

We are Westmount

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connects the municipal water network to a building. Each service line consists of two sections: a public (city) portion and a private portion... If the public portion, the private portion, or both sections, are made of lead, this may result in an increased lead concentration at the tap."

To facilitate more testing, Westmount will launch a new in-home lead testing program in the spring of 2026, with "eligibility for the program ... based on the likelihood of lead service entries."

Mandeville also shared that the city has adopted an action plan to reduce the concentration of lead in drinking water, and it is divided into four main stages:

1. Replacement of lead water services on the public side,
2. Testing for lead concentration in water in private homes,
3. Distribution of lead-reducing filters and information to homes in at-risk areas,
4. Implementation of a subsidy program for the replacement of private water service pipes.

"In accordance with the plan, you re-

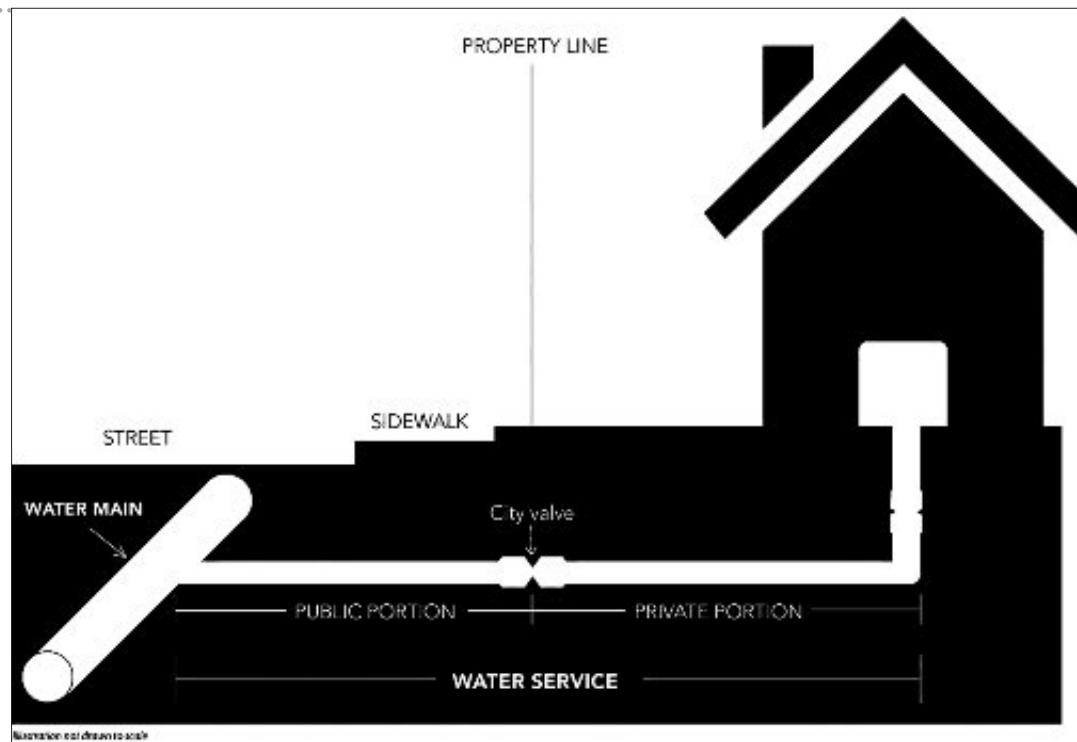


DIAGRAM COURTESY OF JULIE MANDEVILLE, THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE CITY OF WESTMOUNT.

ceive a pitcher and pack of filters that meets the requirements of NSF/ANSI Standard 53 for water testing. This filter is certified to reduce the concentration of lead in drinking water to below the regulatory limit."

Exactly how many filters/purifiers has

the city distributed to residents?

"Approximately 650 NSF-53 pitcher-style filters have been delivered to date," about 430 of which were delivered proactively by the city to pre-selected streets where the presence of lead service lines was suspected.

Library, cont'd from p.1

photos as well as all the audio capsules." These include the library's origins, "Findlay's" architecture (referring to the library's architect), a century of female innovation (about the library directors of the past), modern architecture, special collections and a chapter written for children about the children's department.

This launch event includes lunch in the Westmount Room, for which registration on Eventbrite is required. There is a link to it on the library's website www.westlib.org.

Portrait Sonore (www.portraitsonore.ca)

was created by architect Sophie Mankowski. It synthesizes the information and weaves the narrative together including original music and sounds. The project was funded by a donation from the estate of Frances J. Hodge, who was born in Westmount.

The audio documentary is available in English and French. The launch includes samples of the Portrait Sonore recording, short speeches by the creator, library staff and refreshments.

The city previously published an audio walk with Portrait Sonore about the Westmount's places of worship (see June 21, 2022, p. 11).

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Alexis Nihon food court re-opens, re-named ‘bonap’

By JENNIFER BALL

The launch party for the Alexis Nihon food court’s re-opening – including a new name, “bonap,” to capture the universal joy of sharing good food in good company – took place on November 25. The food courts on the mezzanine level of the shopping mall have been closed since the beginning of March for renovation (see March 25, p. 8 and September 16, p. SL-17).

Amanda Clement, content creator at Cominar in the office of culture and brand, provided a November 24 press release. “The creation of this new food court represents a significant investment for Cominar,” said Marie-Andrée Boutin, chief development and real estate operations officer at Cominar...

“Beyond strengthening the centre’s appeal within Montreal’s retail landscape, it also contributes to the vitality of the neighbourhood.”

The food court now hosts 13 restaurants with a dozen different types of cuisine from Japanese to Lebanese.

The new layout maximizes natural light: ceilings have been raised, and the

area now opens fully onto the mezzanine. The designers used a lot of plants to introduce warm tones in a calm and welcoming ambiance.

Ten restaurants are currently operational in the food court reconstitution:

- Grillades Torino,
- Muffin Plus,
- Poke Monster,
- Poulet Rouge,
- Real Fruit Bubble Tea,
- Shawarma Plus,
- Souvlaki Bar,
- Subway,
- Sushi Shop,
- Thai Express.

Three more eateries – Emilia, Manchu Wok and Roll’V – will open by early 2026.

The shopping mall is located at 1500 Atwater Ave. It is mostly in Westmount, with the balance of the mall being downtown in Montreal’s Ville Marie borough.

The company that owns Alexis Nihon is Cominar REIT. It owns and manages office, commercial and residential buildings, mainly in Quebec, and was founded in 1965.



The seating area in the re-launched food courts in Alexis Nihon on November 25.

Alexis Nihon escalator running again

By JENNIFER BALL

The *Independent* reported in the November 4 issue (p. 23) that the escalator from the Metro to street level at the Alexis Nihon shopping mall had been out of service for months and was awaiting a critical part. The *Independent* has information that it was operational again the week of November 10 and reached out to Amanda Clement, content creator in the office of culture and brand at Cominar, on November 25 to confirm the exact date it again carried shoppers between floors.

She told the *Independent* on November 28: “I was able to confirm that the escalators were back in service on November 17.”



►The operational escalator from the Metro to street level at the Alexis Nihon shopping mall. Photo taken November 25.

Correction

In last week’s the story on the hockey player of the month for October (p. 20), Andrew Maislin’s title should have read: division head – operations and sports facilities.

Pedestrian access created from Greene Ave. to Westmount Square



Temporary access to Westmount Square’s concourse and its tunnel to Alexis Nihon opened on November 27, as seen the same day. The area is the target of a major rejuvenation project (see October 21, p. SL-22, November 11, p. 10).

PHOTO: JENNIFER BALL.

