

Many advocate delay till new council

## City council votes 5-3 to approve southeast re-development project

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Despite being billed as a “special” council meeting to provide the “final” approval for the five by-laws related to the city’s “vision” for re-zoning for the southeast re-development project, the session September 18 attracted a standing-room-only attendance at city hall. Of the many questions, most generated hearty applause to suggestions that approvals be held off until

## Municipal election news

In the race

coverage to come:

- Geoffrey Chambers (District 2)
- Gurveen Chadha (District 4)

after the municipal election November 2.

After opening with lengthy explanations of each by-law by Councillor Matt Aronson, questioners continued to ask that their adoption be put on hold for consideration by the new city council.

It was not until more than two hours later, however, that council votes were called for each of the five by-laws resulting in each one being approved 5-3 with the councillors who voted against each one, in order of the vote, being Kathleen Kez (District 8), Elisabeth Roux (District 2) and Antonio D’Amico (District 1). Anitra Bostock (District 5), who was not in the room, was viewed voting her approval to each one online.

“We knew from the beginning this would be divisive,” Mayor Christina Smith said in opening the meeting. “Today, this [south- continued on p. 7

## Contactivity holds open house on Victoria



Seen here with handcrafted knits from Contactivity’s Busy Bees program at the senior centre’s September 18 open house are, clockwise from left, Lily Lam, executive-director Benita Goldin, board president Ann Rutledge and Busy Bees knitting and crocheting teacher Catherine Jones. See p. 14 for story.

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## Fire near Packard

A source told the *Independent* that a fire broke out September 20 in the lane behind the former Packard car dealership at 4024-32 St. Catherine just west of Atwater, “with fire trucks, police and Westmount Security vehicles on the scene.”

The building is currently unoccupied and is next to an empty lot. We hope to have more details in our next issue. – WI.

Don’t miss our Autumn  
Social Calendar, see p. 15  
Westmount’s Terry Fox run  
exceeds target, see p. 17

## Note to all readers

Please read my editorial on p. 18, re-published from last week. If you agree with me, we’d love to hear from you, for publication.

## Thank you, volunteers

Thank you to all our newspaper-distribution volunteers, who distributed over 3,000 newspapers door to door last week! – For the latest details on our efforts to mitigate the effects of Canada Post’s limited strike that interrupts its distribution of the *Independent*, please see our website.

DAVID PRICE, EDITOR

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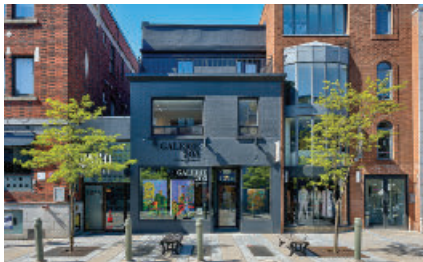
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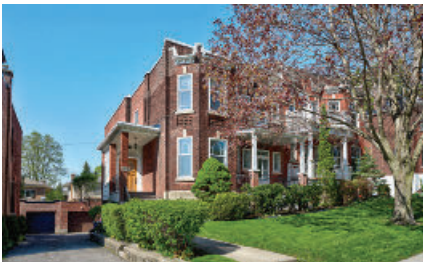
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# Public Security tracks down 'water-bombing' youths caught on video

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A 14-year-old boy who attends "a neighbourhood school" along with two others, was identified and tracked down through a house video following a "water-bombing" incident last week, Public Security officials confirmed. When a resident opened the front door, a water balloon was thrown into the vestibule, missing its target but bursting in the house.

The incident was captured on video, which the resident took to Public Security, resulting in officers going to the school. While the school administration was reported to have not been available, "we took the matter seriously and followed up," explained Public Security director Greg McBain.

One such incident occurred on Strathcona and another on Arlington.

In the video, which the *Independent* has seen, one boy knocks loudly and roughly on two side-by-side doors to try to get residents to come out. Up to four other boys

could have been part of the group waiting with balloons.

A \$124 ticket was issued under the city's nuisance by-law to the one boy whose identity was "positively confirmed," McBain said. But it was also understood that the school was dealing with the students.

## Resident helps recover stolen car

A stolen car was recovered in front of a house on Lansdowne Ave. between Côte St. Antoine and Sherbrooke, September 16, Public Security officials said. The car had been reported as "possibly" stolen after a resident found it around 6:10 pm. It was confirmed when Public Security checked out the car's VIN number seen through the windshield and discovered the vehicle had, in fact, been reported as stolen.

Described as a KIA Soul, it had been reported earlier in the day and was referred to police.

## Intoxicated cyclist falls off bike

A 21-year-old cyclist fell off his bicycle on de Maisonneuve just west of Greene, September 12, Public Security officials said. The incident was reported at 11:03 pm by someone who stated he had been "going in and out of" traffic. On attending, the man explained he had had "a lot to drink" and was described as heavily intoxicated. Considered to be a danger to himself, he was taken to hospital.

Letters to the Editor, p. 8

Police Reports, p. 10 & 12

Social Calendar, p. 15

Pet page, p. 16

Social Notes: Centaur, p. 21

*September 22 was the last day of summer*



But it still looked fairly summery on Victoria Ave.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.



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Candidate announces platform, supports Gallery

# Jean-François Emmanuel runs for District 2 council seat

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Having lived in Westmount for some 20 years, Jean-François Emmanuel, a resident of District 1, is actually running for city council in District 2. This, he said, was to not conflict with a declared candidate he knows who lives on the same street.

“I thought it was the right thing to do,” he told the *Independent*.

While he knows many residents in District 2, he explained, he also lived on Windsor Ave. in District 4 for about 12 years.

“A few years ago, we moved to Upper Belmont, another beautiful street, with its own character but with the same sense of living in one of the nicest cities in Canada surrounded by parks and green spaces.”

Now that his family is older, he explained, “I feel the time is right to give back in another way.”

His campaign platform, he said, “is to make sure all residents who live here – all ages and communities – feel they have a place in Westmount, and to ensure safety and security.” If elected, he would also promote “employee engagement and innovation, and ensure that our roads are kept in the best state possible.”



Jean-François Emmanuel photographed at his home on September 13. PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

Emmanuel, who holds bachelor degrees from the University of Montreal in industrial relations (2000) and law (2003), has spent

some 25 years professionally in HR and industrial relations. “I believe this, combined with my long roots in Westmount, gives me the experience, judgment and commitment to serve effectively as a city councillor.”

Professionally, he lists working in HR with organizations of various sizes in both Canada and the United States. This includes “several management positions in complex, constantly evolving companies.” He names these as including the Old Port of Montreal, Aramark, Amazon, GDI Group and Dollar Financial. He currently works for an executive recruitment firm called Mandrake. “We specialize in working with diverse organizations to improve employee engagement.

“For this initiative [running for council], I have numerous ideas on how to improve [the city]” involving better communication when roadwork is being done and regarding important city initiatives.

“I will try to get back to a philosophy that everyone is proud of Westmount... that means arranging little things as they break down and not leaving minor eyesores forever.” By this, he lists “broken lamp posts, old construction signs” and advocates dangerous potholes be fixed in the spring and not left until July. He also aims to ensure that

“our street marking is well done, after winter and that it lasts for more than a season.”

He also lists “traffic flow and fluidity along with resident safety at crossings and parks.” One of his biggest objectives, he said, is to work with the traffic committee and Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) to re-think traffic flow and make some streets one way and add security measures like speed bumps and street-safety mitigation measures, as well as reviewing traffic light synchronization “based on my deep understanding of some areas that do not have the right programming and lead to congestion and driver impatience.”

Emmanuel has been playing hockey for many years in the annual Westmount Old-Timers Hockey Tournament (SWAT) that raises funds for pediatric cancer research.

“I coached in the summer in the Westmount recreational city program. Even though our boys are not hockey players, I always played hockey and, when they were young and learning the basics of hockey at the WRC, I always asked if the coaches needed some help.”

He said he looks forward to meeting many residents on the campaign trail, and listening to their ideas and feedback. He is also “proud” to support Councillor Mary Gallery for mayor saying “I think she is the right leader to guide Westmount forward with vision, energy and integrity.”



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# Confessions of an amateur newspaper distributor – Autumn edition

BY DAVID PRICE, EDITOR

Due to the limited Canada Post strike stopping the service (Neighbour Mail) that the *Independent* normally uses, I distributed over 700 newspapers last week, and 10 volunteers distributed another 2,300.

For an explanation of all our efforts, please see our website.

\*

*Upper Belmont. I'm still only on Upper Belmont.*

And those stairs on the east side of Upper Belmont and Upper Lansdowne

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### NIGHTMARE ON GREENE AVE!

