

# WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly Vol. 20 No. 5b

We are Westmount.

May 12, 2026

HR matter leads to key positions being filled 'temporarily'

## Substitute DG Lapointe now heading city clerk's office too

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

As the city approaches one of the busiest times of year with the start of many road construction projects, city council at its meeting May 5 approved three additional responsibilities for Dave Lapointe (director of culture, sports, recreation and social development), who is already serving as substitute director general in the absence of actual director general Julie Manville.

These were described as resulting from the absences for "an indefinite period of time" of three important positions in the city clerk's office. These involve Paule

Geoffroy-Béliveau (department director and city clerk), Arianne Leblond (assistant director and assistant city clerk) and Myriam Léger (legal advisor and assistant city clerk).

The appointment of Lapointe was moved by Councillor Antonio D'Amico, and approved unanimously.

### Custody of records

The operation of the city clerk's office is among those whose positions are required under Quebec's Cities and Towns Act. The city resolution explains that this requirement is "pur- ..... suant to section 85" of *continued on p. 10*

Go Habs go!



As seen at the Garderie K.I.D.S. nursery school on St. Catherine west of Metcalfe. See p. 6 for another picture of Habs support. PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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## Nearly \$8 million okayed for work on Sherbrooke from Grosvenor to Strathcona, and Arlington Ave.

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

What is expected to be the city's largest road re-construction project for 2026 was approved by city council May 5 at a cost of close to \$8 million.

This is the re-construction of Sherbrooke between Grosvenor – where last year's similar work left off – and Strathcona.

It also includes the re-construction of nearby Arlington from Sherbrooke to the intersection of Côte St. Antoine.

The overall project includes Hydro Westmount and water main work on Sherbrooke, all in the council resolution at a total quoted cost of \$7,874,182 including tax. ....

This is expected to be *continued on p. 7*

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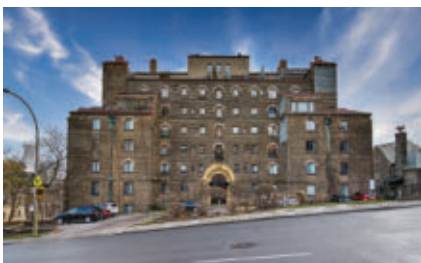
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# 'Disorientated' woman brings out Public Security, police and fire responders

BY LAUREN SWEENEY

A woman described as “disorientated” was found May 1 seated on a walker at 3:22 pm in the area of St. Catherine and Metcalfe, and using words an officer could not understand.

When she tried to stand up, she was found to be too weak and was put in a recovery position.

A medical doctor passing by suggested she be kept in the recovery position while awaiting transport to hospital.

Urgences Santé arrived soon after.

Police were also called when the woman “refused to cooperate” and she was eventually reported to have been transported to the Montreal General Hospital.

## Loose dog recovered on Grosvenor, owner reminded the dog should always wear a licence tag

When Public Security received a call April 29 for a dog running loose on Grosvenor at 7:30 am, officers located it and took it to the station. It did not have a licence or collar.

After a photo of the dog was put on social media, the owner and dog were reunited.

On picking up the Labradoodle at the station on Stanton St., the dog’s owner was reminded that dogs must always wear a licence, according to assistant Public Security director Kimberley Colquhoun.



Carrying out foot patrol on Greene Ave. May 7 were PSO Alex Paleo, left, and PSO Alex Yanyabé.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PUBLIC SECURITY.

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In the

## Spotlight

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Lots of changes since last Retail Watch, p. SL-22

House History: 35 Thornhill Ave. p. SL-28

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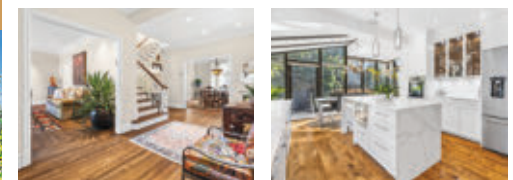
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## 'No mow May' is here Residents asked to let the grass grow for pollinators

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In keeping with “No mow May,” Councillor Matt Aronson, whose commissioner-ship includes parks and green spaces, reminded residents at the May 5 council meeting “to let the grass grow this month.”

Instead of rushing out with the mower to create a golf-course-style lawn after the winter, he explained, the idea is to allow the grass to grow, along with dandelions, clover and other so-called weeds. This approach aims to allow for the proliferation of butterflies and other pollinators.

“Hold off on mowing to ensure pollinators survive,” he said.

This continues last year’s “No mow May” initiative as signed by small pickets in Devon, Prince Albert and King George (Murray) parks as well as at Queen Elizabeth Gardens, Stayner Park and the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG).

