

New this year: 'giant' versions of Connect 4, Jenga

City's 48th Family Day arrives at Westmount Park May 31

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

It seems to have come up very quickly this year given the late onset of spring or even summer. But the program for the city's daylong 48th Family Day in Westmount Park is less than two weeks away on Saturday, May 31. The event often attracts up to 3,000 residents and passers-by.

In keeping with the usual addition of new events, this year's program introduces a "free play area" where some of the activities available are: parachute, giant Connect 4, giant Jenga, Spikeball, Kan-Jam and hula hoops. These will be on the field in front of Westmount Park School.

"This is always the best day of the year for the Sports and Recreation team," de-

partment director Dave Lapointe told the *Independent*. "Although it is a very hectic day that involves weeks of planning, the staff always love to see the smiling faces in the park!"

The basic program runs from 10 am to 4 pm. This kicks off at 10-10:30 am with the make-up booth, petting zoo, inflatable games, Eurobungee, a mini-train through the park, pony rides and others. Some late morning activities include traditional and novelty races, egg and balloon tosses and a tug-of-war.

Some special activities in the early afternoon include carnival booths and Public Security's "dunk tank."

The city is planning to mail out a program schedule to all homes, Lapointe said. *continued on p. 6*

Centre Greene turns 35



Centre Greene board members, staff and supporters celebrated the 35th anniversary of the Greene Ave. community centre on May 10 after unveiling renovations on the third floor. See story on p. 7.

PHOTO: MARTIN C. BARRY.



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Exo admits homeless issue exists in pedestrian tunnel

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Exo says it is in talks with the Société de transport de Montréal (STM), the Côte des Neiges-NDG borough, the Montreal police and the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC) to fix security and sanitation problems in a pedestrian tunnel linking the Exo entrance to the MUHC super-hospital and Exo's train platforms.

The situation on the commuter rail ser-

vice's property at the Vendôme intermodal transit station in NDG just west of Westmount was brought to the attention of the *Independent* by MUHC physician Dr. Pro-santo Chaudhury, whose home is nearby. (He was profiled by the *Independent* in its October 5-6, 2010 edition, p. 1.)

"Some pressure needs to be put on authorities to address the situation," he said in an e-mail.

The owner of a busi- *continued on p. 13*

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Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom holds its first blood drive



Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom held its first-ever blood drive May 13, with Rabbi Lisa Grushcow setting an example with her first blood donation in 30 years. The goal was 60 units, which can provide units for four times that many individuals. Although only 3 percent of eligible blood donors in Quebec actually give, Temple's blood drive reached its objective.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA ELLIOTT.



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Public Security waiting for man to call

Woman spots pedestrian drop 'wad' of money in park

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A woman walking in Westmount Park May 10 saw a man ahead of her drop what she described as "a wad of money" on the slope up to the bike path, which she was unable to access. Calling to a young boy ahead of her, she asked him to pick it up along with a stray bill.

The boy brought the money to the woman, who told the *Independent* she called Public Security and handed it over to an officer who subsequently went by her home to pick it up.

An official report had been filed but Public Security officials said a few days later that no one had claimed the money so far. It was described as having been locked away safely.

Woman falls face first at Victoria and Somerville

A Public Security patroller was flagged down outside 353 Victoria May 15 at 12:49 pm by someone saying a woman had fallen face first in the street at Victoria and Sherbrooke, department officials said.

The 70-year-old woman, described as still in shock, was covering her face with

her hand and was treated on the scene. She was told, however, it was important that she go to the hospital. It was not known where she lived. Her parked car was "given toleration."

Ticket issued for gasoline-fired leaf blower

When a patroller at Gordon Crescent and Oakland heard a gasoline-fired leaf blower in operation May 12 at 1:43 pm, the user was found on Summit Crescent. On seeing the officer, he put the blower down and explained that his electric blower was charging. Nevertheless, gasoline-fired blowers are no longer allowed in Westmount and a ticket was issued.

Distribution note Canada Post in position to strike

Canada Post distributes the majority of our newspapers, and all of our door-to-door ones. This edition was printed before it was known whether Canada Post's employees would strike or not, which is possible starting Thursday, May 22.

For a description of the *Independent's* contingency plan, please see May 13, p. 4. For fully up-to-date information, see our website.

One thing that is known: apartment and condo buildings will be getting drops of newspapers by private distributor (not individual copies by mailbox, as is usual) until the threat of a strike passes. We won't risk all, many or some of those copies being caught in Canada Post's system by a strike after we deliver to them.

I reiterate my hope for a mutually beneficial, swift agreement between employees and management. – DP.

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The many messages of May



As seen May 15 on Sherbrooke, left photo, at Vignal in the Queen Elizabeth Gardens (a city park) and, right photo, at Mount Pleasant on private property.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.



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Scouts clean up mountain



PHOTOS COURTESY OF V. ELLIOTT.

According to Scout leader Virginia Elliott: “Neither rain, nor snow, nor sleet’ kept about 20 members of Westmount Scouting groups from showing up for the annual Summit Woods spring clean-up on Sunday, April 27.