Since June 1, our household has lived through nothing short of a civic nightmare. We are in the corner house at Greene Ave. and Dorchester Blvd., the very intersection where almost all the work [by the city of Montreal on Greene north and south of Dorchester] is staged. What was announced as a water main replacement looks more like the excavation of a Metro station. The trench alone could swallow a bus, and it stretches across both façades of our home.

Every day, we endure the roar of jackhammers, suction machines shrieking like trumpets of doom, boulders smashed, steel pipes torn from the ground, and a constant parade of Caterpillar bulldozers, smaller diggers and beeping trucks. Most of this machinery operates directly under our windows and beside our steps. The vibrations rattle the walls, the windows shudder, and cracks have already appeared inside the corner rooms.

The intersection has become an operations hub. Shift changes, deliveries and crew briefings all happen at our sidewalk. From sunrise to late afternoon, the corner shakes to a merciless rhythm of metal on

haven't gotten any less numerous since the last strike. I counted 17 at one typical house. Ugh.

On the bright side, so many of my old friends are still around, sitting in driveways or hanging out on front porches, including:

- The car with eight (!) antennae. What are the antennae for? Fun? Work? Who is the owner? I lie awake at night thinking about this mystery.
- The realistic cat statue on a doorstep in front of the empty (by the time I go by) plate that appears to be left out for strays.
- Sauron's "Mordor chic" house (bricks and black metal).

stone, a war-zone symphony that makes even a kettle refuse to whistle. Unlike neighbours farther along the street, we have no respite: every cut, hammer, and suction event happens within meters of our walls.

We were told this ordeal would last until December. It is now September 20. Four months have already passed, and three more months of torment remain. For those elsewhere it may be occasional, but for us on this exact corner it has been relentless, a daily assault on body and mind.

- The house with the mail slot sealed, *decisively*, with duct tape and what looks like house insulation. It gives the house the look of anti-asbestos tent or pandemic shelter, but the message is clear: No mail here! (Or anywhere else at that house, as far as I can see.)
- The angry dogs that grab the paper as it goes through the mail slot. In some cases, I remember the house (and dog!) before I hear a bark.

Some friends are gone:

- The super-smelly bong on the front stoop. I always imagined its user as a 60-something dad exiled from the house by his wife and kids to indulge in his habit

Montrealers are urged to be patient with infrastructure renewal, but there is a limit. Our street has become Swiss cheese, our days unbearable, our nights sleepless. Our corner home has borne the brunt of the noise, dust, vibration and traffic chaos every single day. The city owes more than vague apologies and temporary asphalt. It owes real accountability for the scale of this disaster and, at minimum, a mitigation plan for our intersection and a firm, accelerated schedule to finish the corner work first.

M. RAHIMI, DORCHESTER BLVD.

outside. Has he quit Mary Jane? Moved out? Found a room inside that he can use? Smoke on, brother, wherever you are! Or good luck with quitting for good.

- The fleet of pink plastic toddler's vehicles on the doorstep. The house was for sale during the last strike late last fall. Maybe the family has moved? Are the pink cycles climbing dunes in Africa? Or swishing around some swanky park in Paris? Or becoming part of Tokyo's already bright palette? Ride on, little sister! (Or, in this day and age, maybe little brother!)

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Looking straight down at the city's two Tupper parking lots on September 20.

Photos: Ralph Thompson.





**Council votes, cont'd from p.1**  
east] area struggles with crime and hopelessness. Delay has not solved these problems...[but only] made them worse.”

**Choice left for next council**  
The city’s “vision” for the area (principally west of Atwater to Greene and between St. Catherine and Dorchester), allows for the newly elected new council to make choices, she explained, saying that property owners in the area have lived with the city’s zoning freeze for too long. “We owe them clarity. That is why this decision cannot be postponed again.”

The “real work,” she explained, “will begin after tonight.”  
Councillor Mary Gallery, a declared mayoral candidate, expressed surprise at

the opposition when the city was trying to move the plan forward for the new council. This generated a hearty round of applause, led enthusiastically by District 3 councillor Jeff Shamie, who is seeking re-election.

**Suggesting delays**  
Among the many questioners asking for changes to be put on hold was former councillor Marina Brzeski suggesting the council establish a freeze on changes “and let the new council tweak it.”  
“It’s wonderful to have a vision,” said Diana Bruno of Springfield. She asked, however, what the cost will be to the city of the required infrastructure. “While we have an opportunity to generate more tax revenue, the bottom line is that it’s the taxpayers who will foot the bill.”

Looking east on August 17 towards the southeast re-development area and downtown Montreal from above the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG).

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COUNTER-PROTESTOR KNOCKED DOWN PROTESTOR, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND

Lorne Mayers recently wrote that protestors on Greene Ave. were harassing locals, intimidating shoppers and blocking access to business. He claims that they knocked down an elderly individual who had to be taken to the hospital (“When will city officials restore peace to our streets?” September 9, p. 8).

Since I am the elderly individual in question, I should tell you that I was not knocked down by the protestors. I was knocked down by a resident of Westmount, a white-haired man who was extremely angry about what we were saying and strode over to seize one of our flags. I ran to protect it. He didn’t see me because I was right behind him when he stepped back and crashed into me, knocking me backwards so that I hit my head on the pavement.

Someone called an ambulance, and I went to Emergency at Verdun Hospital where a nurse checked me out. Fortunately, I was not hurt.

Mr. Mayers must have heard the story second-hand where it got garbled. He obviously does not like the fact that we are protesting on Greene Ave., but we have been thanked by many people.

I don’t know who the white-haired man was because he ran away after the incident.

LAUREL GIBSON, AHUNTSIC-CARTIERVILLE

PROTESTING PEACEFULLY A CORNERSTONE OF DEMOCRACY

I am writing to respond to the letter sub-

mitted by Allan Goldberg in your September 9 issue (p. 8). It’s very disheartening to hear such an antagonistic attitude towards public concern over the crisis facing Palestinian people right now.

Speaking to the protestors can be very illuminating. Some have a personal connection to Gaza and all of them are appalled at the brutal violence being inflicted on the civilian population there.

What fuels these protests now isn’t misinformation – it’s an enormous body of damning evidence revealing that Israel is committing atrocities and applying collective punishment to the Palestinian people. It has been fact-checked and corroborated and agreed upon by countless major media outlets, doctors, human rights lawyers and advocacy groups. This simply cannot be dismissed as being anti-Semitic or anti-Canadian hatred.

Nor are these protests anti-democratic. I think it’s worth remembering that protesting peacefully, though sometimes disruptively, is a cornerstone of democratic participation and has been leveraged by every major social movement of the past.

Lots of attention has been paid to the disruption, but very little has been said of the fact that the protestors’ actual demands – that the Canadian government stop approving arms shipments to Israel and start to take concrete action to prevent a genocide – have been ignored by our leaders.

That these protestors have refused for months to pack up their things and stay home speaks to their conviction. They are on the right side of history.

SASHA KLEIN-CHARLAND, ROSLYN AVE.

SOUTHEAST VOTE A LOW FOR WESTMOUNT DEMOCRACY

September 18 marked an unprecedented low in Westmount’s democracy. Against the overwhelming opposition of affected residents, experts and three councillors (four, if one counts Councillor Peart, who flip-flopped\* at the last minute), Mayor Smith and her allies on council, rammed through the ill-conceived LEMAY plan for the southeast, rather than holding it over to the next council.

That would have allowed residents to debate the matter with candidates in the ongoing election campaign, and for badly needed improvements to be studied and incorporated.

Mayor Smith and her allies argued that delaying a vote on LEMAY until after the imminent municipal election would kill the plan and necessitate starting over. The mayor knows this that is not the case, and in fact, when asked, no member of council could provide any legal underpinning for this misleading assertion.

In 2017, this same mayor, citing the proximity of the upcoming elections, held over the AGIL plan to the next council. That was not only wise, but it is the precedent that proves that the process does not need to be started over. The AGIL plan was not shelved by that delay, but by the new council led by Mayor Smith, which never put the plan to a formal vote.

That was a lost opportunity to develop the southeast. It took council another six years to tackle this important issue, disappointingly with a worse plan than the 2017 AGIL plan.

Leadership requires wisdom. It requires our elected representatives to listen to the legitimate concerns of their electorate who will live with the consequences of council’s decisions for decades to come.

Let us hope the next council possesses the necessary skills and integrity to restore our democracy to the high standards Westmounters expect of it.

PETER F. HOFFMANN, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

**Editor’s note:** Peter Hoffmann considers that Councillor Peart “flip-flopped” because, up until the last minute, Peart shared, often behind closed doors, his preference to extend the discussion on the southeast plan and to delay the vote. I don’t think that it is flip-flopping to have a less-than-enthusiastic view of a proposal championed by your political allies and ultimately by you.