Other areas include Clarke and the old train station lawn at St. Catherine and Victoria.



A “No mow May” poster in Prince Albert Park on May 8.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

## Le clocher de Saint-Léon de Westmount: un joyau patrimonial

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# Resident Cukier: Rosemount becoming a dumping ground

Rosemount Ave. resident Rony Cukier and his fellow neighbours have noticed an increase of garbage bags being dumped in front of their homes by passing cars.

“This morning [May 4] while I was sitting at my window, I noticed a dark blue Volvo with two persons in it making stops on the street and emptying out garbage from their car onto the street. This is not the first time that this has happened,” Cukier told the *Independent* by email. Despite wanting to, he was unable to get a photograph of the perpetrators.

“I feel that Public Security during their patrols should try to catch these individuals and severely fine them. ... I am writing you in the hope that you can bring this to the attention of other citizens and if they see people dropping off garbage from their cars onto other neighbouring streets that they take a picture of the licence plate of the car and submit it to the relevant authorities. The only way to stop this is if it's a community effort.

“The security and the police can't be on every street.” – WI.



Extra garbage on Rosemount Ave. on May 4.

PHOTO COURTESY OF R. CUKIER.

## What the fork?



As seen on Weredale Park road April 24.

PHOTO AND HEADLINE COURTESY OF WILLEM WESTENBERG.



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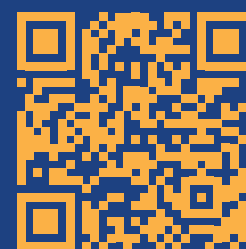
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# Go Habs go!



As seen at the Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom on Sherbrooke at Wood May 7.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.

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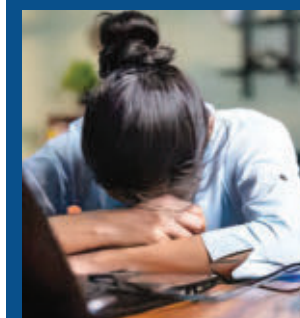


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Sherbrooke St. between Grosvenor and Strathcona will NOT look like this once construction begins, as seen May 8.

PHOTOS: INDEPENDENT.

**Road work, cont'd from p. 1**

reduced when a Quebec tax grant kicks in, Councillor Jonathan Chomski stated in introducing the motion.

“It’s a big job that has to be done.” Mayor Michael Stern added. “The hydro line is at the end of its useful life and we don’t want to be caught in a big mess.”

He explained that the project is within budget and the city will get back three quarters of the provincial sales tax though the city discloses the full amount of the cheque that it will write before the rebate.

**Ventec chosen, same as last year**

The contract was awarded to Ventec, described by Chomski as “the most complying” of eight bidders. This is the same contractor that did the re-construction work last year through the commercial stretch of Sherbrooke from the west city limits to Grosvenor.

This year, the work is also expected to cause some changes in the bus traffic as well as parking on the north side where the sewer line runs.

**We welcome your letters**

We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

KUDOS TO WESTMOUNT  
FOR PEDESTRIAN PASSAGE

Kudos to the city hall for opening a pathway for walkers passing the construction site of 1336 Greene Ave.

EDUARDO LOPEZ BANCALARI,  
SHERBROOKE ST.

THANK YOU, WESTMOUNT –  
HELPING REFUGEES WAS  
A COMMUNITY PROJECT

Dear Fellow Westmounters,

I am deeply honoured to have received the Rotary Club's highest recognition of service, the Paul Harris Award (see May 4, p. 1). I accept it with gratitude and humility, as this initiative was never the work of one person alone, but the result of a community coming together.

Over the past several years, I have had the privilege of helping refugees and asylum seekers newly arriving in Montreal by providing them with donated furniture

from generous Montrealers. This effort would not have been possible without the support of many individuals and organizations.

I owe special thanks to the late Francie Montgomery, whose encouragement and belief in this project were instrumental from the beginning. She arranged for the Rotary Club to lend its truck for furniture deliveries. She helped bring visibility to the initiative by connecting me with David Price [editor of the *Independent*], who kindly sent one of his reporters to interview me at home, ensuring that my work was shared with the Westmount community. Thank you, David, for your invaluable support.

I am also grateful to Minto, the owner of the building where I live, for providing a storage space for donations. The well-known "red box," strategically placed in the building, became a vital collection point thanks to the generosity of the tenants.

My sincere thanks go as well to the dedicated team of social workers at the YMCA on Tupper St. Their collaboration was essential. By connecting me with families transitioning from temporary shelter to permanent housing, they made it possible for these donations to reach those who needed them most.