“Scouts also scoured the Reserve Père-Trempe, where commercial gardeners not only dump their refuse but seem to bury their lunch garbage under garden waste!” Some interesting finds included balls, a padlock, a broom, a section of fence, a Mexican 50-peso bill in perfect condition and a shoe.

“From the large number of bottles collected it seems alcohol consumption is a popular pass-time on the mountain,” she surmised.

“In spite of the very wet and cool weather the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts were in good spirits. One Cub told his reluctant parent who balked at the weather ‘we need to do our best!’”



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Contract awarded after 6 years of temporary tarp

Westmount Public Library’s roofline work okayed for \$500,000

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

The need to carry out repairs to the library’s brickwork at the roofline of the 1995 addition reported in 2019 was translated into a contract approved by city council May 5 at a maximum of some \$510,359. The leaky mortar has been covered with tarpaulin since then.

The resolution, proposed by Councillor Elisabeth Roux as commissioner of the

library, explained that the work required “repair of the parapets and replacement of various sealants on the exterior of the library, for which S.A. Construction Inc. was the lowest compliant bidder.”

While leakage into the interior had not been reported, the exterior area had been very visibly protected by covering for the last five years and had been described at the city council meeting June 3, 2019 by resident Denis Biro. At that time, he sug-



Part of the tarpaulin remaining May 14 of this year after its installation in 2019 to protect deteriorating brick work at roof of the library.

Help save Centennial School

Centennial Academy, a high school that supports neurodivergent students and those with learning difficulties for over 50 years, is now at risk of closing.

Featuring **Rufus & Martha Wainwright, Patrick Watson, Sarahmée**, and **Emmanuel Bilodeau**, a benefit concert is taking place to secure a future for Centennial Academy students.

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gested the library had “serious water infiltration behind the façade” (see story June 18, 2019).

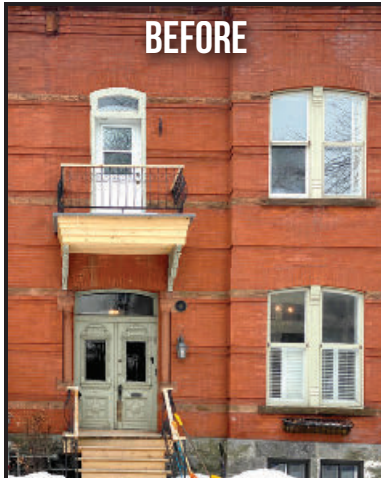
This led to Mayor Christina Smith acknowledging the city’s lack of investment and maintenance of municipal buildings, specifically – at the time – the greenhouse complex and city hall, which were then in need of multi-million dollar work. “This why we are now left with exorbitant bills,” she said at the time.

Biro had then challenged the city policy of paying down the debt at a time of low interest rates to prevent “further deterioration of buildings.”

Family Day, cont’d from p. 1

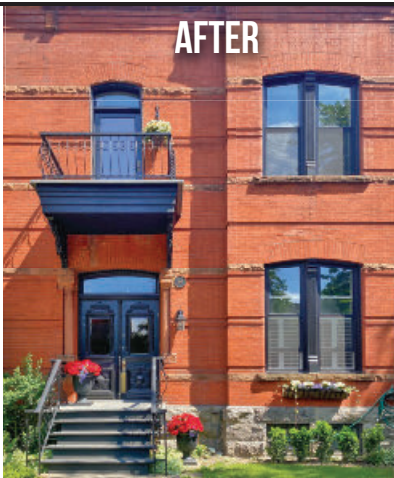
Special displays are to include those from police, fire, military and cadet units, as well as a child-seat inspection by Public Security on Melville from 10 am to 3 pm while exhibits from the city’s many community groups along the park’s trails are to include a bake sale from Contactivity.

Food trucks are also billed to be available, as well as a variety of foods and refreshments to be purchased from Girl Guides and Venturer Scouts. Water is to be available throughout the day on the main field.



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An open letter to Peter Trent from Westmount city councillor Mary Gallery

Until now, I have chosen not to respond publicly to your ongoing critiques. However, your recent *Independent* guest column (May 13, p. 6) includes several significant inaccuracies and fails to reflect the complex challenges my council colleagues and I are working hard to address on behalf of Westmount residents.

The commentary not only misrepresents facts but also reflects a broader disconnect from the realities of governing in today's environment. In the wake of the pandemic, cities everywhere are facing new financial and social pressures.

Municipal leaders face difficult decisions as they navigate limited resources, escalating costs, aging infrastructure and growing public expectations. Overlooking this context to advance a personal narrative not only disrespects the efforts of our dedicated professional staff, but also weakens the quality of public dialogue and risks discouraging those who might otherwise step forward to serve.

At a time when leadership is most needed, this kind of approach is both unfair and counterproductive.

Years of infrastructure neglect

When I joined council in 2017, it quickly became clear that Westmount's infrastruc-

ture had been left to languish for decades. The fallen greenhouse perfectly illustrates this neglect. Although the project was costly, it was unavoidable due to years of deferred maintenance and underinvestment by past administrations. This work was understandably prioritized because of community expectations, which in turn shifted funds away from other urgent needs.