By way of background, Peart voted for the preliminary southeast by-laws on June 18 (see June 24, p. 1) and he is, in my opinion, a stalwart ally of the mayor, for density and for something building-heavy

in the southeast, as evinced by his many columns in this newspaper. Did anyone seriously expect him to raise the banner of revolt at this late date and vote against the final southeast by-laws?

Furthermore, Peart was previously upfront – and so *consistent* – about his mixed feelings regarding the precise proposal on the table at this moment. Listen to his remarks at the September 8 meeting starting at timestamp 31:55.

At the September 18 meeting, Peart continued on this *consistent* theme: “This plan is good, quite good. It’s not perfect, but no plan is ... I’ve advocated for a pause right up until to this afternoon even, so as to allow for a little more time to continue improving before adoption rather than after, but the votes are not there. Faced with that reality tonight, I am choosing to support this framework rather than see years of progress erased by starting over” (timestamp 39:45). He then voted for all the final southeast project by-laws on September 18.

I don’t consider *consistent* mixed feelings to be flip-flopping.

Lastly, I also find it unremarkable for a politician to vote for a specific proposed law that he or she deems imperfect, given the alternative (in his or her view) and the desire to work with political allies. – DP

1:1 PARKING RATIO A BLOW FOR EQUALITY

The proposed southeast Westmount development, with multiple new towers, highlights a serious concern: insufficient indoor parking. This deficiency will increase demand on already overburdened street spaces, creating frustration, congestion, and inequality. A balanced one-to-one ratio one parking space per unit, is both reasonable and necessary. Without it, housing growth risks limiting opportunities and widening social gaps.

Developers may cite new regulations to justify building fewer ..... parking spots, but ulti-

continued on p. 15

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EDITORIAL

# Funny, compassionate, discreet Mayor Christina Smith

It is a civilized custom, I have noticed, to say nice things about outgoing politicians as their terms end, regardless of the speaker or writer’s personal politics.

On the heels of a tense meeting (September 18) and cusp of her last regular one (October 1), let me be the first to start the proceedings with Mayor Christina Smith.

She and I know several people in common, and I had met her socially long before she joined city council as a councillor in 2013. I am sure that neither of us were predicting fighting Municipal World War III over a newspaper’s access to real estate transfers when we last met as “civilians” in the early 2010s.

Perhaps for this reason, I always noticed a laugh or light tone in her voice when we talked, *forthrightly*, about that and other issues to do with coverage. But we soon found common ground! How? By agreeing that real estate transfer access was OUR LEAST FAVOURITE TOPIC.

I also like to joke that she is the head of the Official Complaints Department and I am the head of the Unofficial Complaints

Department, but I think she thought that the titles actually belonged the other way around. In a democracy, views will abound.

Not everyone appreciates her humour. At the September 18 meeting for the south-east, she made a very funny comment – I thought – as she tried to hustle along one of the more long-winded questioners. The person sitting next to me did not see the humour, to say the least.

With all the problems in the world, if we can’t laugh about municipal politics, what hope is there? Work hard, argue hard, lobby hard – yes. But leave some room for chuckles. It’s all First World stuff. Ninety percent of the world would kill to have our problems and controversies.

More seriously, I have known her to get involved in situations – not appropriate for coverage – where discretion and compassion were required, and to excel at both.

Humour, compassion and discretion – our next mayor would do well to walk in Mayor Smith’s footsteps in these regards. *Bonne retraite*, Christina, at least from Westmount municipal politics. – DP

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Running for second mandate in District 1

D’Amico advocates for return to weekly garbage pick-up

By Laureen Sweeney

District 1 councillor Antonio D’Amico announced his decision recently to seek a second term on city council representing the largest geographic district in Westmount, one that includes Summit Woods. He currently serves as the council’s commissioner of finance.

Among many reasons listed in his platform for the district are “to bring back” weekly pick-up of garbage throughout the year. This would include collecting from the backyard for seniors and mobility reduced residents. He also “pledges” to maintain and protect Summit Woods as “green, safe and accessible to all Westmount residents” and to maintain Devon Park “as is” following recent re-construction.

D’Amico also aims to lead public consultation on the re-construction of The Boulevard, “which is our next big project in District 1,” saying “I believe residents know their district best.”

Another, he says, is to help prioritize projects aimed at catching up on infrastructure needs such as re-construction of roads and “to make Westmount streets safer and cleaner by increasing street



Antonio D’Amico at the August 4 city council meeting.

cleaning and the number of public security officers.”

He also opposed the timing of the adop-

tion of council’s southeast development plan (see p.1).

Pre-budget consultation

A chartered professional accountant (CPA) by profession in both Quebec and the United States, D’Amico serves as the city’s commissioner of finance, and aims “to improve the [city’s] information structure so as to provide more timely financial reporting transparency to residents.” This includes pre-budget public consultation meetings.

D’Amico is a graduate of McGill and mentors young accountants in obtaining CPA designations.

As a member of the city’s environment committee, he told the *Independent* he will

be “recycling and re-using his posters from previous campaigns.” D’Amico lost by four votes (to Anitra Bostock, who went on to be councillor for District 5) in 2017 and won by 141 votes in 2021, beating out Marcy Katz and Jane Silverstone Segal.

He maintains a commitment to “green” accounting. This is defined as incorporating costs of sustainably into financial budgeting.

Served as WMA president

Before running for council, D’Amico was a president of the Westmount Municipal Association (WMA) in 2017, a position once considered to be a stepping stone to city council.

Police Report

Police arrest Bureau en Gros shoplifter after ID-ing suspect

By Martin C. Barry

A quick perusal of security camera footage was all that Montreal police and staff at the Bureau en Gros office supplies store on St. Catherine St. needed to swiftly identify a shoplifter who walked in last week, grabbed a phone charger, then briskly walked out without paying.

With the security system recording virtually every move, staff hardly reacted when the suspect walked out with the stolen merchandise around 11 am on Saturday, September 13.

“The suspect walked in, had a look around the store, and then left with a portable battery charger that was worth around \$130,” said Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit.

A witness immediately called the police, who arrived shortly afterwards and screened the security recording.

A still image of the suspect from the video was relayed to officers out on the beat. They quickly located the suspect and made an arrest.

“He was someone who was known to us, but with the picture, we were able to find him,” added Yigit.

Wallet stolen from sleeping tenant

Also on September 13, albeit during the early morning hours, a tenant who’d been sleeping in a basement apartment on Dorchester Blvd. noticed that his wallet containing credit and bank transaction cards went missing while he was asleep.

“When he woke up, he noticed that his

basement window was open and he found that suspicious, so he closed the window,” said Yigit.

“But he then realized later that transactions were done overnight on his bank card.

“So, he put two and two together and concluded that the suspect came in through the basement window, stole his wallet and left.”

As there was nothing in the incident report written up by the investigating officer to indicate there were any surveillance cameras at the apartment or in the vicinity, the police have almost no leads.

Items stolen from SUV

Finally, on September 15, a Nissan Kicks subcompact SUV that was parked briefly around daybreak on Sherbrooke St. was robbed of some personal items belonging to the owner.

The owner told police that after parking around 5 am, he returned an hour later to find that sunglasses, an iPad and a Hudson Bay blanket were missing.

In his written complaint submitted to the police, the owner noted a “strong, heavy, dirty smell in the car,” while adding that the interior appeared to have been disturbed.

The investigating officer’s report noted that there were no signs or markings on doors to suggest tools were used for a forced entry, and that none of the windows had been broken.

“I think he left his door unlocked,” Cst. Yigit concluded.

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Police Report

# Police thank local teen for help in burglary suspect arrest

By Martin C. Barry

Staff at Station 12 on Stanton St. presented a teenage Westmount resident with a Montreal police department certificate of appreciation recently after he provided some crucial assistance in the arrest of a burglary suspect believed to be responsible for a string of household break-ins in Westmount over the past few months.

According to Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit, Charles Seitz's actions, which included using physical restraint to detain the suspect, were crucial to the arrest of a 57-year-old man, later identified in news reports as a West Island resident.

News reports also asserted that the man, a Romanian national, served time in prison in England and Germany for burglary offences. He is facing charges here regarding 21 burglaries, all allegedly committed in Westmount.

In April, the *Independent* reported on a few of these burglaries, which took place over a period of less than 24 hours at homes on Roslyn, Grosvenor, Lansdowne, Victoria, Belmont and other Westmount streets.

According to witness accounts as well



Charles Seitz, centre, with a certificate of appreciation from Montreal police – and a large group of well-wishers, including Mayor Christina Smith and Public Security director Greg McBain.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SPVM.

as complaints filed at Station 12, the suspect was seen wandering around on those streets late at night, while trying front and back doors as well as windows.

