

Many turn out for event at Prince Albert square

Large tree lighting, singing bring in holiday season

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Many residents and passers-by helped “officially” open the holiday season at Victoria village December 3. With a drink of hot chocolate in hand in Prince Albert square, they counted down the tree lighting at 5 pm as a Hydro Westmount worker stood by to switch on the red-and-white

lights that seemed almost magically to light up the very tall, bushy tree that makes it visible from afar.

Among those seen were newly elected District 5 councillor Shawn Moss, guitarist and former YMCA executive director Gary White and Frosty the Snowman (played by Cynthia Lulham, general manager of the local merchants’ association).

“It was great to see so many people cheerfully braving the cold to celebrate the holiday season!” Moss said.

The 20-foot tree was sourced from a farm in Tremblant, installed and co-ordinated by city parks superintendent Giovanni D’Amico.

A special feature of Victoria village at this time is a contest in-
volving a treasure hunt in *continued on p. 3*

City lights Christmas tree, kicks off holidays



Mayor Michael Stern, centre, and councillors Jonathan Chomski, Antonio D’Amico, Shawn Moss and Kathleen Kez pose in front of the city’s Christmas tree on December 1. See story on p. 22.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

**This issue is the last one before
our usual Christmas break**

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

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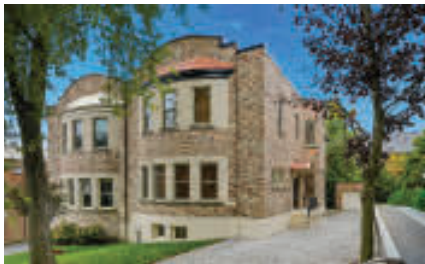


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**Beware of earlier sunset:
Public Security**

Woman with dog hit crossing Sherbrooke

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A woman crossing Sherbrooke with a dog December 3 was struck by a vehicle around 5:07 pm, Public Security officials said.

Responding officers found her being assisted by onlookers at the northeast corner of Kensington. Stating she had pain in her back, officers placed her in a patrol vehicle for warmth while awaiting Urgences Santé.

She was reported to have been crossing Sherbrooke from the east side of Kensington when struck by the vehicle turning east off Kensington onto Sherbrooke.

The driver was reportedly “shaken up.”

“This is a reminder to both drivers and pedestrians that it is becoming dark earlier at this time of year,” said Public Security director Greg McBain.



Frosty the Snowman/Cynthia Lulham with Louise Carpentier, past president of the Westmount Historical Association.

Tree lighting, cont'd from p. 1

all stores displaying a “nutcracker” poster. This means shoppers can find entry forms therein for participating in a scenario in

which shoppers can find an army of “escaped nutcrackers.” Prizes are to be drawn December 19 at 4 pm. The found nutcrackers are to be hung on the Prince Albert tree.

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Police Report

Police seek suspect who smashed Westmount Square tunnel mirrors

By MARTIN C. BARRY

A period of law enforcement calm that prevailed in Westmount in recent weeks was disrupted late last month by a public mischief incident that took place in the pedestrian tunnel that runs between Westmount Square and Alexis Nihon Plaza.

Around 10:30 pm on November 27, as reported by police at Station 12, part of a row of floor-to-ceiling mirrors in the tunnel was shattered as a group of four young men and women were making their way through.

At a certain point, one male member of the group, who were estimated to be in their 20s, lunged at the mirrors, delivering a solid kick, breaking at least one of them.

Although the perpetrator fled along with the others, a video surveillance camera captured what happened and the police have enough evidence to identify the suspect, according to Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit.

He said the video evidence will be handed over to a police department digital materials expert who will clarify the images, after which they'll be distributed to officers to see whether they recognize the suspect.

Often, Yigit continued, officers will end up recognizing the suspect, leading to an identification, and an arrest warrant will be issued.

Crime prevention advice for holidays

The Christmas and Hanukah seasons have become somewhat notorious as a time of year when burglaries become more frequent while householders are away

vacationing and cars laden with gift purchases are broken into.

Regarding the latter, the police have said it often enough: never leave valuables in plain sight inside a car no matter how safe the surroundings may seem, as thieves are known to strike quickly when opportunity arises.

It takes only a few seconds to stow purchases or anything else of value in the

trunk where they can't be seen. Save yourself a mountain of regret and remorse if you end up realizing after the fact what you could have done beforehand.

As for household break-ins, Cst. Yigit noted that the cost of home security systems, especially those that operate interactively with video and audio capabilities, is reasonable enough to make them more accessible than ever.

City information on 2025 capital works not ready yet

By JENNIFER BALL

Of the city's 65 planned projects for 2025, how many was it able to complete and how much of its allocated capital budget did it spend? It turns out we will only know this information when audited figures become available at an undisclosed future date.

The *Independent* asked questions on this topic last week and on December 5, Julie Mandeville, the city's director general (chief unelected employee), provided a statement saying, "At this time, our team is still compiling the information related to the 2025 capital projects. As the year is

not yet over, the data must first be finalized and then validated through our usual audit process. Once we have the complete and audited figures, we will make the information publicly available, including details on completed and ongoing projects as well as the outlook for 2026."

Mandeville explained that the Programme triennal d'immobilisations (PTI) represents "an overall envelope." It is a legally required three-year capital investment plan that municipalities in Quebec adopt annually to outline infrastructure projects, their costs and financing methods.

But it is not a static situation. "As the year progresses, adjustments can occur for

a variety of reasons – for example, the absence of bids, bids coming in significantly higher than estimates, shifting priorities due to emergencies or capacity constraints. These factors can influence which projects advance within the approved envelope...

"Finally, the new council is currently working on the next PTI, which will guide the city's capital priorities for the coming years."

Another question that the *Independent* posed that Mandeville did not answer was which 2025 project was the largest "not-done" project, what was its dollar estimate and what specific factors prevented it from being completed.



Happy Holidays!



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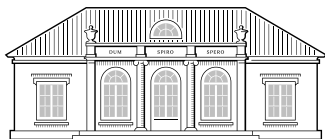
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City mandates firm to pinpoint cause, source of leak at conservatory

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

When rain leaked into the city’s re-built, iconic conservatory during the fall flower show November 26, city officials were quickly on the spot to put buckets under the leaks. Last week, however, they still had no confirmation as to why and how it had occurred. But since then, with no rain, the leak has stopped.

“Our visual inspection wasn’t conclusive,” said Tom Flies, the city’s senior director, project management and land use (see

also December 2, p. 26).
“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.”
As a result, he told the *Independent* last week, “We mandated a firm that will do an inspection in height to ascertain the cause of the infiltration.”
It was on September 20, 2015 that a pane of glass fell from the roof of the original 1927 structure, narrowly missing a



Buckets at work November 26 at the conservatory.

man seated below. This resulted in the immediate closure of the structure for safety reasons and led to a restoration project exceeding \$6 million that maintained the original foundation, including the adjoining “frog pond” wing (see story June 21, 20).
The conservatory has been described as being a “cascade” design and structure, and one of the few in Canada.

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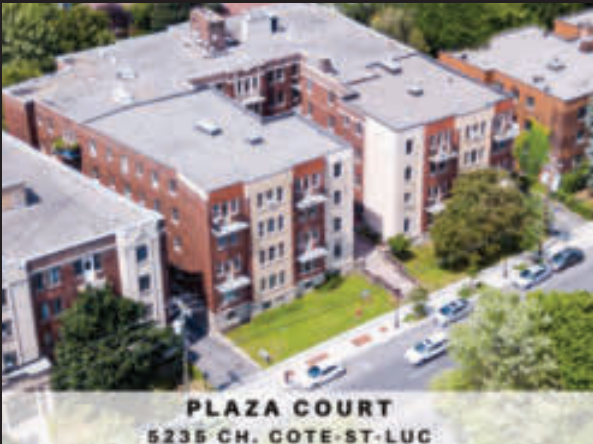
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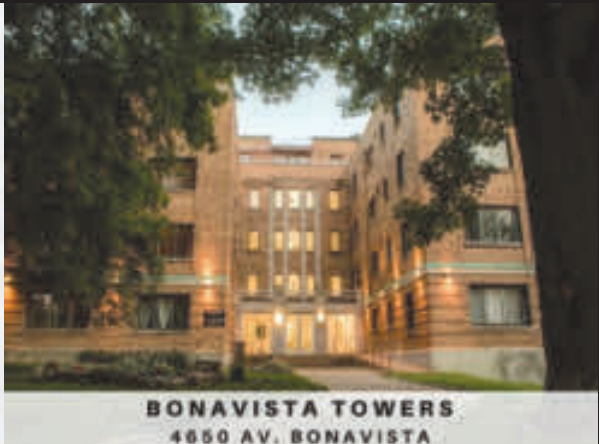
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Atelier Cookie, a delicious new neighbour



Retail Review

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Catriona Larouche.

I have been remiss. Atelier Cookie par Caro opened a few months ago – June, to be exact. As the name suggests, it's a cookie destination. However, it's also far more. Not only are there many coffee choices (cortado, cappuccino etc.) but also matcha teas. Lavender and spice flavours are much loved.

The brains behind it? Caroline Héroux. Brains indeed! She is also a film producer and children's book author. Her daughter Catriona Larouche is co-owner of the burgeoning business.

Holiday season is on the menu with gift baskets – whimsically named after Santa's reindeer – piled on the counter. "Frosty" is the taste of the season for their most popular cookie: the Atelier CCC. It has a touch of peppermint, explained barista Olivier Lessard. Goods are baked fresh daily at the Westmount location, then some are shipped to their Atwater Market kiosk. Some

are gluten free. All are visually gorgeous.

"Cookies are made from Caro's personal recipes," added Catriona. "We have also added 'salty' options with our empanadas." Atelier Cookie is already a go-to destination not only for local res, but Westmount High students, who enjoy a student discount. As I left with my chocolaty choices – and a few scones, since you asked – I also saw warmly clad workmen choosing oatmeal raisin "to go."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THANKS FOR THE CITY HALL CHRISTMAS TREE

Well done, Westmount! The tree outside city hall is back to tradition! Beautiful in white! I love it! The “Coney Island” lights on city hall are not missed.

Happy Christmas, Merry Hanukkah and safe holidays to everyone!

BEVERLEY HUTCHISON, KITCHENER AVE.

THANK YOU FOR THE SPEED-MITIGATION MEASURES

I wanted to take a moment to thank the city administration as well as the TAC [Transportation Advisory Committee] for installing digital speeding signs in key areas of our community. These long-awaited measures reinforce our shared commitment to safety for residents, families and pedestrians.

This proactive approach demonstrates real leadership in creating a more secure urban environment.

We appreciate the thoughtful placement of these signs in strategic locations across the city as well as new stop signs that will be added on busy and long strips. Together, we’re making Westmount safer and more responsive to the needs of all who live and travel here.