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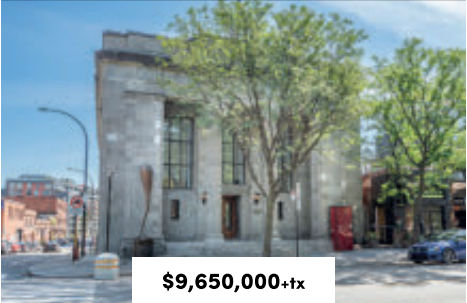
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RIP – Sunny the fox has died

Fox chasers to meet with Cllr. Aronson for talk on urban wildlife problem

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Editor’s caveat: This article is news, not an endorsement of the newsmakers’ actions. The *Independent* does not advise anyone to get close to wild animals for any reason, especially those that can bite and/or that can be infected with rabies. – DP.

A small group of Westmounters who’ve been tracking sickly foxes around the mountain in the hopes of capturing and treating them (see November 11, p. 1) were scheduled to meet with at least one of Westmount’s newly elected city council members this week to discuss the feasibility of the city taking more responsibility for the care of Westmount’s urban wildlife.

“We’re now working with Mayor Stern and we’re meeting with Councillor Aronson to talk about a plan for Westmount wildlife – that’s where we’re at now,” said Victoria Ave. resident Diana Anderson, who started the group.

Although she acknowledged that a sick fox the group tracked for weeks, dubbed “Sunny” by well-wishers, ended up dying after finally being captured, she said their hope is that the city will agree to become more involved in safeguarding local wildlife, as the task is beyond the scope of most residents.

She said at least two more ill foxes were recently sighted in Westmount, although

the group wasn’t able to capture them. “Honestly, [we are] five citizens who are busy with our own lives,” said Anderson.

They have been receiving help from Jean-Yves Lemay, a wildlife rescue specialist who runs a service called Détresse Animal. Lemay claims to be one of the few wildlife rescuers in Montreal willing to track down distressed foxes, because they are notoriously evasive and difficult to capture.

Anderson described Lemay as “overworked” lately. She and other group members believe it would be far more appropriate for the city to take on the role.

“What we want from Westmount is something like a contract with someone like Jean-Yves who, when this happens, Westmount can call them and get some assistance,” said Anderson, adding that Westmount Public Security appears to have washed its hands of the situation. Public Security has failed to return several calls made by the *Westmount Independent* for additional information on the department’s role in this



A photo taken by a group member on October 19 of one of the sick foxes they were tracking in Westmount in the hopes of capturing and treating it.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KARIM BOUZIDI – KARIMBOUZIDI.CA.



As seen at Montrose Ave. and Ramezay on September 7. This same fox was seen for a couple of weekends on Sundays in September in the middle of the day.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA SANTINI.

issue.

Anderson said that the group sent Mayor Michael Stern a formal letter, while also reaching out to city councillor Matt Aronson, who is in charge of council’s parks and green spaces dossiers.

“Our main ask is we need a Westmount citywide municipal plan for sick or injured wildlife,” said Anderson.



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GROUPE
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Retail Review
VERONICA REDGRAVE

The new KifKif restaurant is inspired by *mezze* – Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisine. Rows of lovely field flowers – not rigid bouquets – welcome customers. An investor in the restaurant, Emily Sheiner, chose the décor: subtly shaded pink marble was used for the tables, echoing the long – and already popular! – bar counter. Crushed limestone in the white-washed walls gives a seaside feel. Sheiner also curated the vintage photo areas: one about women; another focusing on family. The *cuisine* team is supervised by chef Dan Geltner, renowned from his work with Michelin-starred kitchens such as Bar Boulud in New York and local destinations such as L’Original. Talented kitchen creators include head chef Alireza Yousefinia and baker Stéphane Bouzaglou. Alireza’s Tahdig rice has become many customers’ favourite dish. Cooked with a glass-like crackling surface, the crispy rice is made with pistachios, saffron and “secret” spices. “It’s a traditional recipe my mother made for me when I was a child in

KifKif brings Middle Eastern vibe to its food, cocktails



Alireza Yousefinia and Pierre Magallanes.

Iran,” he said. Stéphane bakes *über* delicious sweet things: a magnificent *babka* (braided bread) and a twisted chocolate *brioche*. Hummus is home-made daily, as is the pita bread cooked in a massive oven

imported from Italy. The Middle Eastern theme is carried out visually with turquoise-water blue menu covers and orange KifKif logo. General manager Pierre Magallanes showed me fun glistening “gold” tea pots, which reminded me of my stay in Morocco, where mint tea is a daily sip. Eyal Azimov crafted the cocktail menu with “Rose Petal” being a favourite. A surprise was the restaurant’s private room. Entered from Kif Kif’s back door on a parking lot alley, “a bit like a destination in New York’s Meatpacking District,” which Emily explained will be made boldly visible with the Kif Kif orange. Industrial steps lead one past street-art-covered walls to a large room, light filled in the day. Catered by restaurant’s talented kitchen masters, this new space will surely be as popular as the food. (Kif Kif’s vibe is even cooler on DJ nights. Call them to check dates: 514.504.4124.)

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Holiday Gift Guide 2025

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Origin of countdowns

Come New Year’s Eve, it’s customary to count down the last 10 seconds until the clock strikes midnight and the new year officially begins.

It seems like the 10-second countdown is as old as time itself, but the tradition actually is much more modern. According to Alexis McCrossen, a history professor at Southern Methodist University, prior to the twentieth century, New Year’s Day was celebrated rather than New Year’s Eve. And even up until the mid-twentieth century, countdowns were not associated with New Year’s Eve or even festive occasions.

However, the tides turned on countdowns with the Apollo moon launch in 1961. After that, countdowns for radio hits and other fun activities began. Although some TV announcers in the 1960s began counting down to the New Year, it wasn’t

until 1979 that the crowd at Times Square in New York City began joining in. This was despite the first New Year’s Eve ball drop being held more than 70 years earlier in 1907.

Publisher Adolph Ochs organized the first New Year’s Eve party in Times Square in 1904, while the first-ever ball drop took place three years later when the city banned fireworks for the celebration. Yet it was not until the final year of the 1970s for it to be fashionable for a crowd to gather and participate in shouting out the 10-second countdown, a practice that is now tradition. – MCG





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Drunk driving up during holidays



Drunk and drug-impaired driving is illegal in across Canada and all 50 US states. Unfortunately, instances of driving under the influence of a substance seem to increase during the holiday season. According to recent data from the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 29.8 percent of all fatal car accidents between 2018 and 2022 (the most recent for data) involved a drunk driver. Fatal crashes involving drunk driving are about 27 percent more common during holiday periods than other times of the year.

Nighttime driving during the month of December tends to be particularly dangerous. Almost half of drivers involved in fatal crashes between the hours of midnight and 2:59 am were intoxicated, according to data from December 2023. Thirty percent of drivers in fatal traffic crashes between the hours of 6 pm and 5:59 am were intoxicated.

Holiday celebrants should always plan for a sober ride home from parties or holiday dinners if they plan to drink or consume other substances that can cause impairment. – MCG

A history of Boxing Day

Christmas Day is a big event on the calendar each year. Indeed, December 25 is a day when family, faith and festivities converge for people across the globe.

The festive atmosphere of Christmas Day might leave many people a little tired come December 26, but Canadians know the party isn't over upon going to bed on Christmas night. That's because Boxing Day is celebrated in Canada and elsewhere, including the United Kingdom, on December 26.

What is Boxing Day?