He was usually spotted between two and four in the morning. He was described as a thin, white, middle-aged male wearing

a hoodie and surgical mask.

The turning point came on the night of August 13 when the suspect broke into a house where he and the son of the dwelling's owner, came face to face. An altercation ensued, during which the suspect was subdued, after which the police arrived and

made an arrest.

A police spokesman said at the time that the suspect, while attempting to escape, rushed at the owner's son who was standing in the way of the exit, but that the suspect was subdued.

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# Gonçalves' crowdfunding book sheds light on plight of foster children

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A Victoria Ave. resident has launched a crowdfunding campaign to help pay the costs of publishing a book she hopes will serve as a useful resource for young adults with challenging pasts as well as the professionals who support them.

Jane Gonçalves's book, *À la recherche de ma bonne étoile* (*Searching for my Lucky Star*), is set to be released on September 24. While it is initially being issued in French by Performance Edition, an English-language version is also planned.

Originally from France, Gonçalves spent the first 18 years of her life being tossed around in that country's child protection system, which appears to suffer from many of the same shortcomings as child-protection services here.

After spending 14 years in foster care, she was removed from her adoptive family following a negative judicial report on her adoptive parents. Afterwards, she wandered between group homes and psychiatric hospitals.

## What happens when foster children 'age out'?

As Gonçalves notes in a description of her project on an internet fundraising page, every year thousands of young people in Quebec and France enter adulthood, without family support, after leaving institutional care.

Many face significant challenges, including material insecurity, isolation, mental health issues, dropping out of school or work, and the absence of a support network.

"These difficulties make their transition to adulthood especially vulnerable," she said. "Yet, with appropriate guidance and access to resources, it is possible to recover and thrive."



Westmounter Jane Gonçalves seen on Victoria Ave. on September 7.

It was in this context that she wrote the book, to share lessons learned, nurture hope and provide useful guidance to those who need it or who help young people in need of support.

"I just felt I had to do something, because watching the news about mental health and child protection services, whether here or in France where I'm from, is astonishing and saddens me," she said in an interview with the *Independent*.

In spite of her difficult beginnings, Gonçalves, 42, became a good student and went on academically to obtain a PhD in psychology in France. She now works as a senior research advisor at the University of Montreal.

Her crowdfunding page can be accessed at [laruchequbec.com/en/projects/a-la-recherche-de-ma-bonne-etoile](http://laruchequbec.com/en/projects/a-la-recherche-de-ma-bonne-etoile).



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# Contactivity Centre opens its doors to public at ‘new’ Victoria Ave. location

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Westmounters who have arrived at or are heading into their senior years were given the opportunity on the afternoon of September 18 to explore some of the programs and services offered through Contactivity’s Centre’s “new” location at 310 Victoria Ave.

Founded in 1978, and located for decades at Westmount Park United Church, Contactivity Centre provides social, educational, fitness, wellness and intergenerational programs for older adults. Its head-

quarters moved to 310 Victoria, #102, last year (see July 9, 2024, p. 1).

At the same time, a celebration was held to mark the official opening of Contactivity Centre’s new day program for seniors impacted by mild memory loss and dementia, an initiative that was made possible through support Contactivity Centre received from the Grace Dart Foundation (see story at right).

“We are pleased and honoured that the Grace Dart Foundation, a long-time supporter of Contactivity Centre, has chosen to support us again this year,” said Benita

Goldin, Contactivity Centre’s executive-director.

Contactivity’s programs, which are offered at several Westmount locations including the Westmount recreation centre (WRC), Victoria Hall and Selwyn House School, are designed to break isolation, foster connections, encourage engagement

and create a warm and friendly environment for seniors.

While Contactivity Centre works in partnership with the city of Westmount, the programs are open to any senior regardless of where they live. The annual membership fee is \$20.

*See photo on p. 1.*

## Grace Dart supports program for adults with cognitive changes

Contactivity’s September 18 gathering celebrated the Grace Dart Foundation donation of \$100,000 to the centre’s new program for older adults navigating mid-cognitive changes, early stages of dementia and memory loss.

The series is designed to provide stimulating programs and caregiver respite. Staff is trained in special care counselling.

“The program addresses a significant gap in day programs for older adults,” said Elise Nesbitt, board chair Grace Dart Foundation. “As this program has just opened, there is no waiting list. Just call us,” said Benita Goldin, Contactivity Centre’s executive-director.

Centre board members present included president Ann Rutledge, Rebecca Alter, Don Hendy, Tony Wait and Sandra Baines. The ceremonial ribbon cutting was applauded by Grace Dart Foundation board members Jennifer Bradley, managing director; Diana Mulrooney and Adrian Dunn, as well as Westmount mayor Christina Smith, city councillor Mary Gallery, provincial legislator Jennifer Maccarone and a roomful of Contactivity enthusiasts. – VR.



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## Social Notes

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### SEPTEMBER

#### Thursday, September 25

**St. Mary's 2025. Girls for the Cure.** Walk to Raise Awareness & Funds for Women-Related Cancers. Students participating are from ECS, LCC, Sacred Heart School of Montreal, The Study, Trafalgar School for Girls and Loyola. 11 am to 1 pm. Murray Hill Park in Westmount.

**Annual Barry F. Lorenzetti Foundation gala.** Theme: Old style jazz. Dress: Cocktail chic. Honorary president Michael Denham, executive vp/vice-chair National Bank of Canada. 5:30 pm. Cocktail. 6:45 sit-down dinner. Live entertainment. Tickets \$875. [Foundationlorenzetti.org](http://Foundationlorenzetti.org). Maison Principal, 872 rue du Couvent. Valet parking.

**Summer Soirée in Support of Breakthrough T1D.** Organized by Westmounter Alex Cooper. Fundraising goal: \$75,000 for type 1 diabetes research. 6:30 pm. Tickets \$95. (drinks and food) [www.tickettailor.com/events/type1optimist/1758046](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/type1optimist/1758046). Ciel Rose – 3709 St Laurent Blvd.

### OCTOBER

#### Friday, October 3

**HLBS presents Ilios Soirée.** Chair Effie Vassilas. Tickets \$400. [Zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/ilios-gala](http://Zeffy.com/en-CA/ticketing/ilios-gala). 6:30 p.m. Maison Principale, 872 rue du Couvent. Valet parking.

#### Tuesday, October 14

**Allegra + Yannick Nézet-Séguin**, organized by Allegra Chamber Music / The Allegra Foundation. 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$50. [Allegra1@videotron.ca](mailto:Allegra1@videotron.ca). Redpath Hall, 3461 McTavish Blvd.

# Autumn Social Calendar

#### Thursday, October 16

**Visual Art Centre's *En couleur*.** Opening night benefit cocktail celebrating the centre's many years as an art school and its ARTreach community programs. Featuring over 100 artists: painting, collage, ceramics and jewellery. 6 to 9 pm. Online auction bidding at 8 pm. Free admission. Cash bar. McClure Gallery of the Visual Arts Centre, 350 Victoria Ave. Information: [visualartscentre.ca/exhibit/en-couleur-fundraising-exhibition-and-auction/](http://visualartscentre.ca/exhibit/en-couleur-fundraising-exhibition-and-auction/).

#### Wednesday, October 22

**Camp Amy Molson Benefit Cocktail.** The camp offers three summer camp sessions to at-risk children and teens. 6 pm. Tickets \$130. (\$100 for 35 and under) [Campamymolson.com](http://Campamymolson.com). Shauna Joyce 514.484.9919. Atwater Club, 3505 Atwater Ave.

#### Monday, October 27

**Au Contraire Film Festival Gala** in support of UP House. Theme: *#EverythingIn-Between*, a look at the ways we cope, adapt and carry on. Curator Cybil Geracimo. 6:15 pm: buffet *dinatoire*. 7:15 pm: film program. 9:30 pm: refreshments. Tickets \$150. [Acff.ca/gala](http://Acff.ca/gala). Hilton Garden Inn, 6939 Decarie. Complimentary parking.

#### Wednesday, October 29

**Atwater Library's Annual Benefit Party.** Guest of honour John Blachford. Dave Turner Jazz Trio performs. Cocktail features Dunn's famous smoked meat sandwiches. Silent auction online bidding opens October 17. 6 to 8 pm. Tickets \$175. Contact: Lavina Alonzo, 514.935.7344. [Canadahelps.org/en/charities/Atwater-library-and-computer-centre/events/2025-benefit-cocktail-party](http://Canadahelps.org/en/charities/Atwater-library-and-computer-centre/events/2025-benefit-cocktail-party). 1200 Atwater Ave./Tupper St. (accessible entrance and elevator).