A special thank-you to the Public Security team, which also creates a safer environment for all, as well as the traffic enforcement team at police Station 21.

Happy Holidays to all!

JEAN-FRANÇOIS EMMANUEL,
UPPER BELMONT AVE.

THANK YOU, WESTMOUNT, FOR YOUR ELECTION PARTICIPATION!

It is with an open heart that I express gratitude to everyone in Westmount who

participated in the Westmount Municipal Association’s “Meet the Candidates” events on October 15 and 23. It has truly been fulfilling to witness the community spirit flourish. The turnout for both events was outstanding. Victoria Hall was nearly filled to capacity during the mayoral debates. I extol every candidate for their dedication and congratulate those who were elected by their district.

As I shared during my introduction at the mayor’s debate, Westmount is united and we are stronger together. The results of the municipal election reflected our desire for cohesive leadership that is based on collective volition. During this unique period in history where artificial intelligence has a capacity to enhance every aspect of human existence, we are blessed to be an educated, close-knit community that can lead with our heart, driving positive change in every direction.

Unity is the cornerstone to overcoming obstacles, for a problem in one district affects us all. I believe we are on track to not only resolving core issues but to setting the standard for other communities. To do this, we require everyone joining together, regardless of past discord, so we may flow effortlessly into a highly positive paradigm filled with new technologies and strengthened security. As the recent coronal mass ejections have brought the beautiful aurora borealis to our skies, I pray this light inspires us to expand our consciousness with grace and optimism. Thank you to everyone who reached out with kind words and deep gratitude.

JOHANNA STOSIK, WMA BOARD MEMBER

TOO MUCH INK ON FUDDLE DUDDLE

I think way too much space in your

paper has been devoted to words that may, or may not, have been expressed on an open mic. Let he who has never said anything that he wished he could take back cast the first stone.

All this to say that some citizens come to the mic to pontificate and preach their gospel over and over again. My understanding of Mr. Dufour is that he has come to council many times to express his points of view.

Mr. Dufour’s disrespectful questioning of Councillor Antonio D’Amico could and would provoke an equally disrespectful remark. After a certain amount of patience and civility, I can understand how one could lose their patience and express their frustration.

All this to say, [Pierre] Trudeau coined the expression “fuddle duddle” and that is where this conversation should end. Let’s focus on the important things/Does anyone know when Santa is coming and what you are getting for Christmas?

RONY CUKIER, ROSEMOUNT AVE.

ACCOUNTABILITY IS NOT INCIVILITY

I am writing in response to recent letters (December 2, p. 8) describing my comments to Councilor Antonio D’Amico as “aggressive,” “uncivil,” or “disrespectful.” I agree that public discourse must be respectful; however, holding elected officials accountable is neither a personal attack nor a breach of civility – it is an essential part of democratic responsibility.

I am grateful for Councillor D’Amico’s service to Westmount. My questions were never about his broader contributions, which are genuinely appreciated, but about one specific issue: his role on the Environment and Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC). Although he now says his involvement was always meant to be limited to financial issues, this was never communicated to the committee. In fact, one reason I resigned from ESAC was my frustration with his repeated, unexplained absences. Other committee members have confirmed this lack of clarity. More importantly, Councillor D’Amico’s vote to restore weekly garbage collection – unlike fellow ESAC member Councillor Aronson’s – contradicts the committee’s mission and mandate, regardless of what he believes his constituents prefer.

Unlike provincial and federal governments with party-based opposition, our city council has none – making public questioning by citizens all the more vital. Elsewhere, elected officials are routinely challenged by opposition parties; Westmount should be no different. Civic engagement strengthens democracy by filling the gap

left by the absence of formal political opposition.

We should be grateful for the work done by our elected officials, including Councilor D’Amico. My intention was, and remains, to ensure that our civic institutions operate effectively and in accordance with their mandates. Scrutiny of this kind is not excessive; it is what a healthy system of government requires.

RICHARD DUFOUR, ANWOTH RD.

INTERPRETING THE ELECTION, DIFFERENTLY

I was intrigued by the letter from Estelle Pigot (November 11, p. 6) and her claim of “the clear message sent by voters” based on “the candidates who pledged to repeal the PPU were not elected.”

I believe that a clearer message was sent by the voters based on who was, or was not, elected.

Of the eight councillors who voted on the city’s southeast re-development plan, three (councillors Kez, Roux and D’Amico) were opposed and five (Bostock, Gallery, Peart, Shamie and Aronson) were in favour.

Councillors Kez and D’Amico were re-elected and Councilor Roux did not run for another term.

Councillors Gallery and Peart lost in the election.

Councillor Aronson was re-elected but by a margin so narrow that it drew a challenge.

(Councilor Bostock did not run and Councilor Shamie was unopposed).

Based on these results, I believe that the voters did send a clear message, re-electing the councillors who opposed the re-development plan, as presented, and defeating two of the three councillors who supported it.

I hope that the new councillors will see that sound, independent thought, rather than “voting the party line,” is rewarded by voters.

JIM RICHARDS, DORCHESTER BLVD.

CAN SUMMIT WOODS BE SAFE WITH UNLEASHED DOGS?

On Saturday morning, November 22, we arrived for a nature walk in Summit Woods and witnessed an uncontrolled dog attack another. The same dog also charged at one of us. A third dog, whose owner was trying to keep control, was inadvertently drawn into the fray. When the aggressive dog’s owner was asked to leash her dog, she responded that it was the dog’s right to roam freely in Summit Woods.

We immediately contacted Public Security to report the incident. Although officers arrived promptly and were fully responsive, the owners of the attacked dogs

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

had already gone – clearly shaken and very much victims in the situation. As we waited, yet another pet owner approached the trail, heard what had happened, and chose to go elsewhere. They were already familiar with – and fearful of – the same dog. For those who frequent Summit Woods, beware of a dog resembling a German shepherd wearing a muzzle.

This incident highlights a deeper issue. Individual rights and the common good are inseparable; rights exercised without responsibility place others at risk. The debate over whether dogs should be allowed off leash in Summit Woods has become polarized, but beneath that debate lies an essential ethical question for our community and council:

If unleashed dogs continue to be permitted, can we truly guarantee the safety of all people and animals who use Summit Woods – and if so, how?

Responsible pet ownership is the foundation of any policy that balances freedom with safety. When even one owner ignores that responsibility, the entire community bears the consequences.

LYNN BARWELL AND RENALDO BATTISTA,
UPPER LANSDOWNE AVE.

WEEKLY GARBAGE PICK-UP WILL BE DISALLOWED SOON, WHY GO BACK TO IT?

This is a shortened version of a letter sent to Councillor Gurveen Chadha November 12 and shared with the Independent by its author

As I anticipate this topic will be brought up at Monday's council meeting [on November 17], I would like to remind you that weekly garbage collection is not the proper way of managing our waste crisis. You

would be forcing an inefficient system that has been proven time and time again to be actively harming our environment. I would like to equip you with information about the responsibilities Westmount has so you can inform your decision on the topic as there has been a lot of finger-pointing and not a lot of listening.

Most people are already unaware of what can and cannot be recycled, which I think is the crux of the issue. Quebec had changed the recycling rules province-wide at the start of 2025.

Nearly all materials made of paper, plastic, glass and metal can now be recycled. There even exists an app called “Ca va où” by Recyc-Quebec, which allows you to look up the item and see where it is accepted for recycling processing, which I have been trying to get Westmount to promote since its inception in addition to a waste-sorting arcade game I made for Concordia to be adapted for Westmount.

Most people do not sort their waste correctly and thus have an excess of garbage to put out every week. Over half of the material found in garbage pick-ups can be either composted or recycled.

Ville St. Laurent has had biweekly collection for over a decade, and to compensate has drop-off points for those who may have diapers, medical waste or anything else that cannot wait two weeks to be collected. The city of Gatineau, which also has been doing this for a long time, has the lowest waste production per capita in all of Quebec, and they have the additional restriction of imposing a limit to whatever fits in the city provided bin!

And while I don't expect you to know everything about the role of the CMM (Communauté métropolitaine de Mon-

tréal), the highest level of municipal government has already passed a motion, which you can find in their residual materials management plan. Garbage is to be a maximum of 26 times per year by 2028, so there is little point when higher levels of government are starting to enact this through legislation. It is the legal responsibility of the CMM to enforce that adopted measures are complied with but the *administrative responsibility* of municipalities to implement these measures.

I would highly *highly, highly* advise contacting the CMM and consulting with the legal department on these measures before a bunch of time and money is wasted to end up further from where we need to be in 2028.

I wholeheartedly believe this to have been a community engagement failure on behalf of the city, as someone who has worked on this explicitly at Concordia for the better part of four years. The city has previously recognized this shortcoming with the addition of environmental patrolers during the summer but I believe it should go further than that. Communication is a lot cheaper, at the end of the day. Other places have managed to adapt and we can too when we lead by example.

Feel free to take your time to digest this and respond, as I know it is a lot!

Welcome to council :)

JESSICA WINTON, ROSLYN AVE.

TIME FOR CANADA TO HAVE ITS OWN, PRIOR REFERENDUM

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Independence Again NO (Quebec NO), together with its sister organization, The Special Committee for Canadian Unity, is

pleased to announce the publication of its new Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61581623657820.

Polls suggest a PQ government slated for 2026 and a Quebec independence referendum before 2030. The OUI campaign already has over \$250,000 in its fund.

To ensure those who wish to remain Canadian are equally prepared, we're establishing a fund to ensure those who wish to remain Canadian are equally prepared, we're establishing a fund to help publicize a federally sponsored petition.

That petition will demand a “Staying Canadian” referendum to be held BEFORE Referendum 3.

Just as the natives did in 1995, we want Ottawa to ask Quebecers a clear question along the following lines: “In the event of a YES vote, do you want to stay Canadian?”

N.B. The Clarity Act states: “No Minister of the Crown shall propose a constitutional amendment to affect the secession of a province from Canada unless the Government of Canada has addressed, in its negotiations, the terms of secession that are relevant in the circumstances, including ... any changes to the borders of the province, the rights, interests and territorial claims of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, and the protection of minority rights.”

The act mentions territorial claims of the Aboriginal peoples but ignores the territorial claims of those Canadian people in Quebec who wish to remain Canadian. A “Staying Canadian” referendum would help correct that oversight.

Spokesperson for Independence Again NO (Quebec NO) and The Special Committee for Canadian Unity is Keith Henderson, president of The Special Committee for Canadian Unity.

Rotary Christmas luncheon held at Manoir

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The last session of the Rotary Club of Westmount for 2025 took place as a Christmas dinner held with residents of Manoir Westmount, which was founded by the service club. This year's guests of honour included Mayor Michael Stern and District 5 councillor Shawn Moss, along with many of the city's senior officials and others.