City's responsibilities vast

The city is responsible for the care and maintenance of a vast and varied infrastructure: 26 municipal buildings, including park chalets; hydro substations and the condemned incinerator and train station; five garages; 50 kilometers of roads; 100 kilometers of sidewalks; 12 parks; as well as our tree canopy, lanes, public stairs, pathways, ponds, sports facilities, IT infrastructure, Hydro Westmount and the summit lookout.

The extent of neglect we uncovered across these assets was staggering. Years of deferral have left the current council facing an overwhelming backlog of critical work.

The claim of a "ballooning bureaucracy" oversimplifies the realities of modern municipal governance. Staffing increases in Westmount reflect the need to

manage growing service demands, from expanded Public Works and Urban Planning departments to the integration of new technologies and service models.

Much of this growth results from transitioning auxiliary roles into permanent positions. This is an intentional strategy to retain skilled staff and strengthen city operations. These changes are not signs of waste, but of a city adapting responsibly to new challenges while working to maintain a high quality of life for its residents.

It is disheartening to see continued criticism from someone no longer responsible for the daily decisions required to keep this city running. Nearly a decade has passed since you held office, and the financial landscape has changed dramatically.

Costs for materials, labour and services have soared. Our council has had to do more with fewer resources, while responding to evolving community expectations and working in a political climate where opposition is a constant.

Southeast zoning is outdated, ineffective

Take, for example, your resistance to our efforts to revitalize the southeast sector of the city. The outdated zoning you implemented has proven ineffective for more than a decade. Our council remains committed to modernizing this area based on

extensive research, public consultation and careful planning. This is work you have either ignored or dismissed in your public commentary.

I can assure you, and every resident of Westmount, that our council takes our duty to protect the interests of citizens and taxpayers with the utmost seriousness. But your ongoing attacks from the sidelines do nothing to strengthen this community.

They distract from the real work of building a resilient, forward-looking city and undermine the progress we owe to our residents.

I trust the people of Westmount to make informed decisions about the future of their city. This is a community known for its intelligence, engagement and high standards.

As we approach the municipal election on November 2, I am confident that our residents will choose leaders who understand the challenges of today and are committed to moving Westmount forward with vision, integrity and a deep sense of responsibility for the people who call this unique and amazing city home.

While I respect your past service, it is time to move forward in a spirit of collaboration and progress rather than nostalgia and obstruction. The city of Westmount deserves nothing less.

Howick receives Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers



Former Westmounter Lilian Howick received the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers from Governor General Mary Simon April 30 in Ottawa. An approved caption from Rideau Hall read: "For more than four decades, Lilian Howick has been dedicated to helping people live more active lives. As a volunteer instructor with the Westmount YMCA, she has taught thousands of fitness classes to many thousands of students and is renowned for her ability to ensure every participant has fun."

PHOTO BY LOUIS DUBÉ COURTESY OF RIDEAU HALL.

Centre Greene marks 35th year with third-floor renovations

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Friends, neighbours and local elected officials gathered for a celebration on May 10 at Centre Greene to mark the Greene Ave. community centre's 35th anniversary.

Prior to 1989, it was operated as the Unity Boys and Girls Club by the Rotary Club of Westmount.

"In 1989, a group of citizens in the neighbourhood were worried about what was going to happen to this building," said Centre Greene president Michelle Beacom, adding that some thought at one point that it might be replaced by a condo project.

A few years later, the city of Westmount entered into an agreement to purchase the building, while an independent organization would lease it and be mandated to manage operations and programming.

The anniversary celebration included a community carnival from noon to 5 pm, as well as an official unveiling of Centre Greene's third floor following extensive renovations. The third-floor space was originally a caretaker's apartment.

"What makes Centre Greene truly

special is its unwavering dedication to fostering a sense of belonging," Beacom said in an address.

"It's more than just a place to attend a class or event," she added. "It's a space where friendships are formed, support is offered and community is built. In an ever-changing world, Centre Greene remains a constant."

The retired co-owner of Sherbooke St.'s Folklore store (see May 10, 2016, p. 21), Gerard Fellerath, has been on the Centre Greene board as treasurer for the past eight years. He said he stays involved because he finds it rewarding. "I find it a very open and welcoming place, and I like to extend that good will," he said.

Representing the city of Westmount were councillors Kathleen Kez, who represents the district, and Elizabeth Roux.

Kez said Westmount's investment in Centre Greene paid off well for the city. "It's been an investment in our community," she said. "Centre Greene complements with many services that we don't offer. It's a good partnership."

See photo on p. 1

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NUMBERS ACCOUNT FOR PART-TIME, PARTIAL-YEAR EMPLOYMENT

Just to be clear, in the table giving the number of employees working for the city of Westmount provided in my guest column last week (p. 6), the number of employees is expressed in person-years. Westmount's financial statements always use person-years. It's required by Quebec. This means that two people who work for six months of the year, or two people who each work half-time for a full year, are equal to one person-year. Another term for the same concept is "full-time equivalents."