#### Thursday, October 30

**Festival de musique de chambre de Montreal cocktail-concert** hosted by Phyllis Lambert. Works by Chopin and Brahms

performed by Charles Richard-Hamelin (piano), Andrew Wan and Eva Lesage (violin), Victor Fournelle-Blain (viola) and Denis Brott (cello) 6 pm. Tickets \$275. 514.489.7444. [info@festivalmontreal.org](mailto:info@festivalmontreal.org).

### NOVEMBER

#### Thursday, November 6

**Miriam Foundation's Art Auction for Autism.** Co-chairs Jeannette Hoffman-Zaffir, Carol Tryansky, Judy Wolfe and Franki Yanofsky. Catering: Ristorante Beatrice. Tickets: \$350. [Miriamfoundation.ca](http://Miriamfoundation.ca). 6:30 pm. Maison Alcan, 1188 Sherbrooke St. Valet parking.

#### Saturday, November 8

**65th annual Museum Ball** presented by IG Private Wealth Management. Theme: freedom. Co-chairs Alexandre L'Heureux, CEO WSP Global; Jérôme Péresse, chief executive, Aluminium, Rio Tinto; Tracy Robinson CEO CN; and Erik Ryan, special advisor on stakeholder engagement, Atkinsréalis. The museum will pay tribute to the major exhibition *Kent Monkman: History is Painted by the Victors*. Black tie. 6 pm. Information. [mbam.qc.ca/en/the-foundation/the-museum-bal/](http://mbam.qc.ca/en/the-foundation/the-museum-bal/). Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1380 Sherbrooke St. West. Valet parking.

#### Friday, November 28

**Cedars Celebration.** 10th anniversary of the Cedars Cancer Centre at the MUHC; 25th anniversary of Sarah's Fund for Cedars, and the 60th anniversary of the Cedars Cancer Foundation. Honorary co-chairs Andrew Lutfy and Melanie Cosgrove; George and Simé Armoyan; and Nadim Rizk and Audrey Huot. Gala co-chairs Paola Aprikian and Daphne Tsadilas-Shamie. Black tie. Tickets \$2,000. Information [Shoshana.nuez@cedarscancer.com](mailto:Shoshana.nuez@cedarscancer.com). 514.656.6662 x 228. Legala.ca. Windsor Station, 1100 Ave. des Canadiens de Montréal. Valet parking.

## Letters..., cont'd from p. 8

mately, providing adequate parking does not reduce their profits. They remain profitable. But society bears the long-term cost of insufficient planning. Indoor parking should not be seen as a luxury, but as an essential community resource. Countless scenarios exist where a resident, regardless of unit size, will need a parking space.

Families, in particular, often rely on vehicles to access schools, sports and other activities that are not always nearby. Walkability, transit and cycling cannot fully meet these needs.

Failing to match parking supply with housing growth deepens inequality: those with access to private parking enjoy opportunities that others cannot. A one-to-one parking ratio is not only reasonable; it is a matter of fairness and foresight.

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## We welcome your letters

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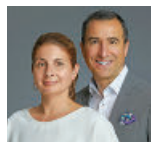
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9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

From the Montreal SPCA cattery, Miss Milly is in need of a new family now. They are truly very full up at the shelter and it would be wonderful if you could keep Milly in your thoughts for adoption.

She is a very healthy grey-and-brown tabby with a wonderful little face. Such green eyes!

An active four-year-old, she is up to date with her inoculations, spayed and micro-chipped.

Please do not hesitate to search the SPCA website at [www.sPCA.com](http://www.sPCA.com), refer to precious Milly's information page from her identification number, 52848243, and plan your visit with her and the adoption coordinators.

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

Please bring your carrier or do not hesitate to choose one from the selection at the on-site accessories boutique. You will also

## Miss Milly



find a fine variety of foods, toys and other necessities there.

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Your neighbour,  
Lysanne

## Happiness for Dex



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LYSANNE FOWLER

Having been an emotional support dog with a strong bond with his owner, things changed for tiny Dex as his owner could no longer care for him. Dex must now write a loving second chapter of his life with a new family.

He is presently in foster care for Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions, enjoying the home and routine even though it is a transition. He has also joined two buddies in his foster family, a dog and a cat whom he has a warm relationship with.

Dex is a very healthy eight-year-old Yorkie mix, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. He is a happy fellow, adaptable to the family's activities and affectionate to all. He enjoys the outdoors and playing in the fenced backyard. He is also getting more time on leash, on which occasions he is becoming more self-confident, as he was less outside in his previous life.

If you would like more information on



Dex, please scroll to the Gerdy's Rescue & Adoptions website at [www.gerdysrescue.org](http://www.gerdysrescue.org) and find details about him on his information page. You can then click on the application form link therein or go directly to it by searching [gerdysrescue.org/gerdys-adoption-form/](http://gerdysrescue.org/gerdys-adoption-form/) to apply for adoption. You can also write the volunteers at their email address [info@gerdysrescue.org](mailto:info@gerdysrescue.org) to enquire with your specific questions and provide information on yourself. They also have wonderful new photographs to share!

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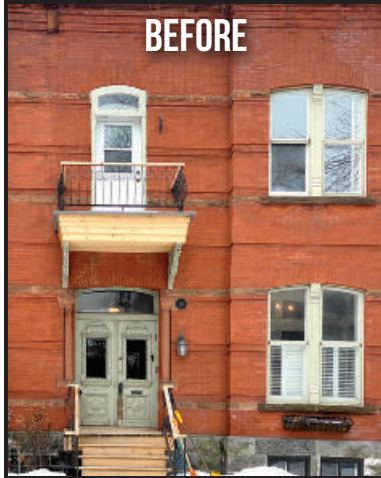
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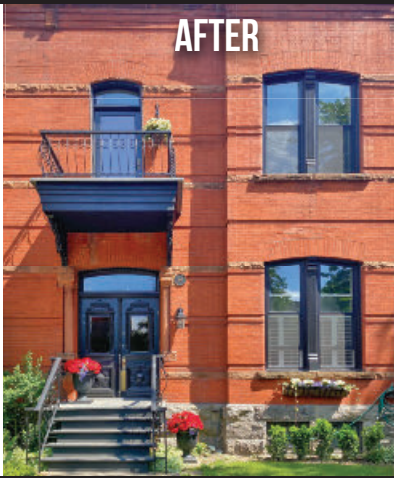
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## Foundation explains increased goal

# Local Terry Fox run at WAG raises nearly \$10,000

By JENNIFER BALL

The Westmount Terry Fox run took place at the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG) on September 14, and the event raised nearly \$10,000, with donations still being tallied and able to be received up until the end of the year.

The charity run organizer, Marina Carricaburu Ortiz, said on September 15: “We had a great day! Twenty to 30 people showed to run/walk, some up to 5 km...”

“We still have to tally up the donations gathered at the pop-ups at the Metro [grocery store on Victoria Ave. at Sherbrooke, where a table registered runners and sold merchandise], shirt sales and raffle ticket sales...”

“A big thank-you to all the local vendors who supported the cause. And of course, the donors, the participants and my awesome volunteers.”