Christmas Day has long been a day to gather with friends and family, but that wasn't necessarily possible for everyone. The working class and servants working in wealthy households in the United Kingdom and other locales in the British Commonwealth typically worked on Christmas Day. But the day after Christmas was customarily a day off from work for such individuals. According to Britannica, it was customary for the upper classes in Great Britain and the Commonwealth to present the poor and working classes with presents on the day after Christmas, which came to be known as Boxing Day.

Is the day still celebrated as it used to be?

Few twenty-first century households have servants, so the Boxing Day of modern times is not all that similar to the holiday celebrated in the past. However, Boxing Day remains a festive day on the calendar. Many people take advantage of retailers' sales and go shopping on Boxing Day, while countless others spend the day watching various sporting events. The Premier League, which is the highest level of the English football league system and among the most competitive leagues across the globe, typically schedules a full slate of matches on Boxing Day. However, that tradition is not necessarily a given in 2025, as the league announced it would move the games to December 27 while leaving room for teams to move fixtures to Boxing Day to accommodate broadcasting demands. If there's no Premier League, Canadian sports fans can still spend the day watching the World Juniors Ice Hockey Championship, which begins its roughly month-long run on Boxing Day.

Boxing Day is steeped in tradition and remains a fun and festive day on many Canadians' calendars. – MCG

Happy Holidays

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Learn to decorate like a holiday pro

The sights and sounds of the holiday season help to make this a special time of year that people look forward to. With its magical moments and opportunities to gather with family and friends, the holiday season is a period to celebrate and, of course, decorate. According to an informal poll from the decorating, culture and travel experts at Veranda, 65 percent of respondents said that the time to decorate for Christmas is the first week of December.

Many stores now display holiday decorations and other wares concurrently with Hallowe'en and fall items, so people can plan their decorating early if they expect to be adding to their holiday collections. These tips can help with decorating and make anyone deck the halls like a professional.

- **Choose your theme and colour palette.** Consider a specific style of decorating, whether it's traditional, minimalist, country, or even winter wonderland. Then select a few coordinating colours to complement the theme and existing items in your home. Pick up these items as they become available in stores, as holiday merchandise often goes quickly.

- **Focus on a few key areas.** While it's

tempting to decorate an entire home, pros know to focus on key areas like tables, doorways and mantles to create the most visual interest. This also makes decorating more manageable.

- **Rely on the rule of thirds.** Create balanced and visually pleasing arrangements by dividing the space visually into nine equal parts, symbolically drawing two equally spaced horizontal and two equally spaced vertical lines. Designers often place important elements along these lines or at their intersections to create a more visually balanced and appealing composition. When grouping decorative items together on shelves and tables, threes often look best.

- **Remove clutter.** It's important to declutter a space prior to introducing holiday elements in order to create a clean and organised look. Store additional decorations and knickknacks until after the holiday season.

- **Start with lights.** It's often easier to decorate by beginning with lights first, and then weaving additional decorations into the mix. Build on lights with garlands and accent items.

- **Less is often more.** Keep the decorating



simple. A few elements here and there can have a much more effective impact than several things that draw attention away from one another. When taking out holiday decorations this year, use it as an opportunity to assess and cull the

collection, which will make things easier next year.

Homeowners can decorate their spaces for the holidays effectively with some guidelines professional designers often use. — MCG

Classic touches to transform home interiors this holiday season

Painter Norman Rockwell was famous for his narrative paintings depicting the essence of American life in the mid-twentieth century. His works of art blended sentimentality with humour and realism and were featured on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* for decades. Some of his paintings portray the classic tableaux that evoke traditional feelings of the holiday season. Rockwell's classic paintings may inspire individuals to recreate that mid-century feel when decorating this holiday season. When transforming home interiors for the holidays, these classic touches can make moments more magical.

- **Embrace classic colour palettes.** Christmas colours include red, green, white, and gold. Utilizing these colours throughout a home will set a classic tone.
- **Utilize timeless ornaments.** Cherished ornaments collected through the years will add a classic touch to the Christmas tree. Family heirlooms and ornaments made from quality materials lend a touch of nostalgia.

- **Use cozy textiles.** Wrap the home in cozy touches, like plaid blankets and velvet ribbons. Plush throws and seasonal pillows also can add a traditional touch to interior spaces.
- **Decorate with classic figurines.** Nutcrackers and religious figurines lend a traditional touch to holiday decor.

- **Display a real tree.** Artificial trees can

look realistic, but a fragrant live evergreen in front of the living room picture window calls to mind a classic Christmas setting.

- **Hang knit stockings.** Celebrants lucky enough to have a fireplace can hang knit stockings in classic holiday colours from the mantel.

- **Play classic tunes.** Holiday music crosses various genres, but the old standards from Bing Crosby or Andy Williams can set a classic feel when entertaining.

Evoking a classic feel at home for the holidays can make celebrations traditional and sentimental. — MCG





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Family-friendly holiday traditions



Tradition figures prominently in many households throughout the holiday season. Whether it's decorations like a Hanukah menorah or a Christmas tree, or a family gathering on Christmas Eve, there's no shortage of traditions to make it even more special.

Young families or first-time hosts may want to incorporate many popular traditions into their seasonal celebrations. Doing so can lay a foundation for years of celebrations to come.

Family baking sessions

What would the holiday season be without baked goods? While it's easy to purchase pre-made goodies at grocery stores and other retailers, homemade concoctions made in the comforts of one's own kitchen alongside loved ones is a classic tradition.

Letters to Santa

Santa Claus makes his presence known one night a year, and writing letters to the jolly old elf is a custom with a lengthier history than some may realize. Though it might not be possible to pinpoint precisely when the first letter

to Santa was written, historians believe the tradition began in the early nineteenth century. Roughly two centuries later, children's letters to Santa remain a popular tradition.

Advent calendars

Advent calendars have a history that dates back centuries. Historians believe the first Advent calendars were produced in Germany around 1850. Faithful celebrants can now find Advent calendars in many forms, and some retailers even sell craft kits that enable families to create their own calendars at home.

Christmas cards

Christmas cards may seem like a relatively recent phenomenon, but that's not the case at all. Prior to 1843, many Christmas celebrants shared handwritten letters with friends during the holiday season. Come 1843, Sir Henry Cole commissioned designer John Colcott Horsley to design a Christmas card that Cole could then send to various friends. Families can design cards together and work as a team to get them ready to send. – MCG



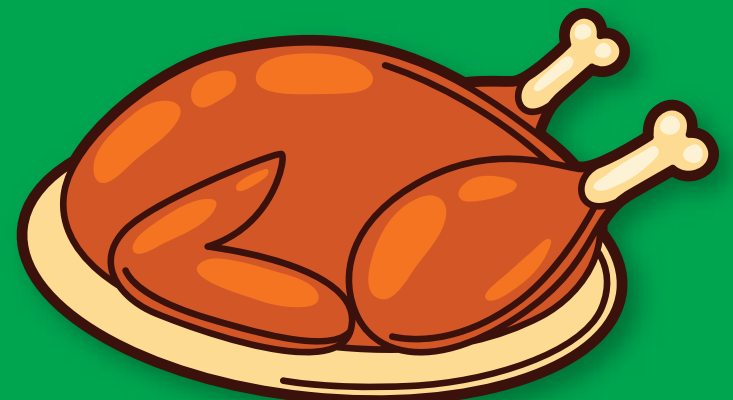
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Tips to keep holiday guests entertained

Gone are the days when extended families lived in close proximity to one another. Ours is now a global society, and it is not unheard of for people to live on the opposite side of the country or even the globe from their parents and siblings. But come the holiday season, families often congregate at one place so they can spend time together. That means that out-of-town guests may be spending a few days with holiday hosts to maximize their visits.