PETER F. TRENT, CÔTE ST. ANTOINE RD.

WESTMOUNT IS BROKEN

If one reads the implications in last week's edition of the *Westmount Independent*, it becomes clear that under the current administration, the city of Westmount is indeed broken.

When one reads the pieces written by ex-mayors Trent and Marks, we now more fully can understand how the current administration and council have very badly let the citizenry down. Crumbling infrastructure, burgeoning bureaucracy and mounting debt are the inheritance that has been left to us all.

How sad that one of the most desirable and pristine suburbs in all of Canada has, in the space of less than eight years, become so dysfunctional.

JOE RUSSO, SHERBROOKE ST.

NON-SALT ABRASIVES WOULD BE ECO-, LAWN FRIENDLY

Regarding Peter Trent's explanation that Westmount stopped casting snow onto lawns due to the damage caused by abrasive salt (April 22, p. 9), I'd like to point out that this isn't the 1980s anymore, even though some days in Westmount it feels like it is. There are numerous environmentally friendly alternatives available today – yet Westmount continues to fall short in seeking out and implementing sustainable solutions.

In fact, with just a few minutes of research and no costly consultants or studies, I was able to gather practical, proven alternatives from ChatGPT. Here are a few options the city could consider – no budget required, just the will to do better for our environment and our community's future.

There are road and sidewalk de-icing products that are less harmful to lawns, plants and the environment, and many cities and municipalities are switching to these eco-friendlier alternatives. Here are some commonly used options that are considered safer:

- 1. Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA)
Pros: Non-corrosive to metals and concrete • Biodegradable and much less harmful to vegetation • Works well at moderate cold temperatures
Con: More expensive than traditional rock salt
Best use: Urban areas where vegetation and infrastructure preservation are priorities

- 2. Potassium acetate
Pros: Very effective and fast-acting • Environmentally safe and non-toxic
Cons: Higher cost • Usually used for airports and high-priority surfaces
Best use: High-traffic areas where safety is critical
- 3. Beet juice blends (often mixed in with brine or salt brine to reduce the overall salt content)
Pros: Reduces the amount of salt needed • Sticks well to roads (less run-off into lawns) • Derived from natural sources, less harmful to plants
Cons: Can stain surfaces and has a strong smell
Best use: Roads and walkways in residential or green-conscious areas
- 4. Sand or grit (non-corrosive traction aids)
Pros: Non-toxic and safe for all vegetation • Good for traction even when it doesn't melt ice
Cons: Doesn't actually melt ice • Needs clean-up to avoid storm drain clogging
Best use: Supplement to de-icers in very cold areas
Tips for use in city settings: Pre-treating roads before a storm reduces the amount of product needed • Proper application rates are crucial – overuse of even safer products can still cause environmental

harm • Public education and signage can help residents understand and support eco-friendly treatments.

ALLAN GOLDBERG, LANSDOWNE AVE.

Distribution note
Canada Post in position to strike

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I reiterate my hope for a mutually beneficial, swift agreement between employees and management. – DP.

More information
Leprince marks event with husband Langlois



Westmount's Royal Montreal Regiment recently welcomed a new commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Langlois. He was pictured on p. 1 last week with his wife, whose name we did not have, although we had asked. Now we have it, so: from left, Caroline Leprince with her husband Kevin Langlois on May 4 at the time of his investiture as the new RMR CO. – DP.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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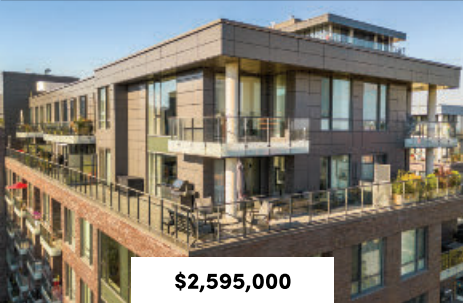
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Presented at meeting May 5
Audited 2024 statements approved by city council

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The city’s audited 2024 balanced budget statement of \$138.5 million including Hydro Westmount was adopted by city council May 5. This reflected \$106.4 million in property taxes, the city’s main source of revenue.

Highlights provided a focus on capital works projects totalling \$26.5 million and a completion rate of 75 percent of the projected rate, said Councillor Antonio D’Amico, commissioner of finance, in presenting the audited report. This compares with that in 2023 of \$25.9 million, a completion rate of 92.9 percent of the budgeted amount.

“Within a demanding economic climate” the city had met the community’s evolving needs, he said.

“Among the [capital works] projects of which we are particularly proud are the refurbishment of the playground and replacement of lighting on the sports field at Westmount Park,” D’Amico said.

“Of particular interest, \$13.2 million of these investments were financed on a pay-as-you-go basis, an amount very close to the planned budget of \$13.8 million.” The



Mayor Christina Smith assists one of the many children present on the morning of October 21, 2024 to cut the ribbon for the (then) newly renovated playground in Westmount Park, a major 2024 project for the city. To the right of the mayor is Councillor Mary Gallery, parks commissioner.

remainder of the capital works was covered by the accumulated surplus and long-term financing.