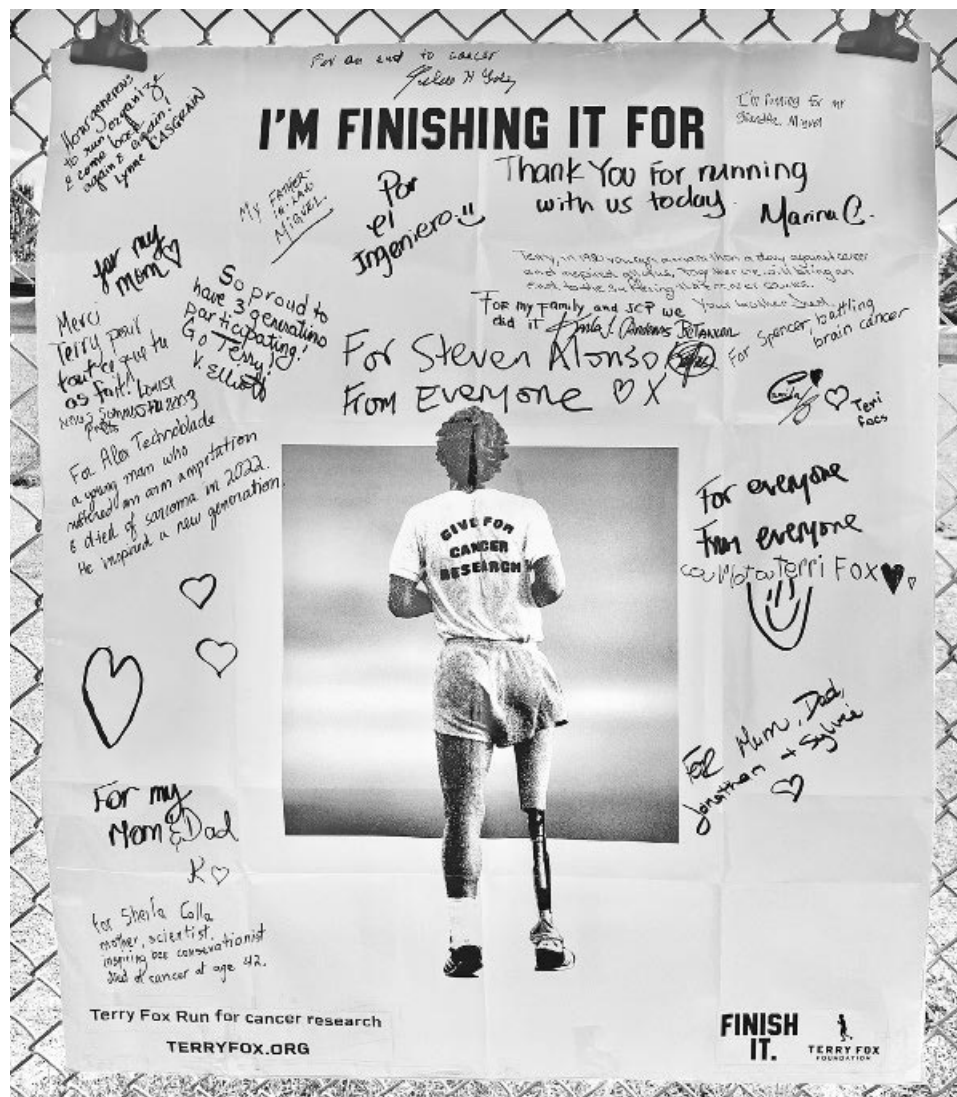
### How was goal set last year?

In October 2024, the *Independent* reported Westmount’s fundraising target was more than doubled (see October 1, 2024, p. 27), but not by the run’s organizer. This year, the fundraising target was also increased, again not by the organizer.

On September 20, 2024, Lyne Benoit, director of Quebec, community and school runs at the Terry Fox Foundation, said that the fundraising target increase from \$3,000 to \$8,000 was caused by a problem with the platform the charity used for donations, saying “This was simply a problem with Crowd change [sic] and this was fixed since.”

According to CrowdChange’s website, it is a portal for fundraising and donor management that lists over 800 entities that are clients, including the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and Special Olympics Canada.

On September 16, the *Independent* asked



The Terry Fox poster showing who the runners were dedicating their run to, as seen on September 14.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARINA CARRICABURU ORTIZ.

Benoit to explain why the 2025 fundraising target of the Westmount Terry Fox run increased from \$5,000 to \$7,200 without this change being prompted by the organizer.

On September 18, she responded and

said “We are very proud of Marina Carricaburu Ortiz, who just completed her second year as Run Organizer. Thanks to her dedication and the support of the Westmount community, the run raised \$9,534 this year – well above the last goal of \$7,200.

That is an impressive increase of more than \$4,000 compared to last year.”

The Westmount Terry Fox run page as of September 18 lists the funds raised to be \$9,852 (see [run.terryfox.ca/93145](https://run.terryfox.ca/93145)).

“Regarding your question about the fundraising target: the Terry Fox Foundation sometimes adjusts goals in recognition of a community’s potential and in the spirit of Terry’s vision.

“During the Marathon of Hope, Terry originally set a target of \$1 million. But when he realized the possibilities – that a town of 10,000 people could contribute \$10,000 – he raised his goal to \$24 million, or \$1 per Canadian [at the time]. Inspired by that philosophy, when we see a run surpass its targets, we raise the bar.

“We do this because we know it is possible – and because Terry taught us to believe it is possible....

“That said, we could not exist without our volunteers. Our role as a foundation is to support them so they can be successful on run day. Marina’s leadership and the community’s generosity show exactly what Terry believed in: that together, ordinary people can do extraordinary things...”

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## EDITORIAL

# Voter: Do you support the city's former, larger budget for ads in the *Independent*?

**Declaration of interest:** I have a financial interest in every advertisement sold by the *Independent*. Read on at your peril. – DP.

\*

Well, this is awkward.

There has been a city of Westmount story brewing for years but that I have tried to avoid because it involves the newspaper and the newspaper's finances directly. But things never seem to get any better, and I think that Westmounters ought to know the facts and get the chance to share their opinions with the election candidates.

In short, the municipal government has gone from being a major advertising client when the paper was founded in 2007 to a valued, but much less important one.

For clarity, the municipal government has never been a 50-percent or similarly important client. The *Independent* is primarily made possible by the sale of ads to real estate brokers.

For further clarity, the drop in spending preceded the current council, although it continued under it.

**All that I am requesting is the restoration of the city's former budget with us, which works out to about \$4 per Westmount resident per year.**

### *I am an ad salesman*

I write "awkward," but I am not ashamed of selling ads by any ethical method, including appealing to voters over the heads of the city of Westmount's politicians and unelected employees. It's your money. What do you want done with it?

I thank in advance everyone who is of like mind and, regardless of their opinion on this matter, I thank again everyone who has ever had a nice word to say about us, me or this newspaper, **including at the city.**

I share two letters with you at right. Looking at the March 2007 one, written before we started, I believe that we have lived up to my hopes as expressed to the council of 2005-9. What do you think?

Over the years, I have sent several versions of the 2022 letter to various council members, without changing the overall downward trend of city advertising.

Indeed, in recent years, the city has accelerated the use of its own pamphlets and flyers (see photo above), which it distributes by Canada Post, the same service that we use for door-to-door delivery.

I can't tell you what a slap in the face these mailings are! (Intentionally?)

There is a Westmount-owned, Westmount-headquartered, Westmount-focused newspaper going out to residents, and – instead of buying its ads – the city uses

the same delivery method to deliver paper publications that it creates from scratch.

Even the city's 2013 study, completed by IPSOS, concluded "The *Westmount Independent* is the main vehicle via which residents keep informed about current events" (p. 15). At that time, "official websites" were at 19 percent and the *Independent* at 42 percent as the primary means of "keeping up with Westmount current events." The IPSOS study is available on our website. It is ironic that the city dramatically cut its advertising support soon after.

### *More ads, more content*

But it is more than that. As a print publication, every advertisement that we sell allows us to have more content.

Why? As we sell more ads, we add pages – and articles – to the paper.

Now, wait a minute, you might say. Doesn't some of the *Independent's* content have nothing to do with municipal government? Yes. Isn't some of it quite light or even fluffy? Yes!

Why should a government want to advertise in such a publication when it can have its own? My answer: if we are doing our jobs properly, our blend of content – serious and fluffy, budgets and ball gowns, jabs and jokes – gets readers of all kinds reading, and gives the ads value, which is relevant even for government. A government-issued publication, on the other hand, cannot have the same personality, or much personality at all.

Some of you may remember that I am a free-market advocate. Is "Mr. Free Market" now asking for a government subsidy?

No! I am not talking about a subsidy. I am talking about advertising purchases.

Is Mr. Free Market talking about a government buying ads for the sake of buying ads, in effect creating a subsidy?

No! I can think of so many instances when the city has had a message that could be better communicated and so help change the targetted behaviour. Whether it is something that is illegal (e.g. wheels not to curb, gravel/dirt on a sidewalk, any number of things without a permit), or something that the city is offering (e.g. an open day, a celebration, a Sports and Rec program, hazardous items drop-off), or something that citizens could do better (e.g. differentiating between garbage, compost and recycling), the city has many,



many messages that could be reinforced with advertising – including repetitive advertising, something it does not do.

This is not some academic or solely self-serving point. In advertising, *repetition works*. Have you ever seen a specific ad by a major brand many times in a short period of time? The world's most expert marketers obviously have the same view.

### *A good newspaper creates community*

Additionally, unlike all our other clients, the city has a community-building mandate. Having a good local newspaper helps make community possible.

I ask you: Is it better for Westmount municipal life that we exist?

Also, unlike most (but not all) private sector entities, a government can take notice of its spending's impact.

Consider a municipality buying snow-ploughing services in a remote community with one possible supplier. Would it want to sign a contract that awarded no money at all in the event of a no-snow winter? In such a case, "Bob's Ploughing" would likely not be there the year after a warm winter. Such a municipality should think win-win, and should use its budget strategically.

We are not in the shoes (or trucks) of "Bob's Ploughing," but there are times of year when a larger consistent government client would make a difference. *Did anyone mention January?*

Another possible counterpoint to a larger advertising budget is that the *Independent* frequently carries the view of government critics, including sometimes me.