Remarks and introductions were made by president of the Manoir board Jennifer Ball, who often reports for the *Independent*; Rotary club president Nickoilas Cieslinski, and Manoir manager Gina D'Angelo. The Manoir Singers presented Christmas carols, accompanied by Scott Bradford.

The non-profit seniors' residence was founded in 1979 as part of Rotary's com-

munity service tradition and continues to support it to “ensure it provides affordable accommodation and various services for independent seniors.”



Mayor Michael Stern with Manoir residents.



The Manoir Singers set the mood.

A visit from Hanukkah Harry

By MATT ARONSON

with no apologies to Major Henry Livingston Jr. because we haven't forgotten about that time he tried to invade Canada.

*Gather 'round, gather 'round, my darling mishpocha,
While I share a tale for this feast of Hanukkah.
You know the story of old St. Nick in his sleigh?
Well, that tale... don't you know? It was ... "borrowed,"
let's say!*

*So you see, my dear friends, truth must prevail –
That Christmas poem was a Yiddish folk tale!
So tonight I'll share (translated to English, of course)
The original story, from its original source:*

'Twas the first night of Hanukkah, quiet and bright,
When our family gathered to kindle the light.
The menorah was placed by the window with care,
In hopes that the whole shtetel would soon see it there.

And that very night, the children all snug in bed,
Had visions of latkes and dreidels dance in their heads.
The day had been busy, we'd done quite enough,
So we all settled down for a long winter's schluff.

When out in the alley came a terrible clatter,
I jumped from my bed to see what was the matter.
Out the window I peered, what could cause such a fuss?
'Oy vey,' I exclaimed, 'what's all this mishigoss?'

The moon on the frost of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a luster of midday to objects below.
When what did my wondering eyes start to see,
But an old peddler's cart... led by a team of donkeys!

With a jolly old driver, so lively and keen,
I knew in a trice 'twas Hanukkah Harry I'd seen!
Not quite swift as eagles, more like tired old schleps,
His donkeys moved skyward with slow, plodding steps.

As he fretted and kvetched and called them by name:
"Now, Schlomo! Now, Yankel! Now faithful Moishe!
Stop with the dawdling, we're not here to play!
We've thousands more homes to visit, alright?
And you three are moving like you've got all night!

"Oy vey, such slow donkeys, would you look at
the clock?
We've still got to cover the whole Eastern block!
To Minsk! To Vitebsk! To old Mogilon!
Come on, you donkeys, we work until dawn!"

With mutters and grumbles they rose to the sky,
(Though not with the speed Harry wished they
would fly).
But Harry kept urging his team through the night,
"You call this fast flying? My bubbe's more spright!"

Like the fiddler before them, they flew to the roof,
Landing so softly, each on one hoof.
Despite Harry's kvetching, his eyes held a spark,
As he soared through the air, they shone bright in
the dark.

Such a mensch was Ol' Harry, he makes us all proud,
With his old peddler's charm and laughter so loud,
In his long coat of blue velvet, so dapper and clean,
With his full silver beard, he cut quite a scene.

His cart was a wonder of bundles galore,
With packages stacked from the back to the fore.
Wrapped beautifully, each parcel did gleam,
Like magical gifts from a midwinter dream.

From deep in his cart came wonders untold,
Each package wrapped up with ribbons of gold.
Through a mountain of treasures, his hands
gently swept,
As he searched for the wish that each child's heart kept.

The cart overflowed with such wonderful things:
Dreidels of silver on fine golden strings,
Books of the prophets bound bright and so rare,
And toys that young scholars might specially share.

"Nu, what would be perfect?" he'd mutter and think,
As he considered his options, quick as a wink.
"Perhaps this fine siddur, with letters of gold?
Or a tallis like fathers have gifted of old?"

"These games for Miriam to learn and to play,
A chess set for David to use every day,
This menorah of brass, or this sweet violin – "
For music, he knew, was beloved by his kin!

"Now what else," he pondered, "what gifts might
delight?
These warm woolen socks, and this ring polished
bright?
This umbrella of silk with a fine wooden hand,
Or perhaps something bigger... something more grand?"

These slacks are quite nice, and this lovely sweater's
hand-knit,
But for little Sarah, oy vey, they simply won't fit!
For her, a doll with eyes bright and blue,
But this collection of Talmud, books one through
thirty two....

For young Abe the scholar, those books might be right,
But maybe these skates would give more delight?
This sled is quite sturdy, this ball bounces well – "
Such a maven of gifts, he knew how to tell!

His choices selected, he jumped down the flue
And when he emerged, his suit was more sooty
than blue.
But his smile grew wide as he adjusted his hat,
For there on the table, my goodness, what sat?

Golden latkes still warm from their bath in hot oil,
A reward most deserving after a long night of hard toil.
And next to the plate, what a wonderful sight!
A glass of fine Scotch for this cold winter's night.

"Ah, such nachas!" he said as he took a big bite,
Then sipped at his Scotch with evident delight.
He then carefully placed gifts he'd brought
Making quite sure that none was left out or forgot.

With his treats all enjoyed and his task nearly done,
He brushed off the soot and got ready to run.
Then offering a wink and a thumb of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.

He sprang to his cart, and told his team "Go!",
And away they all flew through the blizzard of snow.
But I heard him exclaim, as he soared out of sight,
"A gud yontiff to all, and to all a sweet
Hanukkah night!"

*And so dear mishpocha, as this evening ends,
Let's toast Old Harry and the three donkeys he tends.
Seven nights of Hanukkah still do remain,
And maybe.... just maybe... he'll visit again!*

*Oh, one last thing, to be perfectly fair,
My gift you is this story I share.
So thank you for listening, it's really been swell
And now this tale of Hanukkah Harry is all yours to tell!*

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Flores makes top-10 list of most influential Hispanic Canadians

By MARTIN C. BARRY

A longtime Westmounter with Central American roots is one of 10 Canadians who were recently selected as the most influential people of Hispanic heritage in Canada. Originally from El Salvador, Monica Flores grew up on Victoria Ave. and now lives on Clarke.

She has worked in government relations and as a communications executive in Canada and internationally in health care and the pharmaceuticals industry.

Most recently she was vice-president for government affairs and communications at Telefilm Canada.

Flores was chosen by TLN Media Group and the Canadian Hispanic Business Alliance for the honour, which was announced during a gala event held in the Toronto suburb of North York in October.

In 2023, Flores was a finalist in the Quebec Women’s Business Network (Réseau de Femmes d’Affaires du Québec) annual awards, where she was recognized as a Leader of Influence committed to the community.

She said she considered this latest recognition to be just as important.

“I do consider this award significant given that it recognizes my contributions to Canadian society, which is really important because I immigrated here when I was a child,” said Flores.



Monica Flores, seen here at home on November 12, is on a list of the top-10 most influential people of Hispanic heritage in Canada.

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Both buildings of Albert Square inhabited, at least a bit



At least one unit in the larger building, right, of the Albert Square development at Prince Albert and de Maisonneuve is in use. Some of the other units still don't have proper front doors and work continues generally on site. This former office building is being re-purposed into six townhouses. The smaller building, left, with two units, which is new and slightly eastward, also has at least one occupancy. As seen December 3.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Valve replacement on Atwater blocks southbound traffic



Looking south at the corner of de Maisonneuve at Atwater on November 14.

By JENNIFER BALL

Atwater Ave. between de Maisonneuve and St. Catherine was blocked off on November 14 in front of the entrance of Alexis Nihon shopping centre to southbound traffic.

Hugo Bourgoïn, media relations officer at the city of Montreal, said on November 20, “Last week, our teams carried out plan-

ned work to replace a valve on the water main at this location.

“To ensure the safe completion of this work, one lane of Atwater Ave. (southbound) was closed to traffic between de Maisonneuve Blvd. W. and St. Catherine St. W. ...

“Vehicles were re-directed to the remaining [i.e. northbound] lane, which was temporarily converted to two-way traffic.”

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FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: ANTOINE DUFORT-PLANTE, PETER HIGGINS, CHARLOTTE MATTE, PASCAL COUILLARD, STEPHANIE MURRAY, CHRISTINA MILLER, JONATHAN MARTINET, MARIE-ALICE COURET, JULIE LACROIX, FRANCESCA SGAMBETTERA

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CLASS OF 2026

FOR MAKING THIS ANOTHER EXCEPTIONAL YEAR!