Among these capital works highlights singled out were the complete reconstruction and re-configuration of the play-

ground and widening of paths in Westmount Park as well as the re-surfacing of Dorchester, re-construction of the water main on Upper Lansdowne and creation of the new makerspace at the library. The restoration of the Public Works mess hall

was described as a “strategic building” for city operations.

The city’s Public Works department, its largest, benefitted from a milder 2023-2024 winter, which reduced snow removal costs (which ultimately increased in 2025 after unexpected record-setting snow on February 20).

The 2024 financial report and audited statements were to be submitted to the Quebec ministry of municipal affairs and ultimately to be on the city’s website.

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Police Report

Station 12 police report arrest of boutique shoplifter

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Staff at the Montreal Police's Station 12 on Stanton St. report the arrest last week of a shoplifting suspect following several theft incidents at Westmount fashion boutiques where the perpetrator casually walked off with merchandise while staff members were distracted.

According to Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit, the owner of a boutique on Sherbrooke St. near Victoria Ave. filed one of the theft complaints.

This followed an incident during which an individual walked in while customers were being served, then proceeded to the rear of the store where he grabbed merchandise and walked out without paying.

"Apparently this gentleman also did a couple of businesses on Sherbrooke St.," said Yigit. After he and Station 12 colleague Cst. Emmanuel Provencher contacted a few other local merchants, they were able to track down the suspect and he was arrested on the evening of May 15.

"He was known to do this quite often,"

added Yigit. "He would walk in the back while the employees were occupied. He would go through their stuff. Whatever he would find lying around. Purses and whatever else."

Quebec merchants report substantial financial losses due to shoplifting, with the Retail Council of Quebec estimates that almost \$2 billion worth of goods is stolen annually. It also reports that thieves are increasingly targeting expensive items like computers and jewellery.

"We've noticed that there has been an increase," said Yigit, noting that the police enforce the law on a case-by-case basis. "We just apply the law and do the best we can with the laws we have to work with," he said.

No car thefts, two break-in attempts

Although there were no reported car thefts or attempts in Westmount last week, complaints were filed at Station 12 regarding two attempted break-ins at local homes.

The first, on Wood Ave. near de Mai-

sonneuve Blvd. around 9 am on May 11, was reported by a homeowner.

While monitoring a security camera video feed, he spotted a suspicious-looking individual wandering around the rear of the property.

Apparently spooked by an unexpected noise, the suspect fled, according to Cst. Yigit.

In the second break-in attempt, a property owner on Claremont Ave. reported a broken window at the rear of the residence. The window is thought to have been broken sometime between May 3 and 12.

"It was assumed it was an attempted break-in," said Yigit.

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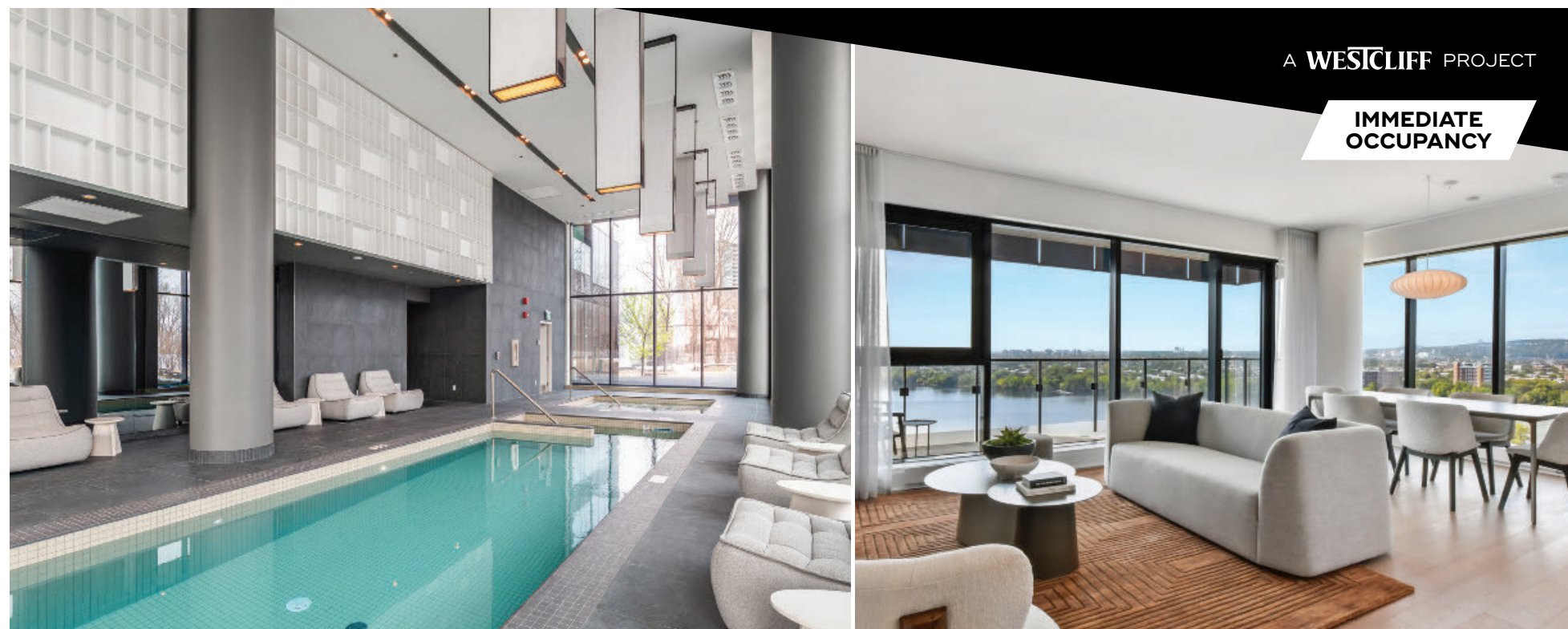
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Plan International CEO tells Women’s Canadian Club about impact of US aid cuts