According to Diane Gottsman, a national etiquette expert and owner of The Protocol School of Texas, a weekend is typically sufficient for a nice visit, while anything more than three days can be challenging for hosts, particularly if guests are not being helpful.

Hosting house guests for a few days requires hosts to keep guests engaged. Although the actual holiday itself



provides ample opportunity for entertainment, hosts may need additional ideas to quell boredom if visits stretch for more than one day.

Here are some ideas for making spirits bright without having to stress too much.

Create a guest basket

Offer some in-house entertainment

for guests. This can include best-selling novels, a book of word games, an adult colouring book, or some small craft kits picked up at the store. This option enables guests to self-soothe if boredom strikes.

Host a movie marathon

When guests visit, hosts can whip up some microwave popcorn and additional snacks and cue up a few different films. They can be holiday classics or movies that will bring back fond memories.

Take a trip

This time of year there are plenty of activities going on. Plan a drive over to a Christmas tree farm that may be offering rides through the fields or has a hot cocoa station. Walk down the main street of a quaint local town and savour all of that cozy flavour. Time a trip to a tree lighting or another holiday-related

special event, drive around at night and look at neighbourhood lighting displays or a simple walk in scenic, peaceful park.

Make an edible craft

Spend some time in the kitchen making gingerbread cookies or another relatively easy holiday treat. Guests can customize their desserts with coloured sprinkles or other embellishments.

Set up Christmas karaoke

Get everyone in the holiday spirit by streaming instrumental tracks of favourite holiday carols and songs. Everyone takes turns singing a tune, whether they're great singers or not. The fun is in giving it a shot and laughing along the way.

Go on a crawl

Whether it's to visit area pubs, diners, dessert shops, or coffee spots, pick a few different places to stop in so everyone can get some fresh air and have a little fun.

Entertaining guests for the holidays requires some creative thinking and a willingness to have a little fun. – MCG

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Holidays

CHRISTINE

City names new Public Works director

Ubner-Sauveur comes to vacant position from Montreal North

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

City council November 17 appointed Maxime Ubner-Sauveur to head the city's Public Works department as director. This is the city's largest department.

He comes from the Montreal North borough of the city of Montreal, where he is reported to have served as director of Public Works "and related divisions" and had

been a keynote speaker at events such as an annual symposium on public works hosted by the Union of Quebec Municipalities (UMQ), where he shared best practices for integration and inclusion within the workplace.

The Westmount position has been vacant following the re-assignment of the former director, Robert Talarico, and his subsequent resignation, according to the recent

council resolution.

The new appointment is effective December 2, as was moved by Councillor Jeff Shamie, whose commissionership on the newly elected council includes Public Works.

The appointment comes at the start of a demanding time of year at Public Works faced by the need for special attention to the city's slippery mountainside streets.

Public Security asks for leaves to be contained when collected

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Two tickets were issued last week for the use of gasoline-fired leaf blowers, underlining the prohibition in Westmount of this type of equipment, Public Security officials said.

While electric blowers are permitted, "we're asking that residents and their gardeners rake leaves and dispose of them into trucks and bags to prevent them being blown into the street, drain and down the hill," said Public Security director Greg McBain.

"We ask for co-operation in this regard especially so that leaves do not blow onto the sidewalk, making them slippery," Mc-

Bain explained.

Tickets were reported issued November 27 on the upper levels for the use of the illegal gasoline-fired equipment. In one case, the ticket was reported in the amount of \$468 when issued to the company for which the offender worked. In the other incident, a ticket for \$158 was given to the user.

In both cases, patrollers "observed" the leaf blowers in use: one on Shorncliffe, the other on Lexington where the user "tried to quickly switch to an electric one."

Man found 'in crisis' on Victoria sidewalk

A man described as "in crisis" Novem-

ber 26 was found seated in the middle of the sidewalk outside the Metro store on Victoria, Public Security said last week.

He appeared "upset and angry" when found at 12:30 pm where a baby carriage containing his belongings was also described as upset. Due to his "violent nature," the responders decided to "monitor the situation" and wait for police, who had been called to respond.

As the man began picking up his belongings, he appeared calmer.

A witness was reported to have told Public Security that the man had broken a window on a white Range Rover. No other details were reported.

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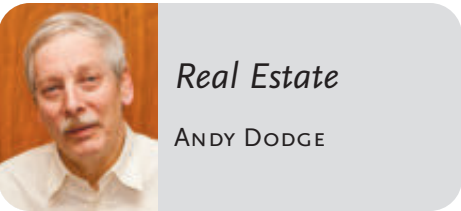


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Real Estate
ANDY DODGE

Note: The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in July 2025, gleaned from city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 23.

Real estate sales registered in July this year revealed some wild variations but a



73 Somerville.

July transfers: Some wild sales

very strong interest in capturing a Westmount address while they are still (relatively) affordable.

Not so 43 Surrey Gardens, which brought its owners \$15 million for a house that they had purchased for \$3,668,000 in February 2023, and that was evaluated on the 2023 valuation roll as \$3,685,000. Thus, the mark-up over valuation for the latest sale was more than 300 percent – four times the valuation – a figure we haven’t seen in Westmount in many years. It was a private sale, but the list of extras and improvements in the title deed was an indication it had been extensively renovated.

On the opposite end of the sale was 73 Somerville Ave., which sold for \$724,000 or 32.1 percent below its \$1,065,500 valuation, a house which, like many of the neighbouring houses, still suffers from the clearly visible signs of shifting, having been built on what, in the 19th century, was a large swampland, according to city maps. Many of the other houses have had sloping floors re-built, and there is a building permit posted on the door, but there was little sign of activity when we photographed the house last week.

Those two outlier sales make up the opposite ends of a July list of 22 Westmount



43 Surrey Gardens.

single-family homes, only three fewer than were registered in June.

Excluding the two sales above, the range of prices went from \$995,000 for 119 Lewis Ave. to \$5,450,000 for 630 Clarke Ave., and the variations from valuation ranging from -8.6 percent for 73 Chesterfield Ave. to +62.9 percent for a house at 429 Mount Ste-

phen Ave.

Statistically, the average price of the 22 house sales was \$3,033,618 and the average mark-up over valuation leapt from 17.6 percent in June to 32.5 percent in July. If we remove the two extreme sales from the mix, we come to an average price of \$2,551,000

continued on p. 27

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Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in July

ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2023 VAL	RATIO (%)
104 Arlington	Tyler Grant Kim & Sabrina Olga Henrioux	\$3,565,000	\$2,969,500	20.1%
73 Chesterfield	Pierre-Marc Jasmin	\$1,810,000	\$1,980,900	-8.6%
630 Clarke	Ilham Sbihi & Khallid Belkhou	\$5,450,000	\$5,237,100	4.1%
175 Cote St.Antoine	Hongmei Liu	\$2,230,000	\$2,374,200	-6.1%
343 Grosvenor	Adam (Antoni) Borowczyk & Marie Farmer	\$2,200,000	\$1,635,100	34.5%
507 Grosvenor	Andrij Serbyn & Bohdana Ratitch	\$1,995,000	\$1,789,900	11.5%
632 Grosvenor	Michel Gil	\$2,125,000	\$1,821,600	16.7%
111 Irvine	Yi Cao	\$995,000	\$1,084,200	-8.2%
764 Upper Lansdowne	David Crosbie & Claudette Girard	\$1,725,000	\$1,797,200	-4.0%
119 Lewis	Susan Briscoe Testamentary Trust (two members of Briscoe family)	\$1,250,000	\$1,025,000	22.0%
364 Metcalfe	Russell Kirstein & Geneviève Bettinville	\$3,175,000	\$2,483,800	27.8%
365 Metcalfe	Barbara Duchesne (Roubert)	\$3,450,000	\$3,065,400	12.5%
465 Mount Pleasant	Harry Grivakis	\$3,300,000	\$2,038,300	61.9%
429 Mount Stephen	He Wei	\$1,705,000	\$1,699,500	0.3%
710 Upper Roslyn	Jean-Jeremie Siow & Anne Mary Mekhael	\$2,500,000	\$2,168,000	15.3%
44 Somerville	Claudette Dagenais & Lionel Collins	\$2,250,000	\$1,660,600	35.5%
73 Somerville	Mitsuru Osawa Cope	\$724,000	\$1,065,500	-32.1%
462 Strathcona	Zachary Levine & Catherine Henin	\$3,550,000	\$3,023,800	17.4%
119 Sunnyside	Josée Maillette & Pierre-Antoine Fradet	\$3,655,000	\$3,682,900	-0.8%
43 Surrey Gardens	William Trihey & Tara Garbarino	\$15,000,000	\$3,685,000	307.1%
21 Thornhill	Ben Battat & Martha Nicol	\$2,600,000	\$2,650,400	-1.9%
56 Windsor	Helen Glen Tucker	\$1,490,000	\$1,450,100	2.8%