SOLD the greenbergs say so-long to their summit sanctuary, a special structure they splendidly shaped themselves **SOLD** charmants & charmés, pierre & caroline créent un chez-eux chaleureux sur chesterfield **SOLD** migrant de montcalm, anne-laure & loïc imaginent, installent & inspirent sur iberville **SOLD** martin & arine make a magnificent move doing wonderful work on wilson **SOLD** sophie & andrew shape a stronger chapter on their splendid sun-filled semi **SOLD** gp & sarah forge a fresh future together in their new vaudreuil vista **SOLD** mark & mindy make a memorable move, pouncing on pretty percival **SOLD** yves & denise disent adieu à mcomber pour créer de chic contours de vie **SOLD** shima & mahmoud bid adieu to drolet, landing lightheartedly on lovely loire **SOLD** the adelmans, attentively & adoringly bid adieu to their parents' abode on atwater **SOLD** cool cats christopher & alex confidently coordinate the closing of their parkman place pad **SOLD** christine & daniel glissent gracieusement de grey guidés par le goût d'une grande aventure au grand air **SOLD** marie & adam achieve an architectural coup-de-maître as they gracefully get going from grosvenor **SOLD** luke & andrée-anne affectionately arrive in an amazing area, admirably ascending toward an awesome abode **SOLD** positive papiches are pleased as punch, packing up for their amazing arrival on argyle **SOLD** andrew & matt make a meaningful move on circle rd, marking another memorable milestone together **SOLD** faridath quitte son cocon au coeur de la ville, contente d'accueillir son nouveau condo sur contrecœur **SOLD** their northcliffe nest now behind them, adrian & nathalie navigate new narratives of their own **SOLD** mylène & guillaume bouclent belmont en beauté, gagnant grosvenor pour grandir dans un glorieux nouveau gîte **SOLD** marlene & piotr bid bye-bye to their abode on beautiful boyer **SOLD** cynthia & richard do the domestic downsize, deciding on a delightful new dwelling **SOLD** karma keenly navigates the closing of her aunt's condo with care **SOLD** angela gets a groovy condo & goes gleefully to grosvenor **SOLD** claudie choisit berlioz & célèbre sa nouvelle cadence, entre condo, calme et campagne **SOLD** ariane, d'un accord d'affaire à une amitié ancrée, est heureuse de son havre habilement acheté sur hingston **SOLD** julie, joyeusement retraitée, jaillit de château-jones, vers la simplicité de ste-cunégonde & du sud-ouest **SOLD** robert & marie-claude repartent de grey pour renouer avec une ravissante résidence **SOLD** dodie & steve divest of their tmr digs, delighted with their dynamic new dwelling **SOLD** dobromir donne son départ de donegani, découvrant une demeure sur dynamique 'de lusa' **SOLD** dearest maureen & nehman decidedly depart from rockland, delighting in their dazzling new dwelling on deacon **SOLD** jennifer & bill bring down the final curtain call, closing on their 'du canal' condo **SOLD** émerveillé en explorant ahuntsic, elliot entame avec entrain l'expérience exaltante de son premier achat **SOLD** the edwards end an era as they exit their investment on irene, indicating toward their (not-so) infants' independence **SOLD** thomas, freidi & the fam take flight, bringing their bunch to a beauty on belmont **SOLD** franco forges forward, faithfully finalizing his brother's estate **SOLD** nadia nimbly nabs her first find on stupendous somerville **SOLD** devan & charles-antoine retire from their remarkable upper-roslyn, rising forward with renewed resolve **SOLD** après vingt ans dans leur villa sur grosvenor, michèle & avi voyagent vers une verdoyante vie de retraite **SOLD** jonathan & leandro wander from wolfe, making meaningful moves to maisonneuve **SOLD** rayna & tyler transitioned from grand trunk toward brighter beginnings on burton **SOLD** zainab & dan depart from md, relocating to a lovely lair on lansdowne **SOLD** esther & david downsize from their dreamy chesterfield, delightfully landing on lansdowne **SOLD** suave mario sweeps in from the surrounding streetscape, securing a sun-filled space on stayner **SOLD** a & b gracefully give up grosvenor determined to dive into dauphiné, marking a bright, beautiful new beginning **SOLD** robert nudges from northcliffe, grabbing a grove with gusto on grey **SOLD** andrea graciously graduates from grey, grounding herself & forging forward to a new future **SOLD** melissa & dario hop happily into a fabulous home on fantastic fullum **SOLD** terese transfers out of her top floor tiny home, taking a significant step settling on st-dominique **SOLD** laura fits flawlessly into her first home on wonderful workman **SOLD** the gracious glickmans, grounded in gore, triumphantly treat themselves to a tremendous pied-à-terre in the trafilgar **SOLD** fabulous & friendly fancy is finally free from her irvine investment, igniting infinite independence **SOLD** julia & jaffray joyfully journey from their digs on drolet to a sublime semi on strathcona **SOLD** justin & jessica jalonent joyeusement leur parcours sur guillaume **SOLD** suzie & jake jump joyfully from their cozy condo, landing on lively liverpool **SOLD** gildas, faridath & bébé jérôme, quittant beloeil, butinent jusqu'à benard, berçant leur bonheur dans une bâtisse bordée d'un beau jardin **SOLD** kevon keenly kicks out of his du quartier condo **SOLD** ensemble les héritiers de lise libèrent le lumineux foyer familial, laissant le logis à une nouvelle lignée **SOLD** maria & marc-antoine troquent la troisième avenue pour un parfait petit palace sur prud'homme **SOLD** lauranne largue lucien-paiement & laval se promettant son premier pied-à terre à terrebonne **SOLD** the kims amble away from arlington & kick down to the caymans with the kids **SOLD** pierre & michèle échangent le charme de chapleau pour un chez-eux encore plus chaleureux **SOLD** michel buys a beauty of a building on brebeuf **SOLD** dominique & nicole laissent leur logis après de loyales années, libres de lancer leur nouvelle vie en toute légèreté **SOLD** andréan & éric effectuent leur envol de ste-émilie, optant pour l'horizon ouvert d'oxford **SOLD** resourceful annie revamps redpath place, reselling it for a rewarding return **SOLD** éric & katrina lancent leur lumineuse nouvelle vie sur laval **SOLD** bruno & rené réalisent leurs rêve, régalez par la vente d'youville dans l'vieux **SOLD** lumineuse geneviève laisse son logis sur lexington, se lancant avec loyauté vers l'amour **SOLD** listing their mother's lovely longtime home, larry & wendy wish the new owners a



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wonderful new chapter **SOLD** carla & charles quittent marlowe & créent une charmante continuité pour leurs prochains chapitres **SOLD** les molgats marquent magnifiquement la fin de leur maison sur mt-pleasant, captivés par le charme de la campagne **SOLD** justin & camille make marvelous memories as they move into magical montreal-ouest **SOLD** the mackays manage a meangingful milestone, moving their mum from their magical maison & memories **SOLD** les dematos, mélangeant moultes mini-pauses dans un même mouvement, manifestent montréal comme maison-mère **SOLD** luigi & mary merrily move from marvellous murray hill **SOLD** the millers make their move, marking arlington as their new milestone **SOLD** michelle makes a mighty-quick move, getting out of grosvenor to grab a gleaming new goal **SOLD** michael marked meaningful milestones moving from earnscliffe to claremont **SOLD** d'old orchard, joseph & natalie organisent leur odyssée, naviguant vers la nouveauté de ballantyne nord **SOLD** borys builds his bright new beginning in a perfect plateau pad **SOLD** orhan opened an optimistic new chapter on charming charlotte **SOLD** après trente ans sur arlington, jim & danielle abandonnent avec aisance leur adresse adorée pour un délicieux detour vers outremont **SOLD** subsequent to a season of school success, tina & vince step away from their second storey space on saint-urbain **SOLD** lovely camille lets go of her 'de lusa' lair, leaping toward the life she longed for layered with light & laughter **SOLD** sweet stephanie slips out of her sunny space, making marin a marvelous memory **SOLD** happily helen hops out of her home of half a century, wishing wonderful windsor well **SOLD** stephen seals the sale of his sibling's stately lansdowne space, succeeding in settling the estate **SOLD** warren's wonderful new ways on grey begin, offering a warm welcome into homeownership **SOLD** alexa & bryan close on cherished charlestown, shifting into a special new space on splendid strathcona **SOLD** alexi & zach close on their côte-st-paul casa, advancing to a fresh, fulfilling future on priest's farm **SOLD** becky & jm groove on out of grosvenor, manifesting their move to a manor on metcalfe **SOLD** jaqueline & darryl bolt out of 'de bullion', brilliantly bent on building bold beginnings on breslay **SOLD** milan & rebecca glide out of one grosvenor gem, grabbing an even greater getaway **SOLD** jill & steve bee-line out of belfrage, pinpointing & purchasing a perfect pad on parkman **SOLD** brad bids bye-bye, bee-lining out of his palatial penthouse on prince **SOLD** corinne & nick opt out of ontario, picking the prettiest pad on pleasant prince-albert **SOLD** graham & peiotr proudly part from their precious pad, pouncing toward the city's pulsing playground **SOLD** vanessa & pablo proudly planted roots, purchasing their first, picture-perfect property on the plateau **SOLD** landed at le linton, pierre lists the landmark dwelling, leaning into the next leg of his journey **SOLD** fabienne & jean-daniel ont posé leurs valises dans un prestigieux penthouse, parfaitement perché sur la rue prince **SOLD** sweet toni is super pleased, securing a swift sale for her super sunny saranac space **SOLD** marc parts with his pretty plex on peaceful st-pierre, patiently preparing for a promising path abroad **SOLD** pleasant peter is pursuing promising possibilities on a peaceful plot **SOLD** marie-josée & patrick are pumped to pack up plymouth, already anticipating an amazing arrival on arlington **SOLD** guylaine rejoint redfern, un remarquable nouveau repère rénové & raffiné **SOLD** mr. smith sells & sails off from his island sanctuary on simpson **SOLD** greg & tey successfully saunter out of strathcona, settling into their serene sanctuary in the eastern townships **SOLD** sweet sharon & stefan secured a smooth & successful sale on forty-fourth avenue **SOLD** stephen shaped smart, strategic shifts selling his special matterhorne strip **SOLD** nadine nimbly navigates her signoff from st-antoine, settling in her townships sanctuary **SOLD** cute couple, aranzazu & stéphane, quit québec city, cruising into a cool condo at 'les cours' **SOLD** claudine laisse son logis sur lansdowne & vogue vaillamment vers victoria **SOLD** terrific team tabah triumphantly tackles the trade of their tranquil topfloor townhouse **SOLD** annalise & mark make the move from merry montrose, closing on a cool condo **SOLD** amélie & anne abandonment en douceur cedar crescent, allant vers une aventure apaisée **SOLD** claudine continues to choose the co-ownership life, closing on a cool condo in côte-des-neiges **SOLD** tanja & nathalie stickhandle the successful sale of their stayner estate, saying so-long to their sweet homestead **SOLD** kim & eric find their first foothold in hardwood's forest, fulfilling a fresh start far from the city's frenzy **SOLD** lauren & dan treps their way out of terrebonne, making their move to marvelous mayfair **SOLD** claire & sean successfully seal their search, securing a sweet semi on chesterfield **SOLD** amir & eklas exit their condo in the city, embracing their next exciting chapter **SOLD** tran sang & diue thi wonderfully wrapped up their workman sale **SOLD** the briscoe bunch banded together to bring their beautiful family abode to the best buyers **SOLD** caroline & bob bounce out of belmont, planning for more time in bc **SOLD** lucresse, investisseuse aguerrie, gère un geste avisé et génère un gain garanti, grandement gagnante **SOLD** gérard & denis victoriously vacate their victoria avenue villa, excitingly embracing an extended european experience **SOLD** josh, christina & their brood bounce into something bigger one block over **SOLD** the deruchies wave their warm wishes to wood, revelling in the reality of their new redfern residence **SOLD** marc walks away from wellington, wisely winding down before wandering overseas **SOLD** maude & jim waltz willingly out of wood, kicking open the way to their kitchener casa **SOLD** ashanti & pablo parted with their paré pad, procuring the perfect place for their possee **SOLD** megan & daniel hop with happiness as they hustle their household to heavenly hartland **SOLD** guy's york cutie finally yields, ending years of "i'll sell it soon!" **SPECIAL THANKS** to our buyers whose perfect places have yet to be picked, to our sellers who homes are still to be **SOLD**, to our classy colleagues who offer consistent capable collaboration **AND** finally to our precious group for being every year, the team that tames every tangle | **CONGRATULATIONS** to all our **KIND CLIENTS** for your continued confidence in our crew! Wishing you **HEALTH, LOVE & LAUGHTER** this holiday season.