By MARTIN C. BARRY

“Eight million dollars to promote LGBTQI+ in the African nation of Lesotho, which nobody has ever heard of.”

For those who don’t know where Lesotho is, President Donald Trump’s words to the US congress in March provided a rather rude introduction to the impoverished southern African country.

While Trump was defending the US government’s sweeping international assistance cuts, Lesotho found itself slapped with the heftiest of the tariffs imposed on the nations of the African continent.

Lindsay Glassco, CEO of Plan International Canada, who addressed the Women’s Canadian Club of Montreal in Victoria Hall on April 22, had started her presentation on “Girls Rights: Why Should we Care?” with a video clip of Trump’s sarcastic remarks.

Raised in Westmount, her three-decade-long career in international development began when she travelled to Lesotho for two years as a volunteer teacher.

Before joining Plan International (a charity that works to advance children’s

rights, with a particular focus on equality for girls), Glassco was secretary general of Care International.

She was also director of international cooperation and development for the International Olympic Committee, president and CEO of Special Olympics Canada, and global director of policy and strategies at Right to Play International.

US was largest donor

Up to Trump’s announced cuts, according to Glassco, the US was the world’s largest donor of foreign aid, accounting for around 43 percent. About 50 percent has been slashed, resulting in “a global disruption,” she added.

She said HIV and AIDS supports have been completely dismantled and there have also been radical cuts to abortion, contraception, and sexual and reproductive information programs. “We know that these cuts are going to be putting millions of girls’ lives at risk,” said Glassco.

“Why should we be involved over there when we have so many problems here?” she asked, voicing a question that’s on many people’s minds. She argued, among



Lindsay Glassco, CEO of Plan International Canada, addressed the Women’s Canadian Club of Montreal at Victoria Hall on April 22.

other things, that strengthening a struggling nation’s economy reduces the need for migration to economically stronger regions of the world.



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Homeless, cont'd from p. 1

ness located near the Vendôme station confirmed there are problems there related to homelessness.

"There's a tunnel that goes from the hospital to the Exo building," he said, maintaining that the outer doors to the Exo pavilion usually aren't closed overnight, although the MUHC's tunnel access doors close automatically at midnight.

He said that from midnight to 5 am, homeless people settle down to sleep in the tunnel. He said the problem appears to be mostly on the Exo side of the station, rather than in the area used to access the Metro.

The view from the ground

When the *Independent* visited the Exo site during the day as well as later in the evening on May 1, there were no outward signs of loiterers and there were only a few stray pieces of trash on the ground.

However, Chaudhury furnished the *Independent* with photos he'd taken in early April as well as on May 7, clearly showing the extent of unsanitary conditions on Exo's property. This included what appeared to be excrement on the ground, as well as homeless persons asleep in the tunnel



In this image taken on May 7, apparently homeless people sleep in the Exo tunnel linking the MUHC campus to Exo's entrance pavilion on de Maisonneuve Blvd. in NDG. PHOTOS COURTESY OF P. CHAUDHURY.

as recently as early May.

"It was a persistent problem all winter long and it continues to be," he said in an interview. He maintained that three individuals who have regularly been sheltering in the tunnel "are still using the exterior façade of the building as a latrine," alternating between the Vendôme Metro and the Exo pavilion.

Part of larger issue

Chaudhury sees the situation at Exo as an example of how the impact of homelessness is felt in areas in and around Westmount.

He noted that over the past winter, two individuals would settle down every night from 11 pm until at least 6 am in the entranceway of the TD Bank branch at Sherbrooke and Claremont. The bank has since closed its ATM except during business hours (see February 6, 2024, p. 20).

Chaudhury also gave other examples. "Last week, I found someone in Westmount Park who had camped in a hammock in the new play structure as she was packing her stuff up after spending the night," Chaudhury said.

He said he'd also recently spotted some-

one who set up a campsite in an open space in lower Westmount between the Home Depot and the MUHC's property.