.....
continued on p. 27

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Rotary Report

Maccarone takes on CAQ’s Bill 2, ‘an alarming, repulsive piece of legislation’

By JENNIFER BALL

According to Statistics Canada data from the 2021 census, Westmount had 19,658 residents, 1,280 of whom work in health care and social assistance.

Liberal provincial legislator Jennifer Maccarone – who has sat in the Quebec provincial assembly since 2018 – had that seven percent of the city’s population and their families top of mind when she spoke to the Westmount Rotary Club about Bill 2, which she called an “alarming and repulsive piece of legislation.”

Bill 2 is a controversial health reform law that overhauls how doctors and pharmacists are compensated, tying payments to performance metrics and granting the government broad powers over professional negotiations.

Quickly adopted by government

Maccarone told Rotarians at Victoria Hall on November 19, that “I would love to give you all the information on the 214 articles in that bill, [but] nobody read it until the Thursday, and then it got adopted formally on Friday morning at 3:30 am because the government called closure on it.”

On October 25, the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) government bypassed ex-

tended debate and pushed through the health reform law, which overhauls physician compensation and imposes performance-based metrics.

Maccarone said, “The only people that got to see it was [the CAQ].”

Under Bill 2, the Régie de l’assurance maladie du Québec (RAMQ) now plays a central role in determining your medical need by assigning a “vulnerability code” to each patient, which directly affects how doctors are compensated.

Maccarone said “According to the bill – and this makes me very angry, so forgive me, but I’ve got kids that live with handicaps, and my kids need regular visits to doctors – it’s the RAMQ that’s going to decide your need now, not your medical professional.”

According to Maccarone, “You’re going to have a colour, you’re going to be red, which is a big need, or orange, or yellow, or green. I asked the [CEO] of the hospital [in Shawinigan where Maccarone was on November 14]: ‘What’s your opinion of [Bill 2]? How is this going to affect care?’ And they had no idea what I was talking about...”

“It’s based on performance, and it’s based on a lot of subjectivity and not objectivity, and it means that there’s going to be police in the system...”

“You are going to have an inspector and



From left, Jennifer Maccarone the Liberal provincial legislator for Westmount-St. Louis and the Rotary Club of Westmount’s president, Nickolas Cieslinski, at a November 19 Rotary Club of Westmount luncheon.

a chief inspector who are going to police our doctors to make sure that they’re doing what’s expected of them and to help analyze the ability for them to submit what would be considered reasonable for their remuneration.”

Legal challenges, already

The Association québécoise des phar-

maciens propriétaires (AQPP) have launched a legal challenge against Bill 2, arguing it violates their rights and imposes unconstitutional restrictions. Their main concern being that Section 208 of Bill 2 gives the minister of Health unilateral power to modify existing agreements if deemed necessary to improve access to care.

The Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec (FMSQ) filed a lawsuit in Superior Court to suspend parts of Bill 2, arguing it violates individual freedoms and bans legitimate labour actions.

Maccarone called it “an alarming, repulsive piece of legislation that I cannot wait – in the event there’s a change in government – to just throw [it] in the garbage because it should not ever, in a million years in any democratic society, be adopted like that.”

Maccarone is the chair of the committee on Transportation and the Environment and the official opposition critic for public security, the fight against racism and for the LGBTQ2 community. She also unpacked her public security and family dossiers for Rotarians in detail.

Jennifer Ball, the reporter who authored this story, is a member of the Rotary Club of Westmount.



Westmount
A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

At only two years of age, stunning Thanos is already so athletic and social. This wonderful youngster is presently at the Montreal SPCA kennel, where he is active and keen on staff and volunteer compan-

Young Thanos

ionship for learning and joining other dogs for playtime.

Thanos has a lot of the young-Doberman type in his appearance and carriage. You can see it through his beautiful features and slim build. He is very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

Please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, scroll through the

listings for Thanos’ information page by his identification number, A2000338642, then plan your visit with him and the adoption coordinators at the shelter.

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

Thanos is a majestic and bright young dog, with so much affection and energy to share with a family. Please do not hesitate

to visit him and make arrangements for adoption.

Your neighbour,
Lysanne





Mary Hagerman, author of *The Black Belt Investor*, will speak at the Westmount Public Library.

Participants will explore how self-knowledge, discipline, and confidence are essential to embracing the journey towards prosperity.

Use the QR code or call 514 989-5300 x5355 to register

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Police Report

Sherbrooke St. taxi driver demanded \$50 fee for return of lost iPhone

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Police at Station 12 on Stanton St. have opened an investigation into a Sherbrooke St. taxi driver who is alleged to have refused to return a customer's lost iPhone unless the driver was paid a hefty \$50 fee.

According to Station community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit, the complainant, an off-island resident, was at the Montreal General Hospital on November 20 when he realized he no longer had his cell phone.

Using a location app on another device to find the missing iPhone, the owner's wife determined that the phone was in motion but had stopped in front of an address on Sherbrooke St. in Westmount.

Going to the scene, the woman realized that the phone was inside a taxi. Walking up to the vehicle to ask the driver whether he had found the phone, he allegedly told her he would return it upon payment of \$50.

"She refused and she called the police," said Yigit. Although police responded but were weren't able to reach the taxi in time,

the woman provided them with a licence plate number, added Yigit.

Smartphone owners have sometimes complained that, even when they manage to locate their phone when it is lost, the police are reluctant to intervene.

Yigit confirmed that even when they know the civic address where a missing phone has been located, they are often limited in what they can do because the geo-location app doesn't provide apartment numbers within multi-unit buildings.

As well, he continued, there are legal considerations.

"We don't have the powers to step into apartments," said Yigit. "So, oftentimes we take the address down, we follow our investigative methods, but the only way we're able to proceed is if there's a specific location."

All the same, with the licence plate and other investigative means, the police now know the name of the taxi driver, according to Yigit. Whether charges are laid will depend on the outcome of the investigation.

Police: Don't leave purchases and valuables in, or in sight in, cars

With the onset of the Christmas season when many Westmounters are shopping, the police are advising car owners to be especially careful not to leave purchases or valuable personal belongings exposed and vulnerable to opportunistic thieves who break into vehicles.

On November 21, a woman who had parked on St. Catherine St. near Alexis Nihon Plaza left a Gucci purse on the rear seat of the vehicle.

When she returned a while later, she found a rear window had been smashed and the purse was missing.