This is a point worth considering, but it is not as though the newspaper is 100 percent critiques. I offer plenty of free column space to Westmount's in-power politicians. And I routinely publish views on both sides of an issue, including where I have a clear, known opinion.

But let's address it: Is it weird to ask a government to fund its own opposition?

Well, people are weird and democracy is weird, so it wouldn't bother me if such a funding policy were weird.

But upon reflection, I don't think it is odd for a democratic government to fund opponents, in some way, some of the time. At our two higher levels of government, the in-power government routinely leaves in place opposition-funding legislation.

The federal and provincial governments also have all sorts of checks and balances that they fund, including auditors general, enquiries, reports, research and media through outright ownership.

I am not asking the city to buy us! I am just asking for the old ad budget.

And I am not asking for a fortune, just \$80,000 in Westmount's \$137-million budget – the inflation-adjusted amount of the city's spend in 2014. Just \$4 per Westmount resident per year.

### *Useable by everyone*

One last point: unlike many city of Westmount services, the *Independent* (which is an independent service only partially "paid for" by the city, and that through the purchase of ads that have value) can be enjoyed by everyone. Not everyone can skate, or wants to. Not everyone uses the library. But everyone can get a copy of the *Independent*: at home, online or at a distribution point. Readers can be diehard fans or very casual readers.

Many, in my experience, use us as an insurance policy. Municipal politics is one big joke to these people, until *they* have an issue. And, from that moment on, every word about it is of utmost importance.

All this to say: Westmounters, we are here, 18 years on, in an era when many communities do not have a dedicated local paper. I am proud of our quality level, although mindful of every shortcoming. We are not asking the municipal government to fund us to the tune of 50 percent or anything close to that. But I would appreciate a level of spending equal to what it was when we started. Voters, are you with me?

Every year in the newspaper business has its general and specific dangers, including – I predict – the ones to come. It would be nice to know that I had a partner in the Westmount electorate. If I don't, that is important information to have as well. –DP



Addendum #1

March 9, 2022  
Letter to a city councillor

To answer your question of late 2021, please find a summary of the city’s spending with us in recent years from our accounting system. Thank you very much for your interest and, very importantly, for your business to date.

- Items of note include:
- The largest drop occurred from 2014 to 2015, mainly in city clerk notices.
  - A variety of other factors likely caused the further drops in subsequent years (2015 to 2018), including Bill 122 and the city’s practice of publishing only English versions of some notices, which continues to this day (e.g. January 11, 2022, p. 13).

We have many francophone readers (as evidenced in letters to the editor and letters of support over the years). Language has never been an issue at the paper, and I think our francophone readers value a local newspaper that exists and works as much as our anglophone ones. Shouldn’t their municipal government speak to them in their language in the municipally focused newspaper that comes free to their door?

My pitch for more business from the city remains the same as it has ever been:

1. **Spread city’s message.** Ads in our newspaper are seen, and they are a great way to let residents know what the city is doing with their money, from sports and recreation to street repair, urban planning and public security. They can also convey messages about safety, rules and procedures that save time and increase security.
2. **Community building.** In addition to getting value for its ads, it has also always been my contention that the city, as a government that values community building, should take notice of the effect of having and supporting a local newspaper. Buying our prod-

uct is not like buying more salt for Public Works or wire for Hydro Westmount. It helps bring people together in a moderated and information-disseminating forum.

In this regard, I think that we are a very popular resource for Westmounters, which they all receive free at home and on the internet. Even for habitual non-readers of our paper, we are an “insurance policy” when – all of sudden – municipal politics matters to them.

We are not a city service, but what city service (WRC? Library? Victoria Hall? The Gallery? Public Security?) has such a broad array of users? We reach everyone, every week.

3. **We value all ads, but especially appreciate load-levelling business.** We have always relied principally on non-government revenue, although the city was initially a very large client with a larger mitigating effect during slow periods of the year (e.g. January, July) and a possible one during any advertising recession (which then actually happened during the first COVID lockdown in spring 2020 and the city’s increased spending – thank you! – which you see in the increase from 2019 to 2020).

4. **Inflation bites us all, even before COVID.** If the base 2014 amount of \$61,232.60 were increased by inflation, it would now be \$72,275.36, as opposed to last year’s amount of \$42,206.47 (a 42% decrease).

All this to say that increased spending from the city would be a good thing for its messaging and a popular use of residents’ money. I encourage you to ask them!

If you have any questions, please call, and thanks again.

Best regards,  
David

Addendum #2

March 26, 2007  
Letter to city councillors

I am writing to ask the City to support a new community newspaper with some of its advertising budget. I have codenamed this new newspaper “the Herald.” [...].

Why should the City support “the Herald”?

**Quality.** “The Herald” will be a great community paper. I take pride in all of my products; but, in this case, quality is also a business necessity. It would be pointless to compete with the 4+ existing community papers by joining them in a race to find the cheapest possible content (including in some cases “negative cost” advertorial). I think there is a place in the City for a well-written and well-edited paper that people read and are excited to receive. From a business point of view, I believe that quality draws readers and that readership (ultimately) drives advertising sales. Although quickie publications can make money, quality and profit are not mutually exclusive. Quality consciousness was the reason I contacted and signed **Laureen Sweeney** to be the principal “Herald” reporter.

**Local writers.** I already work with many current and former Westmount writers and editors. “The Herald” will focus even more on local talent. Is this decision mere parochialism? No. Local writers are a great resource because they know the people who make news. They know what is going on. Their neighbours are interested in reading their material. The existing Westmount papers rely heavily on non-Westmounters who miss all sorts of great material and who are known, at best, as bylines. Among others, I intend to work with [a list of former team members].

**Local ownership.** My Westmount home and business addresses will not determine your decision, but local ownership does help avoid many problems. I will *personally* care about quality. I will *personally* care about making “the Herald” a business success and it will be a significant asset in my portfolio. I will be responsive to community issues. You can’t beat hands-on management. [...]

Thank you for taking a look at my proposal. I hope we can build this newspaper together.

Best regards,  
David Price  
President [Sherbrooke-Valois Inc.]

City of Westmount advertising purchases in Westmount Independent

	Jan–Sept 15, 25	Jan–Dec 24	Jan–Dec 23	Jan–Dec 22	Jan–Dec 21	Jan–Dec 20	Jan–Dec 19	Jan–Dec 18	Jan–Dec 17	Jan–Dec 16	Jan–Dec 15	Jan–Dec 14
City Clerk notices	4,415.35	4,554.58	3,291.12	3,678.00	7,859.15	3,720.50	3,644.30	2,230.86	9,904.22	13,051.63	15,323.08	34,112.60
Communications	16,941.20	29,424.19	29,346.91	25,694.34	33,090.92	39,953.40	25,151.02	24,851.51	22,411.52	25,169.30	23,397.68	25,034.00
Events Office	0.00	1,122.27	325.7	426.39	284.26	0.00	1,219.50	954.00	410.00	0.00	272.00	245.00
Human Resources			325.7	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	223.00	0.00	
Public Works	0.00	545.55	545.55	972.14	972.14	452.00	452.00	1,350.00	452.00	1,127.00	1,275.00	1,841.00
Urban Planning			0	1,980.86	0.00	820.16	449.75	0.00	0.00	223.00	0.00	
TOTAL	21,356.55	35,646.59	33,834.98	32,751.73	42,206.47	44,946.06	30,916.57	29,386.37	33,177.74	39,793.93	40,267.76	61,232.60
Change	na	5.4%	3.3%	-22.4%	-6.1%	45.4%	5.2%	-11.4%	-16.6%	-1.2%	-34.2%	

Notes on these numbers:

- (1) The March 2022 letter included the results until 2021 only. The other years were added for this editorial.
- (2) There was an uptick of city spending on *Independent* advertising in 2020 due to the COVID pandemic.
- (3) With inflation, the base 2014 amount of \$61,232.60 would be \$80,328.21 in 2025 dollars.



*The signs they are a-changing*  
**Signage at de Casson-Wood intersection evolves, again**

By JENNIFER BALL

“Continuing or enduring without fundamental or marked change” is the Merriam-Webster definition of the word “permanent.”

This *Independent* reporter was wrong back in August to have used that adjective, though, when describing the traffic and street signage in the triangular traffic island where de Casson and Wood Ave. intersect.

The stop sign, street sign and American elm that were installed by July 11 were removed the week of September 1, and a temporary stop sign was re-erected and immediately graffitied (see March 25, p. 14, June 17, p. 4, August 19, p. 10).

On September 9, the *Independent* reached out to Mugisha Rutishisha, the director of Communications at the city – providing September 11 as the deadline to reply – asking the city to account for the activity in this traffic island that measures 10 by 8 feet.