Exo responds

In an e-mailed statement last week to the *Independent*, an Exo spokesperson acknowledged that homeless people have indeed been sheltering on their property.

"Exo is aware that its infrastructures may sometimes be used as temporary shelter by persons who are very vulnerable," wrote Catherine Maurice, head of Exo's media relations department.

"Exo's priority nonetheless remains to ensure the security and comfort of all of our clients, while also showing compassion," she added.

Regarding the state of the Exo tunnel, she described it as "an installation whose management is complex, since it is closely linked to two other important infrastructures," those being the MUHC and the Metro.

She said Exo is currently "in discussions" with the STM, the borough of Côte des Neiges-NDG, the police and the MUHC "in order to find a solution to this issue ... over the coming weeks."

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Examples of trash found lying on the ground in the Exo tunnel in early April.

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Loving adorable Pepper



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LYSANNE FOWLER

This precious Morkie is a fine fellow, sharing love and joy everywhere he goes. Young Pepper is presently in a foster home for the Gerdy's Rescue and Adoptions volunteer animal rescue group. He is a great six-pound companion, enjoying the foster family environment, where he finds a calm lifestyle full of affection and a friendly doggie companion for fun. He is two years old, very healthy, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. He enjoys the morning rou-

tine of cuddles and kitchen time at breakie. Later, he plays quite enthusiastically with his buddy in the fenced backyard. He would be at his best in a quiet family with a presence in the home during the day. Since he is little, a family with older children is a nice option for him. He has no experience with cats yet. If you would like more information on Pepper, please refer to the Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions website at www.gerdysrescue.org for updates and sweet photographs. Then, do not hesitate to send the volunteers an email with more information on your interest at info@gerdysrescue.org. Pepper is such a delight, a good friend to all! Your neighbour, Lysanne



Pretzel the Bengal



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Stunning Pretzel is so regal in her gaze and demeanor. A sleek brown-and-black beauty, she is a joyful little friend. Pretzel is at the Montreal SPCA cattery, one of three sisters brought in for new families. The other two sisters were recently adopted and now Pretzel is being brought to your attention for your consideration. She is quiet and sweet, and very

time together and your meeting with adoption coordinators as they are open every day, from Monday to Friday from 3 pm to 8 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm. The shelter is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4. Please bring your carrier to be ready to bring her home in. No worries if you need a carrier: you can always choose a model from the selection at the in-house boutique, where they offer foods, toys and accessories as well. Pretzel is waiting for your visit. She is a quiet friend to share family moments with. Your neighbour, Lysanne



healthy – yet was born with a malformation on one of her back legs that prevents her from bending it. This leads to an adapted sitting stance but does not hamper her in mobility or play. At four years of age, she is up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped. If you would like to find out more about Pretzel, please refer to the Montreal SPCA website at www.sPCA.com, then scroll to her information page from her identification number, 2000263715. She is available for visits at the cattery so you can plan your

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Art

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Weill, Avant-garde premiere at MMFA



The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) just premiered another exciting exhibition. *Berthe Weill: Art Dealer of the Parisian Avant-garde* is dedicated to the gallerist who shaped the destiny of modern art.

The visionary was the first to sell Pablo Picasso's work and to exhibit Henri Matisse. The exclusive showing in Canada showcases the story of Berthe Weill, who played a seminal role in the development of Avant-garde movements in France in the first half of the 20th century.

Archival documents complement the over 100 art works. Present at the opening were the MMFA'S director Stéphane Aquin, Westmounter Mary-Dailey Desmarais, chief curator, and Anne Grace, curator modern art.

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Station L turns two, with red-carpet style



Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Soaring silver balloons and a red carpet marked the second-year anniversary of Station L Medispa. Once the Westmount Post Office/Station L, the neo-Baroque style building was carefully renovated and restored by award-winning architect Jean-Maxime Labrecque.

Today, it holds one of largest private surgical centres in Quebec with six operating rooms as well as 18 recovery rooms.

Owners are doctors Ali and Arash Izadpanah. The brothers are both specialists in plastic surgery. After perfecting his McGill training at the Mayo Clinic, Ali further developed his skills in cosmetic surgery in Paris. Arash, who also trained at McGill, practised in BC, followed by a one-year microsurgery fellowship in Taiwan.

Today, both work at the CHUM. Their services at Station L are complemented by Dr. Sandra Davar, a board-certified dermatologist. A graduate from the faculty of medicine at the University of Montreal, she



Doctors Arash and Ali Izadpanah.

has expertise in cosmetic dermatology.

Station L's celebratory eve brought glamour to the neighbourhood. Super high-heels! Leathers! Jewellery! Best initialed purses!

Best news? No hoodies! White was the new black as many ladies chose cloud coloured for the occasion – stand-outs against the equally elegant noirs.

Working with Chléa Dubois, Station L head of commercial, Corinne Asseraf, owner of Galerie 203, curated a special exposition

for the occasion. Work by artists from her gallery was admired throughout the building as guests toured rooms specialized for treatments such as BBL, Fraxel, fillers and lymphatic drainage.