CHRISTINA
MILLER
GROUP

PROFUSION
IMMOBILIER

Forbes
GLOBAL PROPERTIES

WESTMOUNT | JANUARY 1ST TO NOVEMBER 30TH 2025 VS 2024

NEW LISTINGS

DETACHED	SEMI / ROW HOUSES	CONDOS
96 +14%	190 +17%	149 -7%

MEDIAN SELLING TIME

DETACHED	SEMI / ROW HOUSES	CONDOS
103 +25%	49 -18%	60 -32%

NUMBER OF SALES

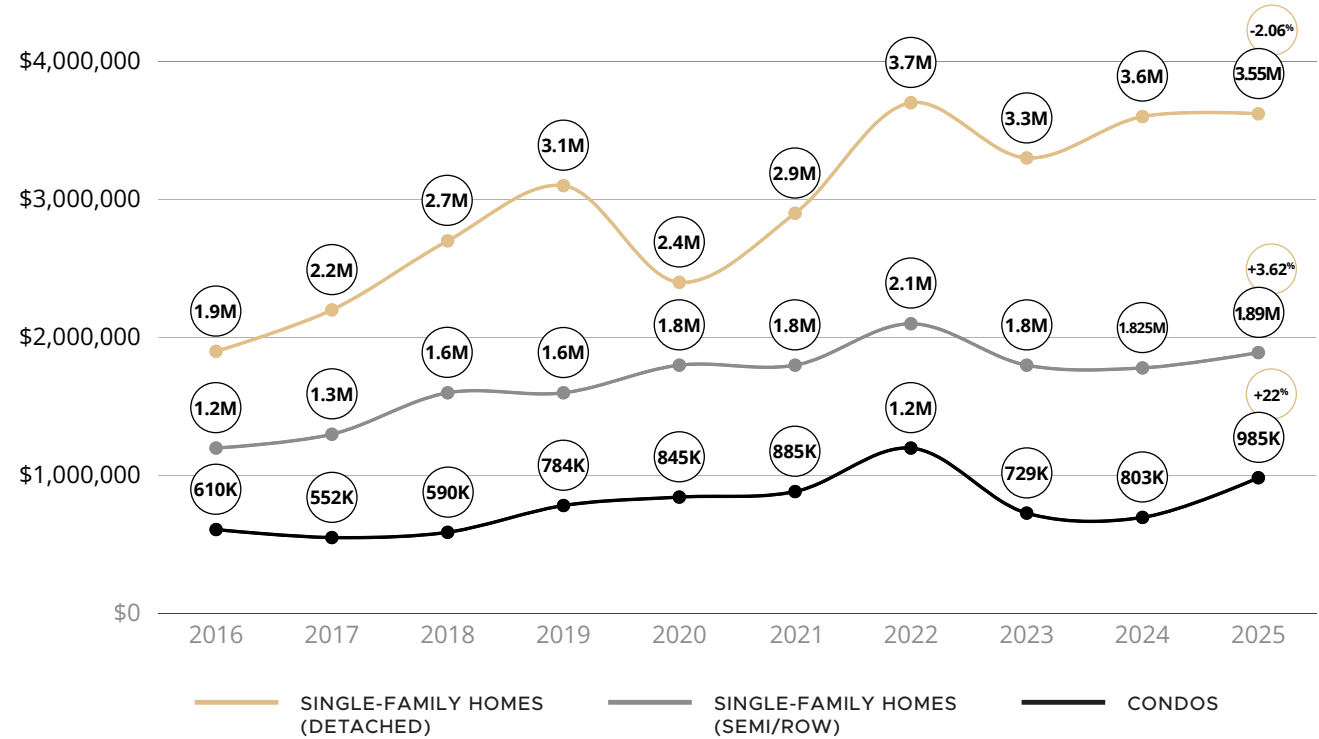
DETACHED	SEMI / ROW HOUSES	CONDOS
45 +15%	110 +25%	73 +18%

MONTHS OF INVENTORY

SINGLE FAMILY HOMES	CONDOS
8.37 -27%	11.75 -20%

Source: Centris.ca and Christina Miller Group data as of December 4th, 2025

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Work continues at St. Stephen's



Work was continuing at the former St. Stephen's Church site at Atwater and Dorchester when the *Independent* went by December 3. This view is from Atwater west towards Weredale Park road, where the church hall once stood. It was torn down by the congregation in 2001 after being condemned by an engineer. The whole site is being turned into residences.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Resident questions merchant associations' city funding

By JENNIFER BALL

Why was \$80,000 given to Greene and Victoria merchants, Mayor Michael Stern was asked during the November 17 council meeting.

The question came from a District 7 questioner who was referring to agenda item from the January 13 council meeting under new business: "26.2. Grant to non-profit organizations – Greene Neighbourhood Merchants Association and Victoria Village Merchants' Association ..."

She said, "I attended the meet-the-candidates at Victoria Hall, [which was held during the election period by the Westmount Municipal Association on October 15 where...] the *Westmount Independent* asked for \$80,000..."

Editor David Price had indeed asked councillor candidates to increase the city's budget for advertising purchases in the *Independent* from about \$36,000 in 2024 to \$80,000, which is the inflation-adjusted amount from 2014.

The District 7 questioner continued: "The city has given \$40,000 to the Victoria merchants and \$40,000 to the Greene Ave. [merchants] and that's \$80,000. I couldn't quite reconcile in my own mind [because the role of the *Westmount Independent*] is pretty obvious to most citizens – that it's a useful communication tool – [but] why are we giving \$80,000 of the treasury to the merchants?"

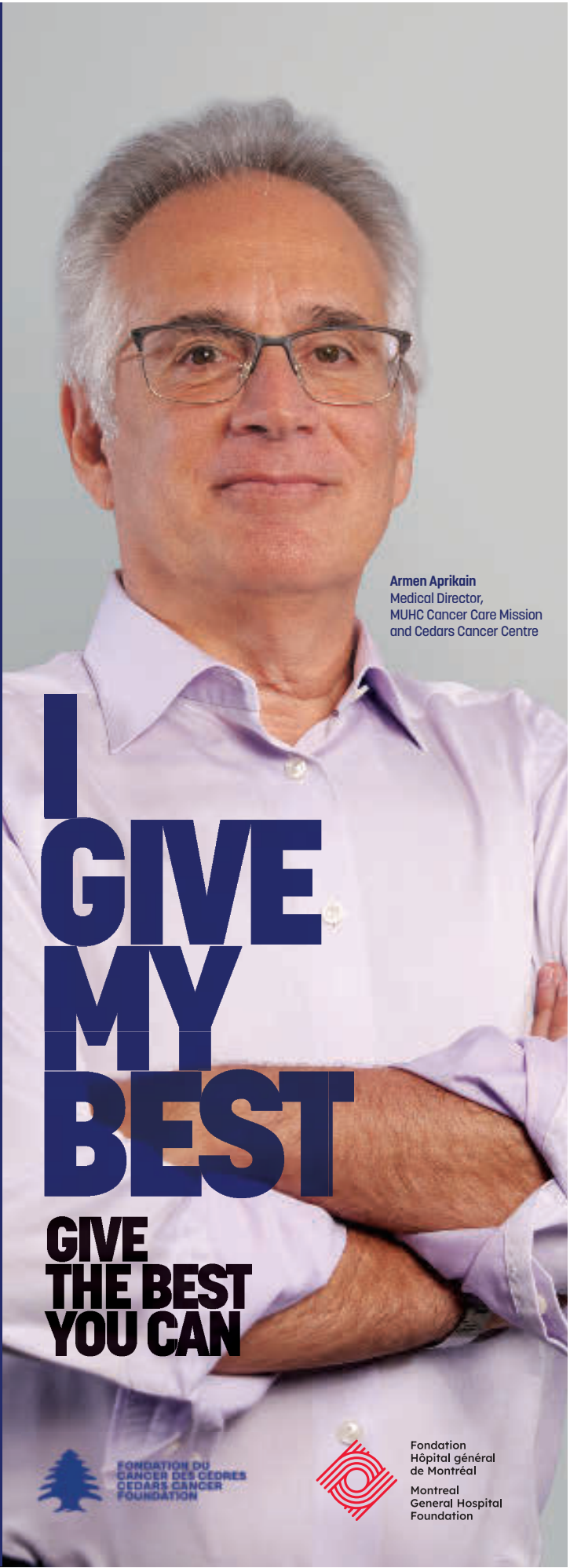
Mayor Stern replied that he did not have an answer but that "we have budget meetings coming up the next two days."



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GIVE THE BEST YOU CAN



Fondation
Hôpital général
de Montréal
Montreal
General Hospital
Foundation



infoWESTMOUNT

2025.12.9 Vol.6/22



NOUVELLES

PROCHAINE SÉANCE
DU CONSEIL

Mardi 13 janvier

NEWS

NEXT COUNCIL
MEETING

Tuesday, January 13



La Ville de Westmount vous souhaite de joyeuses Fêtes !

La Ville de Westmount vous souhaite de joyeuses Fêtes en santé et en sécurité. Au plaisir de vous servir en 2026 !



Holiday Greetings from the City of Westmount

The City of Westmount wishes you a safe and happy holiday season. We look forward to serving you in 2026!

Lancement de l'application Info-Neige

L'application Info-Neige Westmount, désormais disponible sur Apple Store et Google Play, permet à tous les utilisateurs de suivre les opérations de déneigement et les restrictions de stationnement dans la Ville. westmount.org/deneigement

Carte d'accès aux installations 2026

Obtenez votre carte 2026 en personne ou en remplissant le formulaire en ligne. Deux preuves de résidence sont requises. westmount.org/carte

Fermeture du Centre des loisirs de Westmount durant les Fêtes

Le Centre des loisirs de Westmount, incluant les patinoires, sera fermé les **25 décembre 2025 et 1er janvier 2026**, tandis que les bureaux administratifs seront fermés du 24 décembre 2025 au 2 janvier 2026. westmount.org/clw

Déneigement et stationnement de rue

Portez attention aux interdictions temporaires de stationnement pendant les opérations de chargement de neige. Les voitures en infraction seront remorquées. westmount.org/deneigement

Collecte des arbres de Noël

Les semaines du 12 et du 19 janvier (selon la météo). Placez votre sapin en bordure de rue le jour de votre collecte de résidus de jardin. westmount.org/residusdejardin

Horaires des collectes pour les Fêtes

Les collectes du jeudi **25 décembre** et **1er janvier** auront lieu les **mercredis 24 et 31 décembre**. westmount.org/collectes

Emplois d'été 2026

Postulez dès maintenant pour un emploi d'été à la Ville de Westmount. Date limite : 31 janvier 2026. westmount.org/emploisdete

Launch of the Info-Neige App

The Info-Neige Westmount app, now available on the Apple Store and Google Play, allows users to track snow removal operations and parking restrictions. westmount.org/snowremoval

2026 Facility Membership Card

Request your 2026 card in person or by filling the online form. Two proofs of residence are required. westmount.org/card

WRC closed during the Holidays

The Westmount Recreation Centre, including the rinks, will be closed on **December 25, 2025, and January 1, 2026**. Administrative office will be closed from December 24, 2025, through January 2, 2026. westmount.org/wrc