There was no response by the *Independent’s* press deadline.

- Late 2024: a car accident took out the stop sign, the street sign and a tree in the traffic island. A temporary stop sign was erected to instruct drivers to stop,
- March 21: a stop sign and street sign were re-installed,

- Week of May 26: this stop and street sign were removed, and a temporary stop sign was re-erected,
- July 11: a stop sign, street sign and American elm tree were put in place,
- August 31: the street sign was seen leaning over the American elm tree,

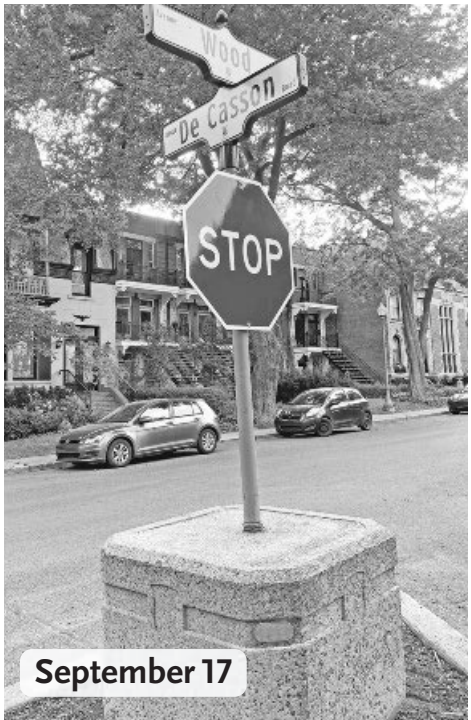
- week of September 1: the tree and signage were removed and a temporary stop sign, which was immediately graffitied, was erected,
- September 17: city workers deliver a stop sign and street sign in a concrete block, but no tree.



August 31



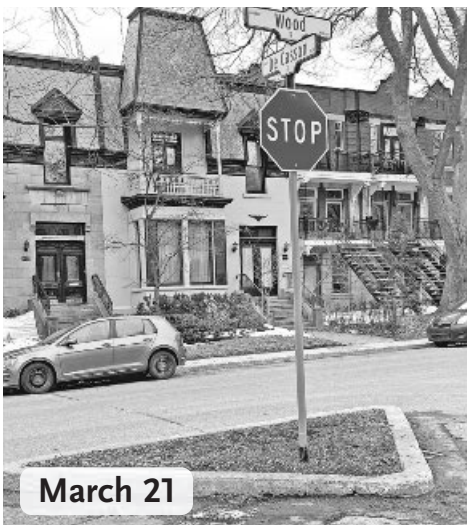
September 9



September 17



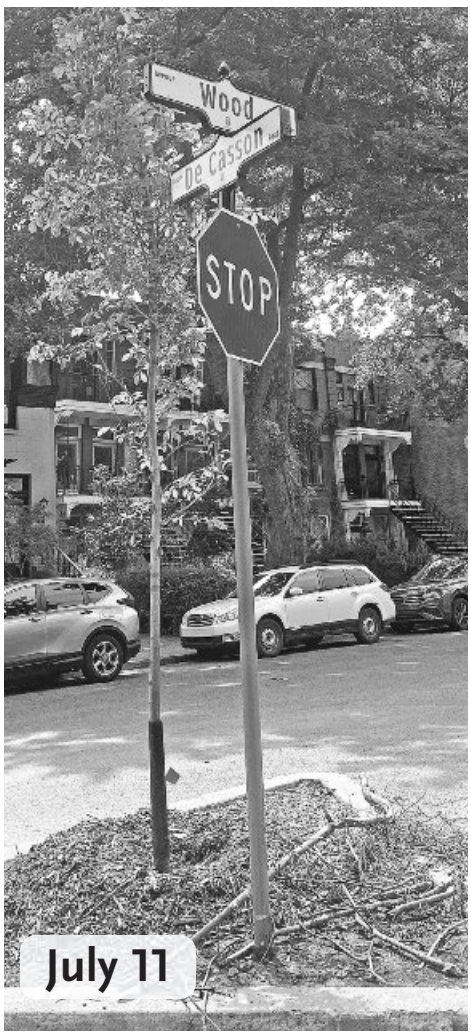
March 19



March 21




June 13



July 11

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## Social Notes

VERONICA REDGRAVE

# Centaur shows supporters completed reno, ‘visits’ Paris



Gala committee members Michael Baratta, Sofia Ruggiero, Eda Holmes, Anna Giampà-Fiorilli, Susan Da Sie, Toni B. Pontarelli, Roberto Menegati, with Centaur's development team Haleema Mini and Sean Ryan.

The Centaur Theatre hosted a magic eve in its newly renovated 122-year-old heritage building. Its ornately decorated lobby transported guests into 19th-century Paris.

Creatively designed by Roberto Menegati (Menegati Design), the décor was inspired by Baz Lurhmann's hit 2001 film *Moulin Rouge!*

The cocktail *dinatoire* took place in the theatre's gallery, catered by the multi-talented Menegati. The open bar was sponsored by the SAQ. Guests enjoyed exploring the theatre's basement, where a makeshift speakeasy, "The Garden of Underearthy Delights," featured a mixologist crafting signature drinks.

Some VIP's noted included the Centaur's board chair **Susan Da Sie** and **Denis Asquini**, and board chair emeritus **Michael Baratta** (deputy business unit leader, Quebec, audit, partner, KPMG LLP, representing corporate patron KPMG), as well as board members **Anthony Czaharyn**, **Sofia Ruggiero** (with spouse ..... and corporate patron ..... continued on p. 22

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Performer Votre-Dame and George Nader.



Michael Fedele and Danièle Simoneau.



Roberto Menegati and Joni Gaines-Jennings.

**Social notes, cont'd from p. 21**

Denis Leftakis of Redemac Inc.), and Norma Tombari.

Other patrons included **Jean-François Dion** and **Nathalie Roussin**, The Kent Group, and **Michael Fedele** vp client experience Exeaire Aviation (attending with **Danièle Simoneau**).

Long-time supporters in attendance included **Anna Giampà-Fiorelli**, **Belle and Ernie Grivakis**, **Toni Pontarelli**, **Dana and Tom Velan**, Quebec's honorary consul of Armenia **Levon Afeyan**, there with **Ana Papazian**; **Marie-Christine Cojocar** from the Caisse Desjardins de la Culture, TV director **Timothy Southam**, and **Francesca Torasso** and **Bruce Bessner**, representing the SAQ.

Guests admired C2, the \$4.2-million enlarged theatre space, a renovation supported by the provincial and federal governments. The Centaur's artistic and executive director **Eda Holmes** introduced the evening's mistress of ceremonies, powerhouse Montreal thespian **Leni Parker**.

(Parker will be seen at Centaur next sea-

son in the English-language premiere of Quebec playwright Michel Marc Bou-chard's *Kisses Deep*.)

Sporting a feather boa and top hat – a *Moulin Rouge!* echo – Parker was joined on stage by two of her *Kisses Deep* co-stars, **Yves Jacques** and **Lyndz Dantiste**. Backed by **Sarah Segal-Lazar** and her band, The Tony Sopranos, **Jacques and Dantiste** performed tunes from *Moulin Rouge!*

In keeping with the bawdy spirit of the evening, burlesque artist **Darragh Mondoux**, also known as *Votre-Dame*, performed a tasteful-but-racy burlesque number while the theatre's newly installed fly-tower lifted set pieces into the air to reveal the full scope of the renovations – a theatre strip-tease.

As the evening wound down, guests ended the eve on a sweet note.

Desserts were sponsored by Mini Muf-fins MTL and Non Solo Pane, as well as Centaur's longtime patron and donor **Marisa Testa**.

Parting gifts included gourmet Italian chocolates and two tickets for any play in Centaur's upcoming season.



Susan Da Sie, Michael Baratta, Leni Parker and Eda Holmes.



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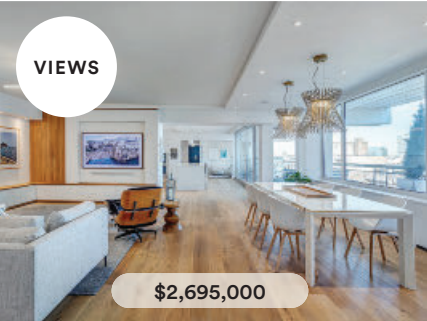


**Ville-Marie**  
3177 CH. ST-SULPICE

5 4 + 1 1 1 2



**Westmount**  
30 SUNNYSIDE AV.



**Golden Square Mile**  
1545 DOCTEUR-PENFIELD AV., APT. PH3



**Mile-End**  
5678 AV. DE L'ESPLANADE



**Westmount**  
521 LANSDOWNE AV.