"This type of crime, we see a noticeable increase this time of year," said Yigit. "People will do their shopping and they

will leave packages or other things in the back seat and people passing by will see."

He suggested keeping a blanket in the car and using it to cover anything that can't be otherwise concealed. Alternatively, the trunk is an even better storage place as its contents are shielded from the eyes of intruders.

Amazon delivery stolen

A Victoria Ave. resident may think twice the next time they order merchandise from Amazon for home delivery. Their latest purchase was filched by a porch pirate on November 22.

"The Christmas holidays brings a lot that," said Yigit, noting that larger and costlier items are often ordered for home delivery this time of year, drawing increased attention from porch thieves.

He said Station 12 has filed charges against a number of individuals, often repeat offenders, who were prosecuted with evidence provided by Ring home security system cameras that recorded their actions.

Gym lockers broken into

Station 12 is urging gym users to be extra cautious following a series of locker-room thefts. During the incidents, which were all on November 26, the padlocks on three lockers at a Sherbrooke St. sports and recreation facility were sheared and their contents stolen.

Among the personal items taken were wallets containing banking cards and personal IDs, cash and jewelry. The preventive advice of the police is to not store key valuables in gym lockers and to leave them at home instead.

RAV4 stolen

Finally, car thieves continue to target vehicles (especially valued or high-end

ones) in Westmount.

During the overnight hours on November 23, a RAV4 compact SUV was stolen from a parking spot near the corner of Sherbrooke St. and Prince Albert Ave.

This make of car was on recent list of the most stolen vehicles in Canada over the past year.

Among the vehicles stolen off Westmount's streets in the past few weeks were two Jeep Wranglers (also on the Top-10 list) and a Chevrolet Volt.

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Are taxi drivers ransoming phones?

A resident recently called the *Independent* with a phone-ransom story similar to the one in the Police Report above.

On November 13, the reader took a cab only to realize that she had left her phone in it. She called the cab company but they demanded \$100 for its return. She agreed, but bargained them down in person.

"I told them that I wasn't going to pay more than \$60," she told the *Independent*. – WI.

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‘Fall’ flower show a prelude to holidays

Volunteers, newcomers turn out to meet new council, each other

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

It was one of the first opportunities many of the city’s volunteers, along with newcomers, had to meet the new mayor and members of the newly elected city council, five (of eight) of whom are new. The event at Victoria Hall November 26 was the traditional opening reception for the city’s annual fall flower show. Usually held earlier in the fall, it was later this year owing to the municipal elections.

This year, the concert hall was packed

with attendees, who were welcomed along with their guests and families. It was also an occasion for those present to meet the city’s department directors or their representatives, who served the wine during the evening.

Opening the event, Mayor Michael Stern explained that “the reception offers us a moment to greet our newest residents, to celebrate the many people who contribute to the life of our community and to express our gratitude to the volunteers whose dedication and generosity shape the very spirit

of Westmount.

“Very quickly, you will see that Westmount is not just a place to live but a community to belong to.”

Councillor Matt Aronson, commissioner of legal affairs, communications and for parks and green spaces, invited the newcomers to meet the city’s directors and other employees, describing them as “the engine of the municipal government” who keep the lights on, the snow cleared, the permits processed, the library doors open, get things done – often while we [on coun-

cil] are still debating how to optimally schedule garbage.”

He also introduced the gardening team: Mélanie Bänninger and Christine Dupuis led by Giovanni D’Amico from Public Works.

While traditionally many of the flowers on display tended to be the seasonal chrysanthemums, this year’s display held later in the year featured the holiday poinsettias as later visited by many of the attendees while rain leaked down into strategically placed buckets (see below).

Rain leaks through conservatory roof during flower show

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

What caused rain to leak though the roof of the city’s iconic conservatory during the reception for the city’s fall flower show November 26? That is the question city officials were still pondering the next day.

“Unfortunately, the water infiltration kept us busy last night,” explained Tom Flies, the city’s senior director, project management and land use, who had been among city officials at the fall flower show reception in Victoria Hall.



“We do not yet know the extent of the water infiltration and will need to carry out a thorough inspection to determine the precise entry point of the water in order to initiate the necessary repairs.”

It was only a few minutes before people started making their way down from the

opening reception in Victoria Hall to view the actual flower show that rain could be seen running down the sloping sides of the conservatory.

“We did not close access to the greenhouse after putting up the buckets,” he

pointed out. “The water infiltration did not warrant a closure of the conservatory greenhouse.”

It was on September 20, 2015 that a pane of glass fell from the roof of the original structure, narrowly missing a man

seated below.

This resulted in the immediate closure of the structure for safety reasons and led to a \$6-million restoration project (October 20, 2015, p. 1).



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Wee Jelly male kitten is a black-and-white contrast, while Bean female kitten is a grey-and-white contrast.

Jelly bean? No, Jelly and Bean

This ever so tiny and young brother and sister bonded pair are presently available for adoption from the Montreal SPCA cattery. Please go as soon as possible for them. The earlier they are in your hands and in your home environment, the better.

Jelly and Bean are very healthy for their



presentation pages from their identification numbers, 2000337190 for Jelly and 2000337188 for Bean.

Then prepare your visit to the Montreal SPCA shelter, which is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4. They are open for visits and adoption every day, from Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, then Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm.

Please bring a carrier for them together, or you can purchase one at the onsite boutique, where you have a wide selection of foods, toys, beds and accessories as well to set up your home for them.

Jelly and Bean need to be placed soon. Please take them into your arms and hearts for many years of love.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

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Auction closes December 7, 2025 at 5:00pm

Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in July... continued from p. 23

ADDRESS	VENDOR	PRICE	2023 VAL	RATIO (%)
TRIPLEXES				
3249-53 St. Antoine	Jennifer Cram	\$1,050,000	\$1,027,900	2.2%
58 Thornhill	Hilda Georgia Egerszegi	\$1,750,000	\$1,833,900	-4.6%
77-79 Windsor	Fatima Ezabra Alaoui	\$1,106,250	\$1,849,900	-40.2%
CONDOMINIUMS				
4410 Côte des Neiges #202	Melanie, Michael & Robert Palumbo	\$480,000	\$531,000	-9.6%
4476 St. Catherine #403	estate Suzanne Mathieu	\$630,000	\$628,100	0.3%
VACANT LAND				
Lot, Lexington	Françoise Décarie	\$1,100,000	\$1,688,700	-34.9%
JUNE SALE				
2 Burton	Noel Butler & Judith Nixon	\$750,000	\$709,500	5.7%

July real estate, cont'd from p. 22

and an average mark-up of 11.7 percent, about the same as the average for May this year.

In either case, the median price stays at \$2,240,000, with 10 or 11 sales above that line and the same number below. That figure, though, does not recognize the number of transactions selling in July in the \$3-million range on streets like Arlington, Metcalfe and Strathcona.

The number of condominiums sold dropped from five in June to only two in July, both for prices well under \$1 million. Because we measure condominium prices on a quarterly basis, this is just the start of sales in the third quarter of 2025, so any statistical comparison would be valid only after the August and September figures come in.

Triplex sales, on the other hand, are generally so sparse in Westmount that we can hardly measure them, since most triplex owners have either condominiumized their buildings or subdivided them as co-operative ownership.

In July, on the other hand, city records show three full triplexes selling, all in different parts of the city, with two selling near valuation but the third one, at 77-79 Windsor Ave., going for 40 percent less than its tax value. The property calls itself a duplex but includes a bachelor apartment so the city counts it as being a triplex. The same applies to 58 Thornhill, with three apartments on three levels of the building, including the basement.