Snow Clearing and Street Parking

Watch for signage indicating temporary parking restrictions during snow loading operations. Cars that interfere with snow removal will be towed. westmount.org/snowremoval

Christmas Tree Collection

Weeks of January 12 and 19 (weather permitting). Place your tree street side the same day as your garden waste collection. westmount.org/gardenwaste

Holidays Collection Schedules

The Thursday collections of **December 25 and January 1** will be moved to **Wednesday, December 24 and 31**. westmount.org/collections

Summer Employment 2026

Applications are now open for summer jobs at the City of Westmount. The deadline for submitting an application is January 31. westmount.org/summerjobs

HEURES D'OUVERTURE HOURS OF OPERATIONS	L / M 22 DÉC. / DEC.	M / T 23 DÉC. / DEC.	M / W 24 DÉC. / DEC.	J / T 25 DÉC. / DEC.	V / F 26 DÉC. / DEC.	S / S 27 DÉC. / DEC.	D / S 28 DÉC. / DEC.	L / M 29 DÉC. / DEC.	M / T 30 DÉC. / DEC.	M / W 31 DÉC. / DEC.	J / T 1 JAN. / JAN.	V / F 2 JAN. / JAN.
BUREAUX ADMINISTRATIFS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES	8 h 30 - 16 h 30	8 h 30 - 16 h 30	- - - - - Bureaux fermés du 24 décembre au 2 janvier - - - - - Offices closed from December 24 to January 2 - - - - -									
BIBLIOTHÈQUE PUBLIQUE PUBLIC LIBRARY	10 h - 21 h	10 h - 21 h	Fermée du 24 au 26 décembre Closed from December 24 to 26				10 h - 17 h	10 h - 17 h	10 h - 21 h	10 h - 21 h	Fermée du 31 décembre au 2 janvier Closed from December 31 to January 2	
VICTORIA HALL	- - - - - Victoria Hall fermé du 20 décembre au 4 janvier - - - - - Victoria Hall closed from December 20 to January 4 - - - - -											
CONSERVATOIRE CONSERVATORY	10 h - 21 h	10 h - 21 h	Fermé du 24 au 26 décembre Closed from December 24 to 26				10 h - 17 h	10 h - 17 h	10 h - 21 h	10 h - 21 h	Fermé du 31 décembre au 2 janvier Closed from December 31 to January 2	
CALENDRIER DES COLLECTES WASTE COLLECTION CALENDAR	L / M 22 DÉC. / DEC.	M / T 23 DÉC. / DEC.	M / W 24 DÉC. / DEC.	J / T 25 DÉC. / DEC.	V / F 26 DÉC. / DEC.	S / S 27 DÉC. / DEC.	D / S 28 DÉC. / DEC.	L / M 29 DÉC. / DEC.	M / T 30 DÉC. / DEC.	M / W 31 DÉC. / DEC.	J / T 1 JAN. / JAN.	V / F 2 JAN. / JAN.
	Résidus alimentaires Food waste	Résidus alimentaires Food waste	Recyclage Recycling Ordures ménagères Household garbage		Ordures ménagères Household garbage			Résidus alimentaires Food waste	Résidus alimentaires Food waste	Recyclage Recycling Ordures ménagères Household garbage		Ordures ménagères Household garbage

Han Modern visits downtown



Art

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Westmount’s Han Modern and Contemporary Art recently premiered art works at downtown’s Centre Mont-Royal. The Mansfield St. convention centre celebrated its 25th anniversary with a cocktail *dînatoire*/vernissage.

Han director Chloe Ng chose artists from her gallery – including Nova Scotia artist Jimy Sloan – to complement the centre’s architecture.

► In front of “Mercurial” by Jimy Sloan were Chloe Ng, Ellen Wallace, David Laidley, Sandy and Warren Retter and Lindsay Hollinger.



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Le Windsor, Montréal

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emma

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Snow on ground for city’s Christmas tree lighting

By RALPH THOMPSON



Anne-Marie Lacombe, director of the Westmount Public Library, welcomed the large crowd and introduced Mayor Michael Stern.

The annual tree-lighting ceremony took place December 1 in front of city hall supported by dozens of citizens and snow on the ground for the first time in years.

A choir of young Selwyn House students added to the seasonal atmosphere with a few carols ending with “We Wish You a Merry Christmas” and vigorous hand clapping.

Anne-Marie Lacombe, director of the Westmount Public Library, welcomed the large crowd on a very chilly evening and introduced Mayor Michael Stern. “It’s my pleasure to welcome you, for the first time, to Westmount’s traditional annual tree lighting event,” said the mayor. It is the moment Westmount declares the holiday season opened.

Stern thanked the city’s Community Events division for arranging the celebration and went on to say “Regardless of our faith, the holiday season is a great occasion to come together, spend time with loved ones and, most importantly, care for one another.”

Everyone joined in the countdown and Noah Moss, son of Councillor Shawn Moss, flicked the switch to illuminate the large decorated spruce tree.

Staff served up hot chocolate, cinnamon tisane, ginger molasses and also vanilla cookies supplied by Gryffon d’Or Bakery while a McGill student jazz trio provided a background of carols. Attendees included councillors Jonathan Chomski, Antonio D’Amico and Kathleen Kez.

See also photo on p. 1.



A Selwyn House choir braved the cold to entertain the gathering with Christmas carols.



Recalling past Hanukahs, past flames



2021

The city welcomed people of all faiths and backgrounds to city hall November 29, 2021 at 5 pm to illuminate the second candle of its Hanukah menorah. There was also a very special visitor, the Flame of Hope, an amalgam of seven historic flames (Hiroshima, Honganji, Nagasaki, Yad Vashem, Bethlehem, Lourdes, Santiago de Compostela – see December 7, 2021, p. 18). In 2021, this flame was lighting Hanukah menorahs at synagogues in Tokyo, Jerusalem and Montreal.

◀During the COVID epidemic, Lawrence Lefcort, in white, North American coordinator for the Flame of Hope, explained the purpose of the flame as an international peace symbol. Visible from left were Rabbi Adam Scheier, Rabbi Lisa Grushcow, then councillor Conrad Peart, Councillor Kathleen Kez, then mayor Christina Smith and Councillor Jeff Shamie. PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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Bal des tannants for The Children's Come Celebrate 25 Years of Daring and Generosity



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Kim Thomassin
Julie Godin
Sean Finn

25

le bal des
tannants
for The Children's

Come celebrate with us on
May 8, 2026, at the Starlink
Aviation hangar, in Dorval

fondationduchildren.com/ball



Bruce Roberts (1946-2022) inspires a new generation of equine artists

By MARTIN C. BARRY

As many artists would probably tell you, drawing figures in movement – be they dancers or horses – is a challenge at which only a few artists have been able to fully succeed.

Renowned Westmount-based artist Bruce Roberts, who passed away three years ago (see September 20, 2022, p. 13), excelled at depicting movement, according to his widow, Anna Gedalof, who helped organize the exhibition of Roberts' work under way in the art gallery at Victoria Hall.

"He had a passion for drawing, and one of the hardest things to draw is a horse," said Gedalof, who held a workshop on drawing horses (Roberts' favourite subject) in the gallery on December 6, along with Roberts' daughter, Aviva. It attracted around 35 participants.

Born in the UK but raised in Canada after his parents migrated here, Roberts arrived in Montreal in 1976 and was a Westmount resident for about three decades. Self-taught, he spent his life as an artist perfecting his drawing abilities, emulating movement and line techniques that he would come upon while exploring art



Bruce Roberts' daughter, Aviva (left, standing) and his spouse, Anna Gedalof (centre, standing) led the December 6 workshop in the Victoria Hall gallery on drawing horses. PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY

books.

"Whenever he drew, he always drew in every which way, to explore the best way to do it," said Gedalof. "He would explore the best way to do it. He would stretch his

imagination in all directions."

Part of the exhibition's title, *draw me a hundred horses*, is a reflection of Roberts' approach when he taught drawing at Université du Québec à Montréal. According

to Gedalof, one of the exercises he would assign would be to draw 100 variations of the common eating fork.

"They didn't need to take another drawing class," she said of Roberts' students. "It was the idea of stretching your imagination."

While Roberts illustrated more than two dozen children's books and his works now hang on countless walls in homes, art galleries and museums, his bounteous output of horse images is what most people know him for.

So much so, according to Gedalof, that a lot of equestrians purchased his work because they agreed he had nailed the horse. "He understood what it felt like to ride the horse – how it moves," she said.

"He also did live theatre, live orchestras. He loved drawing things in motion."

The exhibition of Bruce Roberts' work continues until Friday, December 12 (10 am to 9 pm) at the Victoria Hall gallery (4626 Sherbrooke St. West).

An artists' workshop on how to draw horses was held in the gallery at Victoria Hall on December 6 as part of an exhibition of the work by the late Westmount artist Bruce Roberts.

'ADs' fall to 'SWATTOO' in 2025 SWAT Tournament finals

By MARTIN C. BARRY

The Montreal North ADs put up a valiant struggle, but were ultimately defeated 4-3 in sudden-death overtime by the SWATTOO at the Westmount recreation centre on December 7 in the final match of the 2025 SWAT Tournament for the benefit of Hôpital St. Justine and the Montreal Children's Hospital.

The last game, ending in the early afternoon last Sunday, was the cliffhanging climax of a series of hockey matches that began the previous Wednesday and continued the following Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Former city councillor Nicolas Matosian, a founder of the SWAT tournament and member of the winning team, was jubilant at the conclusion, noting that everyone who played or who otherwise contributed was a winner as it was all for an excellent cause.

Tournament co-chairmen Jim West and Adam Cutler welcomed the participation of Alexis Zang and Jordan Paquette of the "Leaders on Wheels" program at the Montreal Children's Hospital. West and Cutler presented the annual SWAT Trophy for Perseverance to Alexis and Jordan.

Among the fans cheering from the sidelines during the tournament's concluding



moments were Westmount city councillors Jeff Shamie, Kathleen Kez, Shawn Moss and Jonathan Chomski.

Tournament spokesperson Howard Hoppenheim expressed special thanks to François Proulx of Westmount Hydro for his participation as a volunteer, as well as to Dr. Sébastien Perreault, a pediatric neurologist at Hôpital St. Justine, who volunteered his services as a tournament first-aid provider. He also extended "a huge merci" to Geoff Molson for his contributions to the tournament.

The Westmount Old Timers Hockey Tournament was initiated in 1989 by

members of the Senior Westmount Allstar Team (SWAT) to bring together teams from various regions to compete in a friendly charity tournament.

The idea was inspired by Nicolas Matosian Jr., a young patient at the MCH. Diagnosed with terminal brain cancer, he believed there was an urgent need to find the means to combat the disease.