DJ was media celeb Geneviève Borne, her outfit – and hair – a Pantone pop of colour. A great hit was Le Foto Booth – packed as social media fans grabbed their moment in the spotlight.

And of course everyone looked fabulous: Met-gala ready!



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Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Atwater Club hosts ‘HOT for Hormones’

The Westmount-adjacent Atwater Club recently hosted HOT for Hormones, an organization co-founded by **Nancy Essebag-Christie** and **Annie Touchette**.

Donna Saker, The Beat 92.5, was the enthusiastic emcee.

The sold-out full-day event featured a workshop on perimenopause and menopause led by **Elise Dubuc**, co-founder of Sensolia and a gynecological surgeon specializing in sexual health, gynecology, and pediatric/adolescent gynecology; **Sacha Bourdage**, CEO Sensolia, wellness expert; and **Amadea Kezar**, a physiotherapist specializing in pelvic floor dysfunction and pelvic health, and founder of ASK Physiotherapie Westmount.

Also offered was a nutrition workshop led by **Nancy Essebag-Christie**, certified integrative nutrition health coach at Health Coach Mama.

Nancy guided attendees through the importance of balancing blood sugar during perimenopause and menopause, emphasizing how this can support weight



Annie Touchette, Sacha Bourdage, Amadea Kezar, Donna Saker, Nancy Essebag-Christie and Dr. Elise Dubuc.

loss, reduce hot flashes and ease mood swings.

Guests then moved into an energizing session that blended yoga, Pilates and

strength training, led by **Annie Touchette**, certified yoga and Pilates teacher and menopause movement specialist at Club Atwater, along with **Veronika Mikulis**, cer-

tified strength trainer.

The day wrapped up with a workshop by **Catherine Paquette**, human design and self-discovery coach. hotforhormones.com



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Social Notes
VERONICA REDGRAVE

The Pepsi Forum was the super site for the 10th anniversary celebration of A Brilliant Night, founded by Westmount sisters **Alana Wexler Schwartz** and **Suzanne Wexler**, working with **Marie-Claude Lacroix** and **Madeleine Paquin**.

The event raises awareness and funds for brain cancer research at The Montreal Neurological Institute-Hospital (The Neuro) of McGill University, headed by **Kevin Petrecca**, chief of surgery, who attended with his wife **Myriam Douville**.

Neuro director **Guy Rouleau** was there with his wife **Monique Polak**. Hosted by media personality **Anne-Marie Withenshaw**, the *soirée* sparkled with an interactive performance from entertainer **Gregory Charles**, there with his wife **Nicole Collet**.

Guests enjoyed a delicious night with stations from *Beatrice Ristorante*, *Buffet Il Gabbiano*, *Burger Bar*, *Cirka Distilleries*, *Notkins*, *Knisherie Leche*, *Le Fournil*, *G Pizza*, *Miss Prête à Manger*, *Traiteur Phoenix*, *Prêt à Table/Société Traiteur* and *Sweet Isabelle*, among others.

Major sponsors were **BMO (\$50K)** and

Brilliant Night goes off brilliantly



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The evening's honorary vice-presidents were **Abe Adham**, managing director – head Quebec investment banking, *TD Securities Inc*; **Nicole Collet**, general manager, business applications *Microsoft*; **Lorena Cook**, *Sarah's Fund*, *Cedars Cancer Foundation*, The Neuro advisory board Member; **Eric La Flèche**, president/CEO, *Metro Inc*; **Alexandre Le Bouthillier**, AI Entrepreneur and angel investor; and **Madeleine Paquin**, president/CEO, *Logis-tec*.

Working with event committee chair

Alana Wexler, and planning chair **Kaitlin Zwirek**, committee members were **Sadaf Baig**, **Roberta Bennett**, **Sheryl Goldstein**, **Leslie Hacker**, **Katherine Jolin**, **Lisa Kerub**,

Stephany Michaud, **Mia Patt Nooshin Sheibany**, **Heidi Small**, **Marion Van Horn**, **Robin Westhaver**, **Suzanne Wexler**, **Heidi Wilk** and **Linda Zegarelli**.



Nicole Collet, Gregory Charles, Alana Wexler Schwartz, Suzanne Wexler, Anne-Marie Withenshaw and Kevin Petrecca.

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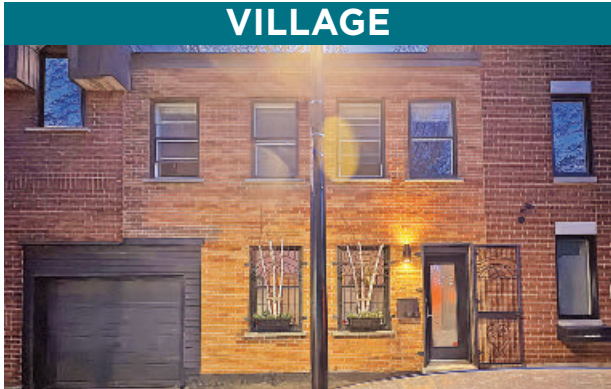


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