One other sale in July involved the land adjacent to 807 Lexington Ave., 622 square meters of land which sold for \$1,100,000, thus \$1,768 per square meter or \$164.3 per



111 Irvine. All photos taken on November 24.

square foot., well below the going rate in Westmount, which is closer to \$250 per square foot.

The list also includes one more sale reg-

istered in June but included with the July list, 2 Burton Ave., which sold for only \$750,000, the lowest price registered for June.



630 Clarke.



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WESTMOUNT: 9 Grove Park – Rarely available on the market, this elegant 4+1 bedroom, 3+1 bathroom home is more than just a residence – it’s a lifestyle. Steps away from Greene Avenue, trendy Sherbrooke Street boutiques, and all the top schools, everything is right at your doorstep. **\$2,649,000**

Remembering Wilder Wall (1966-2025)

Wilder loved Westmount, and Westmount loved him back

By DEANNA BARWICK WALL

Wilder lived and worked in Westmount for over three decades. At Hogg's, where he worked for 32 years, he was well known as the man to go to for expert advice.

In the community, he was equally well-known as a true gentleman, appreciated for his generosity and kindness and his wonderful sense of humour. He was always supportive of local businesses and local initiatives.

He played and coached sports here. Rugby was his main game. He attended Visual Arts Centre pottery courses, where he learned to make items both beautiful and useful. He displayed his photographs at Victoria Hall. He was invited to talk about his unique approach to photography at the Westmount Public Library, where he was introduced as one of Westmount's best – high praise considering the city's well-known fine photographers

He supported every special seasonal sale in the neighbourhood – the holiday bazaar at the Manoir, the book sales at the library, the Christmas bake sales at St. Matthias and Contactivity, and many others. He very much enjoyed all these unique community events, meeting old friends and making new ones.

Everyone knew him

Walking around Montreal with Wilder, it often seemed as if everyone knew him personally. Not only in the Victoria village neighbourhood, but also farther afield, at the MMFA, in a Plateau church at a Christmas concert, at a café or grocery shop on Laurier or up at the Jean Talon Market, Wilder was recognized by his Westmount clients and fellow citizens, who always made an effort to connect with him, whatever the setting.

Wilder never sought the spotlight but it inevitably shone on him. Wilder, being Wilder, was adept at shining the light back onto any and all well-wishers. For someone who spent most of his working life in a windowless, sunless basement, it has been incredible to hear and to read about how much lightness and brightness he brought into the lives of so many members of the community.

Good friend Sean Bower, a former Westmounter and a rugby player himself, noted in his eulogy that while he was used to Wilder being a neighbourhood celebrity, he was a little surprised to see the same reaction at an international rugby competition in Ottawa in the summer of 2024.

According to Sean's account, everyone in the rugby world seemed to know Wilder.

They were happy to see him, wanted to touch base and maybe get a selfie with him. Some had been coached by Wilder in Westmount Park some 20-plus years earlier or had played rugby with or against him and perhaps had enjoyed a Guinness with him at some point.

After Wilder's service in October, as I was exiting the chapel, Sean's words were underlined. Waiting for me was a fellow who had had a Westmount rugby connection with Wilder many years ago. He wanted to show me something. And, as it turned out, it was a beautiful something that matched the beauty of the sun – which, just moments before, had broken through the clouds. It was a happy photo of himself with Wilder thoroughly and freely enjoying themselves, obviously having great fun that splendid summer weekend of rugby games and re-connections.

Everybody loved him

Over the years in Westmount, whenever people realized I was Wilder's mother, they inevitably would say one of two things to me – "Everybody loves Wilder" and then tell me how kind, generous, thoughtful and how much fun he was or "Wilder knows everything" and then would describe how helpful he had been....how he had patiently solved some or other difficult problem for them.

My son, Wilder's brother George, once remarked that it must have been good men of strength and integrity like Wilder that William Blake had in mind when he wrote in his poem "Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion" the following words: "He who would do good to another must do it in minute particulars: general good is the plea of the scoundrel..."

Wilder was a man who interacted with the individual in front of him in a way that was of specific benefit to that individual's needs – he did not deal with abstractions of good, with generalized concepts; he dealt with concrete, tangible result-orientated actions, focussed on the issues at hand. And, with all and for all the quiet good that he did, for all his genuine warmth in all of his interactions, Wilder



"I believe this photo captures the essence of Wilder and that essence was why he was well known in Westmount," said Deanna Barwick Wall, mother of the late Wilder Wall. "Wilder occasionally wore the helmet to work, or out and about for special days, and it was always well received. The ability to turn an ordinary day into a lasting memory was a gift that he shared with his brothers."

PHOTO COURTESY OF D. BARWICK WALL.



was well known in this city of unique individuals and, as is evident from the many heart-felt condolences received and beautiful memories shared since his death, he was well loved by this, his Westmount community, and deservedly so.

Wilder Wall Bursary at Loyola

A bursary in memory of Wilder has been established at Loyola High School.

LHS Advancement Office describes this initiative as follows: "Wilder Wall's love for sport, music, singing, mathematics, pottery and photography is the very embodiment of the Jesuit approach to education, formation of the whole person (*cura personalis*) through the discovery and application of an individual's talents. Your gift to the Wilder Wall Bursary will ensure that Loyola's whole person formation is accessible to future students."

The Wilder Wall Bursary will help those students who need a hand with their school fees and give them the opportunity to study at Loyola High School. It is an initiative Wilder

would be pleased to be associated with for many reasons. Firstly, Wilder very much loved his time at Loyola, which he attended with his brother Sean, who also loved his time there and secondly, helping people in various ways throughout his whole life has always been one of Wilder's many fortes.

If you'd like to remember Wilder by supporting this in-perpetuity bursary, donation options are as follows:

- **Online:** through his obituary in *The Gazette*
- **By mail:** Loyola High School advancement office, 7272 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal, Quebec, H4B 1R2. Please make cheques payable to: Loyola High School with a memo line of: Wilder Wall Bursary.

◀The Victoria Village Merchants' Association held a street festival June 12-14, 2015. The weekend days had good weather, and the sidewalks were busy with shoppers and festival-goers. Hogg manager Wilder Wall prepared the store's table on the corner of Victoria and Sherbrooke June 14 of that year.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON

YES turns 30 with founders, former leaders, supporters



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Recently YES Employment + Entrepreneurship held a fun gala. The fundraiser marked a major milestone celebrating 30 years of community impact, innovation and inspiration.

Held at the Atwater Club, the event brought together those who have helped shape YES's journey and continue to guide its mission of supporting Quebec's English-speaking community.

Emcees were CTV anchor **Caroline Van Vlaardingen** and **Andy Nulman**, co-founder of Just for Laughs and head of PACT (The Power to Act). The dynamic duo ensured the evening was full of heartfelt humour.

Guests enjoyed highlights bridging YES's past and future. Moving moments included one of YES's co-founder **James Hughes** reflecting on the organization's beginnings, followed by an inspiring look ahead from **Giovanna Buscemi**, YES board president.

A lively "fireside chat" on economic opportunity with **Andrew Molson** and **Helen Antoniou** moderated by **Ana Marinescu**, added a thought-provoking touch.