With his friends, he organized two golf tournaments, which during his remaining lifetime raised over \$50,000 and enabled him to start his own fund for the Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation. Spurred by his example, SWAT members decided

that they too could organize a fundraiser and make a difference and the SWAT tournament was born.

The SWAT tournament has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars and is projected to continue doing so with a growing fundraising goal. An announcement of the amounts raised from the 2025 SWAT Tournament is expected in a few weeks.

An authentic Montreal Canadiens jersey signed by current players was the subject of a raffle, organized by Hubert Savoie and Dominic Agostino, and won by Ennio Trivisonno of the ADs.

October/November sales

Condos take the helm – ‘Typical’ house hits new high (\$2.9M)



Real Estate

ANDY DODGE

Note: The following article relates to offers to purchase Westmount residential dwellings that were reported by local real estate agents as having been accepted in October/November, 2025. Because they are not final registered sales, the addresses cannot be made public, but give a good idea of current trends in local real estate activity. The graph at right offers a picture of these trends over time.

Westmount's powerhouse real estate market took a sudden turn in November, with only three single-family sales posted by agents (so far) as being negotiated in that month, while nine condominiums passed the test in November, and coupled with five more in October, now boast 14 for the fourth quarter of 2025, while still awaiting the tally for December.

Since our last report, agents added one more sale to the September list, in fact the highest price for the month – and the year – at \$9,200,000, then another five one- and two-family dwellings to the October list, which now sports a price range from \$1,225,000 to \$9,000,000 (with another sale at \$7,700,000) to bring the average price to \$3,245,688.

Then, in November, the three sales included one over \$3 million, another over \$2 million and a third over \$1 million for an average price of \$2,488,333.

New high

Only after removing the extreme prices and price:valuation ratios do we determine that the “typical” Westmount house, with an average evaluation of \$2,545,642 would have a value of just over \$2,900,000, the

highest mark in Westmount's history.

Meanwhile, condominium sales in October/November ranged from \$375,000 for a small bachelor apartment at 399 Clarke Ave. to \$2,925,000 for an upper-floor apartment at Château Westmount Square, 4175 St. Catherine St.

The list includes both parts of two semi-detached houses on Arlington Ave. that have been converted into condos, four parts of former duplexes and eight apartments, four of which are at Château Westmount Square.

Condos (way) up

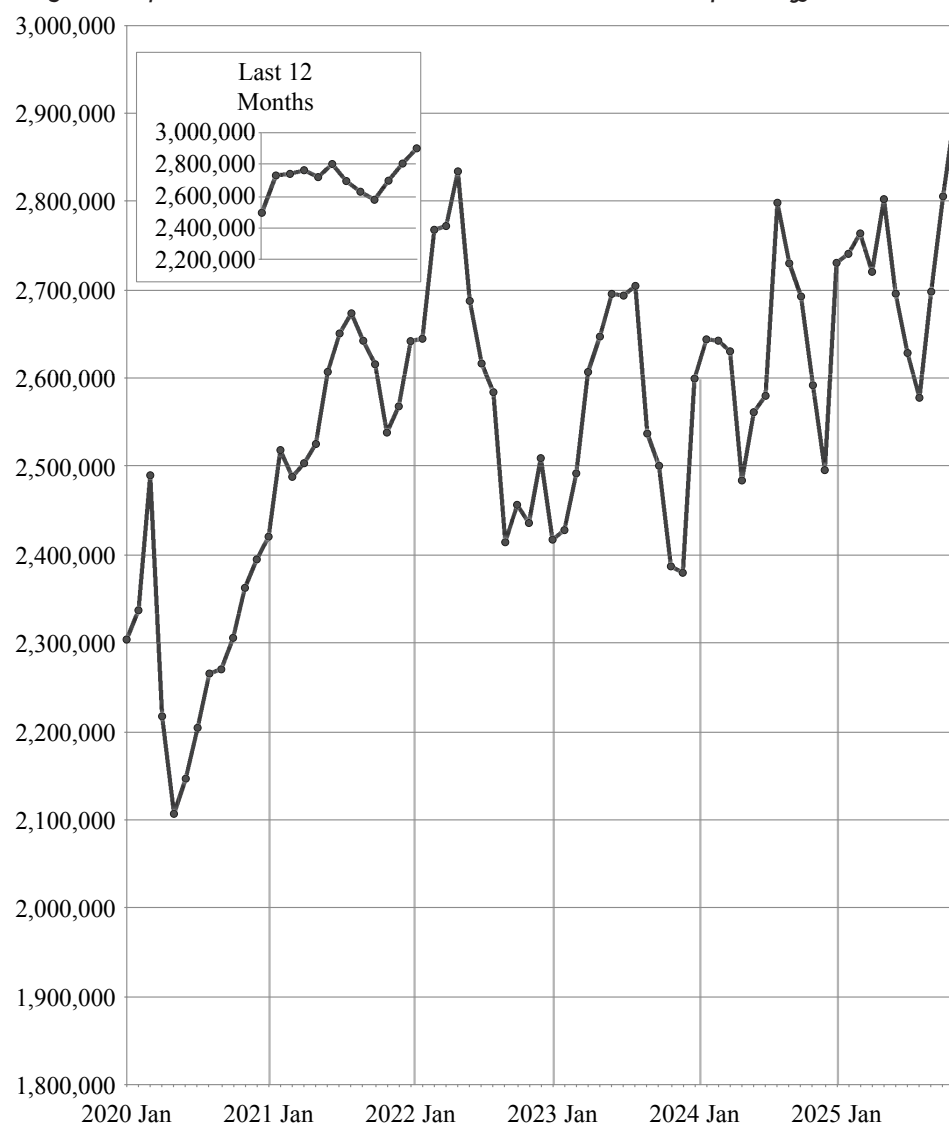
Overall, the 14 condo sales average 11.1 percent above municipal valuation, the highest average mark-up since the third quarter of 2024. Overall, condos are averaging plus-4.9 percent this year, about the same as the average mark-ups for the previous two years.

The lax market for homes in Westmount did not shift attention to adjacent Westmount properties, either, with only three new sales posted for the Côte des Neiges district (one house, two duplex-type condominiums) and one more co-op apartment in the Gleneagles Apartments, 3940 Côte des Neiges Rd. just east of Westmount, and nothing in eastern NDG, the Square Mile or Shaughnessy village.

The supply of listings on the market is dwindling as we approach the holiday season, but sits at 118 Westmount houses, still more than for this time in any year since 2019. There are now 15 listings to rent houses, only two of which are for rates over \$10,000 per month. This year, 35 houses have been rented, way down from the total of 48 for 2024. The asking price for house rentals ranges from \$3,500 to \$13,000 per month, while the asking price range for houses to sell is between \$1,100,000 and \$21,800,000

This being the last review in 2025, let

Average adjusted price for ‘typical’ Westmount house, by month, January 2020 to November 2025, based on accepted offer dates



me wish all my agents and readers the happiest of holiday seasons and best of luck in 2026!

Greene Avenue has some changes

Suetables is now at 1357 Greene Ave. (former SoxBox site), expanding on the personalized jewellery with holiday sweaters in the window. Suetables.com

Uchuu has also moved. Fashions now at 1373 Greene (former Sofia Zakia site). Uchuumontreal.com

SNS Save N Ship is now at 1368 Greene (just south of the municipal parking lot). Savenship.ca

Fade Atelier, Salon de Barbier, is also at 1368 Greene. fade2brooklyn.setmore.com/

Le Marché du Store. The famed window treatment source already has many stores throughout Quebec. 4141 Sherbrooke St. (northeast corner of Sherbrooke and Mount Pleasant/Greene). lemarchedustore.ca



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Brahms evening supports Montreal Chamber Music Festival



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

An elegant evening, For the Love of Chopin and Brahms, hosted by Phyllis Lambert, featured Charles Richard-Hamelin on piano, Andrew Wan and Eva Lesage (violin), Victor Fournelle-Blain (viola) and Denis Brott (cello).



Denis Brott, Charles Richard-Hamelin, Eva Lesage, Andrew Wan and Victor Fournelle-Blain.

Founder and artistic director of the Montreal Chamber Music Festival, Brott is one of Canada's most acclaimed musicians.

As cellist in the renowned Orford String Quartet, he has recorded over 35 albums, including the highly praised Beethoven string quartets and *Homage to Piatigorsky*, his teacher and mentor.

Proceeds from the *soirée* were dedicated to the 31st edition of the Montreal Chamber Music Festival, to be June 9 to 21, 2026. Festivalmontreal.org.

Retail outlet coming?



Despite this prominent Sports Experts logo, the *Independent* knows of no permit application for a store in this residential neighbourhood at de Maisonneuve and Grosvenor, as seen December 3.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

Rotary report

Former MUHC ombudsman Casgrain on complaints, how to find least-busy ER

BY JENNIFER BALL

Editor's note: The *Independent* did not cover candidates' campaign events during the municipal election, hence the late appearance of this article. – DP.

Former MUHC ombudsman Lynne Casgrain explained to Rotarians in a Zoom meeting what the most common complaints her office had to deal with were over her 20-year career – and also how they can find out which ER has the shortest wait time before leaving home.

On September 17, Casgrain, who is a Westmount resident and was running for mayor at the time, said ombudsmanship at the MUHC started at the Royal Victoria Hospital in the 1980s when Patricia O'Rourke, who became Casgrain's mentor, was the ombudsperson there.

Casgrain – whose LinkedIn page lists her most recent professional title as “ombudsman,” not “ombudsperson” or “ombudswoman” – created an ombuds office in 2003 for all of the MUHC. She said that “Although [ombudsmanship] dates from the 1880s in the world, in Quebec hospitals it dates from the mid-nineties.”

Nevertheless, “Quebec was the first jur-



Former MUHC ombudsman Lynne Casgrain on September 10.

isdiction to actually have an ombudsman – ‘complaints commissioner’ they would call them – in every hospital in Quebec.”

The work that the office undertakes, Casgrain said, is free of charge, involves mediation, negotiation and conciliation.

Office employees are advisors with the power of enquiry and ability to investigate through their own initiative.

Reporting lines matter

What keeps the ombuds office independent and impartial is that its employees “report to the board of directors and not to the director general...”

“We do not answer to the DG of the hospital, the director of nursing or the medical director. We do not answer to any of them, and I always insisted on that...”

“Whenever there is a complaint that we investigate, that we [have investigated and closed], we always also inform the complainant.”

Casgrain said she always looked for trends in the complaints so that they could find systemic solutions to improve things at the MUHC. There are 17,000 people working at the MUHC against whom a complaint can be filed. Casgrain provided data on main complaints by number and by category from the latest published report.

- In 2021-2022, there were 2,506 complaints,
- In 2022-2023, there were 2,558 complaints,

- In 2023-2024, there were 2,442 complaints.

1. Most frequent complaint: communication and access,
2. Second most frequent complaint: medical imaging lists and patient priority on the list,
3. Others: Delay of surgery, not enough wheelchairs, coordination of complex care, IVF service, triage and patient referrals, parking at the Glen site, and emergency service/long wait times at the ER.

Casgrain explained to Rotarians that they should always consult indexsante.ca, which lists the emergency rooms in Montreal to compare wait times across hospitals.

Some of the complaints she received, she said, led to systemic action and operational change, including reviews of protocols with personnel, re-organization of waiting lists in key areas and improved coordination of the transition process from children to adult care.

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



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Tom is a wonderful marmalade tabby who is a friendly and cuddly fellow. He loves companionship and joining in, trotting behind you.

He is presently at the Montreal SPCA cattery, which is full up at the moment. Please consider adopting Tom, who is a delightful buddy for all in the family. He is six years old, quite healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped.

Tom has diabetes and he would fit in well in a family who has knowledge of the daily routine. Like many cats, he has a urinary condition, which is managed with a specialized diet. Tom is offered for adoption under the SPCA's humanitarian reduced fee in consideration of his care.

For more information on him, please refer to the shelter's website at www.sPCA.com.

Affectionate Tom



spca.com, then scroll to Tom's information page from his identification number, 2000361968. You can then plan to visit with him and discuss adoption with the staff and coordinators. It is open every day, Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, as well as Saturday and Sunday from 11 am tot 6 pm. It is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4. Do not hesitate to drop by to visit Tom, a friend to welcome in your home.

Your neighbour, Lysanne

Bella & Buddy as a pair, and Amigo



Westmount A-dog-tions

LYSANNE FOWLER

This week, we are presenting these three adorable little cuties from Gerdy's Rescue & Adoption for consideration by your families.

Bella and Buddy are two teacup Chihuahuas who are bonded and best friends. As you see, they enjoy sharing a bed. Bella is the precious fawn-coloured female on the left and Buddy is the sweet tri-coloured male on the right of this precious photograph.

Bella is seven years old and four pounds, while Buddy is eight years old and a bigger five pounds.

They are distinct in their personalities, Bella being quieter and Buddy more gregarious. They are both very healthy, up to date with their inoculations, sterilized and

microchipped. They enjoy walks outdoors but can use pee pads indoors in inclement weather.

Now let me tell you about Amigo, this adorable beagle-dachshund mix. He is small and sturdy, cute as can be, and loves everyone: people, dogs and cats. He enjoys backyard play and car rides as well as sporting walks.

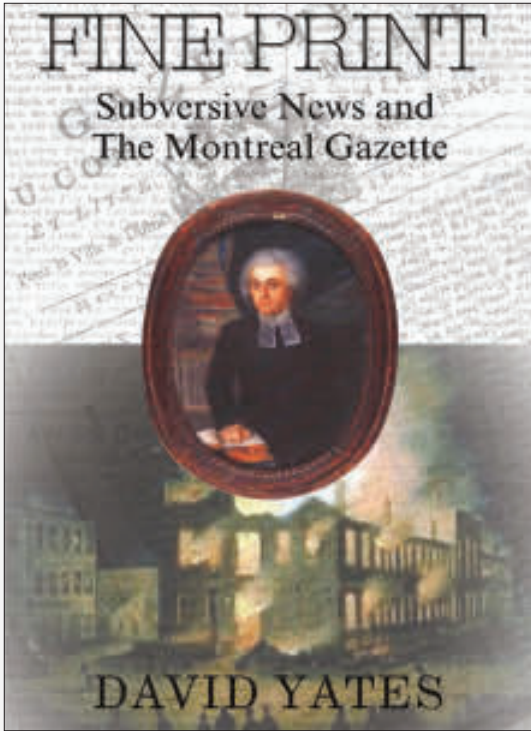
He is seven years old, 16 pounds, very healthy, up to date with his vaccinations, neutered this week, and microchipped.

For more information on these wonderful companions, please refer to the Gerdy's website at www.gerdysrescue.org, where you can also present contact information and interest on their adoption application form. You can also write to them directly at their email info@gerdysrescue.org for more information and additional photographs. Please do not hesitate, best little friends in the home bring so much companionship and joy.

Your neighbour, Lysanne



The Unauthorized History



on Amazon.ca
David Yates Fine Print
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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

VERONICA REDGRAVE

The St. Mary's Ball was another re-sounding success.

Gala co-presidents were **Lindsay Matthews**, general counsel Nuvei, and **Stephen Kelly**, senior partner at Norton Rose Fulbright and board chair of the St. Mary's Hospital Foundation (SMHF).

Fundraising committee members were **Patrick Laurin**, **Brigitte Fetterly** (décor), **Dorine Perron** (silent auction designer); **Anne-Marie Boucher**, **Sylvie Chagnon**, **Terry Didus**, former city councillor **Mary Gallery**, **Arielle Meloul-Wechsler**, **Geoff Molson**, **Sonia Iasenza**, **Curtis Millen**, **Paul Scardera** and **Arthur Wechsler**.

One could hear a pin drop during (short!) speeches by Wechsler, managing partner Kugler Kandestin LLP, immediate past board chair SMHF; the SMHF's CEO **Nadia Wendowsky**; and **Jason Freder**, chief St. Mary's Hospital emergency department.

Foundation board members attending were **Luigi Morelli**, **Rachel Renaud**, president, Roasters Foundation; **Joseph Adamo**,

St. Mary's Ball turns a lucky 88, raises \$2M



Bill Spencer, Luella Bacon, Skye Bacon, Mary Louise and Antonio Sacconaghi, Gabrielle Sacconaghi Bacon, Kidder Bacon, and Alessandra Sacconaghi Spencer.

chief sales and marketing officer/president Transat Distribution Canada Inc.; **George Alexopoulos**, vp global sales, clients and

engagement, Belden Inc.; **Doug Buchanan**, president Rempart Asset Management; **Lawrence Cannon**, CFO Nova Steel;

Donald Clarke, chairman/CEO Gunite Investments Inc. (Stark); **Guy Laframboise**, continued on p. 30

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Dana Ludman and St. Mary's chief of emergency Dr. Jason Freder; Michele Setlakwe, Nadia Wendowsky and Désirée McGraw.



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Guy and Vanessa Laframboise.



Arthur Wechsler, Arielle Meloul-Wechsler, Dominique Arvisais and Lawrence Cannon.

Social notes, cont'd from p. 29

former CEO Subway Quebec; **Patrick Laurin**, managing director Avison Young; **Curtis Millen**, CFO (BCE); **Elizabeth Lund**, CFO Functionalab Group; **Paul Scardera**, executive vp ASSISTENZA International; **Hany Tawfik**, managing director BMO Capital Markets; **Donald Bastien**, immediate past president St. Mary's board of governors; and **Terry Didus**, partner Dentons.

Among the evening's many special guests were **Michelle Setlakwe**, provincial legislator for Mont Royal-Outremont, **Désirée McGraw**, provincial legislator for

NDG and **Senator Tony Loffreda**. Arthur Wechsler, outgoing foundation board chair, and **Nadia Wendowsky**, the foundation's new president and CEO, introduced the evening's honoured guests **Mary Louise** and **Antonio Sacconaghi**. Their story began in 1961. They met and fell in love at the St. Mary's Ball, then one of many deb* balls in Montreal. Over six decades later, their family remains deeply connected to St. Mary's, where all three of their children were born. In tribute to this legacy, their children – **Alessandra Sacconaghi Spencer**, **Gabrielle Sacconachi Bacon** and **Toni Sacconaghi** – made a generous family gift, launching the Champions of St. Mary's initiative.

The gala starred glamour. Floor-sweeping formal frocks (the invitation read "evening gown") were worn with vertiginous stilettos (and also sneakers!). Black was the stellar choice: the best backdrop for starring sparkle. Volunteers were dressed by Suzy Shier, their cloud grey dresses accessorized with red poppies. The 88th annual ball raised \$2,023,500.

**Today, the only deb ball is the Viennese Ball of Montréal organized by the Austrian Society. One can apply to be a debutante (or a cavalier) at austriainmontreal.com.*



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Rib-eye roast beef au jus cooked to rare (GF,LF), butternut squash soup (GF,LF), horseradish cream (GF,LF), mashed potatoes (GF,LF), pan gravy (GF,LF), sweet & sour green beans with shallots (GF,LF), and choice of apple crisp with Chantilly cream (GF,LF) or chocolate tuxedo cake. \$65 per person (no tax).

We also offer plum pudding with hard sauce (GF,LF), holiday cookie boxes, handmade frozen cookie dough ready to bake, mince tarts with hard sauce (LF), and assorted jams & jellies, flavoured salts and sweet stocking stuffers.

Order by 5 pm on Thursday December 18 for pick-up between 9 am and 4 pm on Tuesday, December 23.

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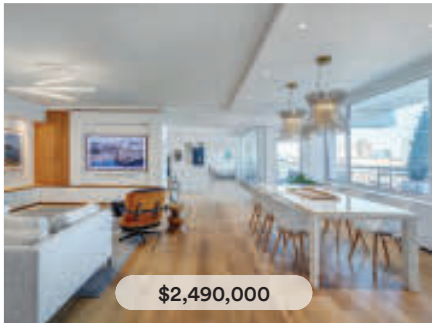
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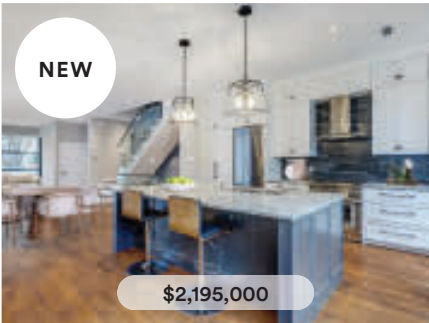
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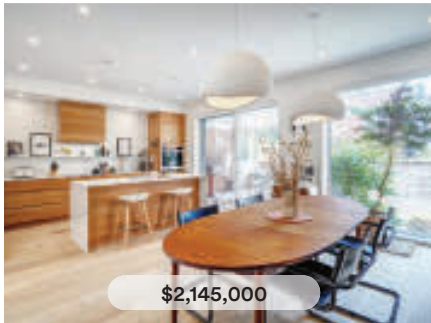
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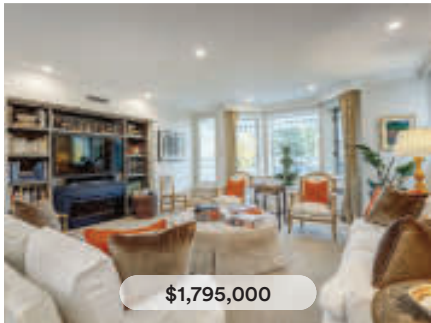
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