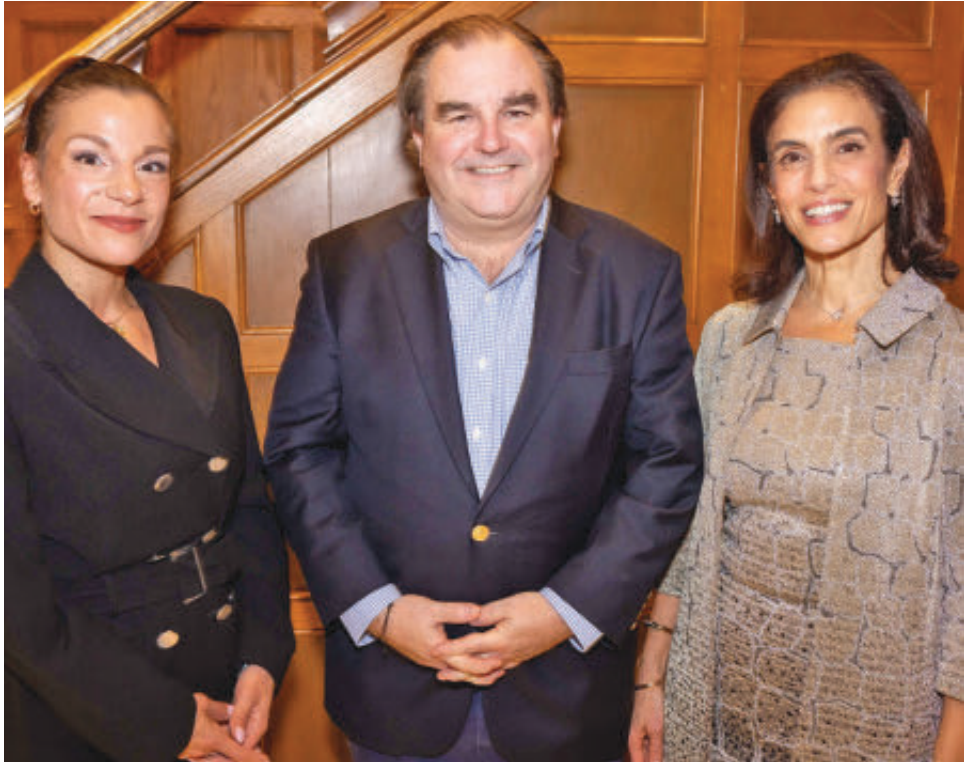
The evening's organizing committee, led by **Anne-Marie Henson**, was co-chaired by **Ana Marinescu**, **Andrew Molson**, and **Helen Antoniou**, with the support of ambassadors **Elizabeth Gomery**, **Lina Aristeo**, **Marina Boulos-Winton**, and **Pino Di Ioia**.

Among the many noted guests were **Patricia Saputo**, **Jennifer Curran**, **Anna Giampà** and **Matteo Fiorilli**, **Jason MacCallum** and **Antoinette Von Hahn**, **Anthony Broccolini**, **Adriana Embiricos**, **David Bensadoun** and **Isabelle Poirier**, **Baljit Chadha**, and **Lucy Riddell**.

A particularly poignant moment came when James Hughes recognized fellow YES co-founder **Timothy Leyne**, as well as the late **Lionel Blanshay**, whose son **Jonathan Blanshay** was present with his family to honour his father's legacy.

Past and present executive directors were also present including interim executive director **Elizabeth Gomery** and former leaders **Marina Boulos-Winton**, **Aki Tchi-tacov**, **Iris Unger** and **Johanne Larouche**.

The evening's success was made possible through the supporting sponsors including presenting sponsor Scotiabank;



Ana Marinescu, Andrew Molson and Helen Antoniou.

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Caroline Van Vlaardingen and Andy Nulman.

The Unauthorized History

Putting it on my Christmas list. Well done, Dave.
-Mary Lamey, former journalist at The Gazette

I bought your book on Kindle and read it in three sittings. Great job! I learned a lot about The Gazette I didn't know. I appreciated that you were critical when warranted and that you didn't write an authorized history.

-Peter Hadekel, former columnist and editorial page editor at The Gazette

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Social notes, cont'd from p. 29

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Founded in 1995 to counter the exodus of young English speakers from Quebec, YES now helps over 3,000 job seekers, entrepreneurs, and artists each year – more than 70,000 Quebecers since its inception. Funds raised from the gala will continue to support YES's mission of turning ambition into achievement for generations to come.



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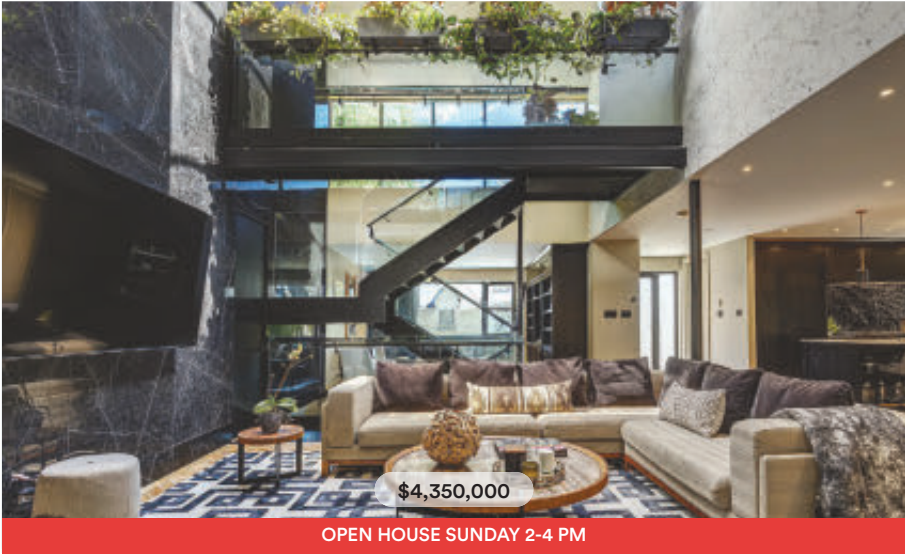
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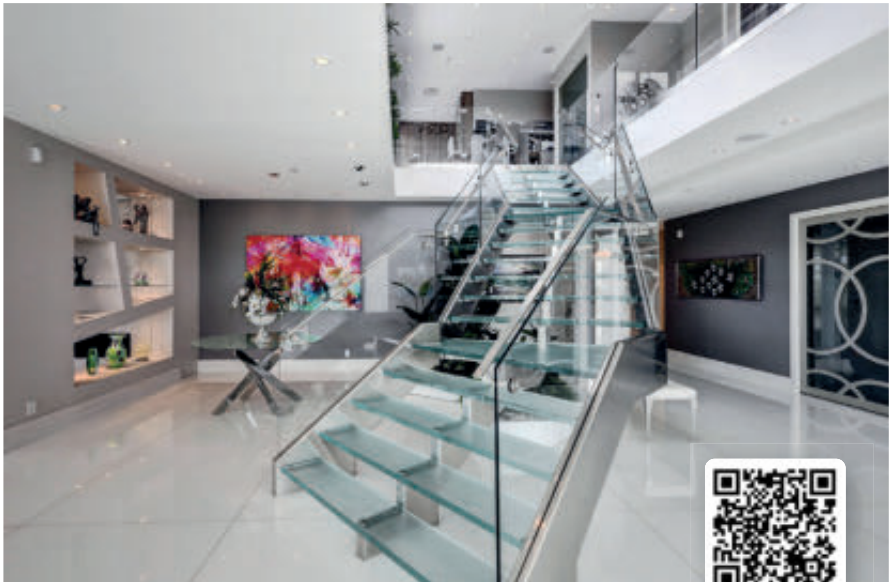


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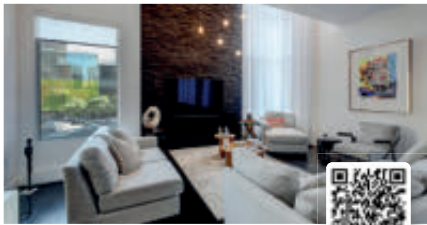
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