This initiative has endured through the years because of the kindness, cooperation and generosity of so many. I was simply one link in a much larger chain.

I warmly invite anyone who wishes to donate gently used furniture and household items. Your generosity can make a real difference in helping new arrivals turn

an empty space into a home, in the years to come.

I would also welcome hearing from someone interested in helping to carry this initiative forward. Call me at 514.577.1242.

*Merci sincèrement à tous ceux qui m'ont aidée.*  
VIVIANE AGIA, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

WE SHOULD CARE ABOUT SAFETY,  
THE UNHOUSED AND FOXES

I am writing in response to the May 4 letter, "Let's care more about people than foxes" (p. 8).

Public safety and human compassion are not mutually exclusive. We can care for our unhoused neighbours while acknowledging that unregulated encampments are fundamentally unsafe. The risks – including open-flame fire hazards, sanitation crises and close proximity to a train line – are well-documented realities that endanger residents and the surrounding community. Addressing these hazards is a matter of urgent public responsibility, not a lack of compassion.

Furthermore, managing human homelessness and protecting wildlife are separate, non-conflicting issues. The animals displaced by urban sprawl have no voice, no social safety nets and no agency. We have a moral obligation to assist wildlife suffering because of the environments we've built.

We need to move beyond divisive comparisons toward a safer, more compassionate community for everyone.

Compassion is not a finite resource. It is about advocating for safe, dignified housing while ensuring public spaces remain secure. Instead of creating a false choice between neighbours and nature, let's focus on the real solutions that ensure safety and dignity for all our residents – human and wild alike.

DIANA ANDERSON, ST. CATHERINE ST.

CLEARING THE AIR: OUTDATED  
ARGUMENTS ON LEAF BLOWERS  
SHOULDN'T UN-DO POLICY

We are writing regarding the discussion at the April 14 council meeting on the issue of leaf blowers (see April 21, p. 5).

Two representatives from local landscaping companies objected to Westmount's existing by-law restricting gasoline-powered leaf blowers. They argued that electric models are more expensive, less effective, potentially hazardous and limited by battery capacity. During the discussion, Mayor Stern appeared sympathetic to these concerns and Councillor D'Amico went so far as to characterize the current by-law restricting gasoline-powered leaf-blowers as "greenwashing."

We would like to address several mis-

conceptions raised during that discussion.

First, it is no longer accurate to claim that electric leaf blower technology is inadequate. Many modern, high-end electric models now deliver power (CFMs) comparable to gasoline-powered equipment, making them viable for professional use.

Second, the timing of this debate is significant. This past winter was exceptional with an early snowfall and prolonged freezing temperatures, which prevented many landscapers from completing typical autumn leaf clearing. As a result, crews were left with an atypically large volume of wet, compacted debris this spring. These are unusual conditions that are challenging – regardless of the equipment used.

Third, the views presented at the meeting don't necessarily represent the entire industry. For instance, a randomly selected landscaping crew working in Westmount was interviewed the day after the April 14 council meeting and reported no difficulties using electric equipment – a perspective that was notably missing from the discussion.

On the question of safety, isolated concerns about batteries should be weighed against the routine handling of gasoline, which has its own hazards. Both systems require proper safety practices, and neither is without risk.

The claim that landscapers need gasoline generators to re-charge batteries when doing their rounds ignores an obvious solution: carrying additional batteries, just as crews already bring extra fuel for gasoline-powered equipment.

Furthermore, noise pollution should be taken into account. Gasoline-powered blowers are significantly louder and more disruptive. Reducing that noise is a major quality-of-life improvement for residents.

In addition to the many considerations outlined above, the impact on public health and the problem of noxious emissions deserve particular emphasis. It has been well documented that gasoline-powered leaf blowers emit excessive pollutants affecting workers, residents and the general environment. Electric models produce zero emissions, especially in Quebec, where electricity is generated from renewable sources.

Let's not forget that leaf blowers themselves are a relatively recent convenience, introduced only in the late 20th century. For most of Westmount's history, properties were maintained using quieter, less disruptive methods. Remember the rake? Efficiency has its place but not at the expense of public health and environmental responsibility.

Westmount has a well-earned reputation for being informed, engaged and forward-looking. The existing by-law is a rea- *continued on p. 12*

## WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

*We are Westmount.*

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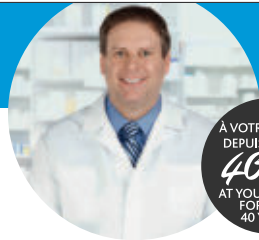


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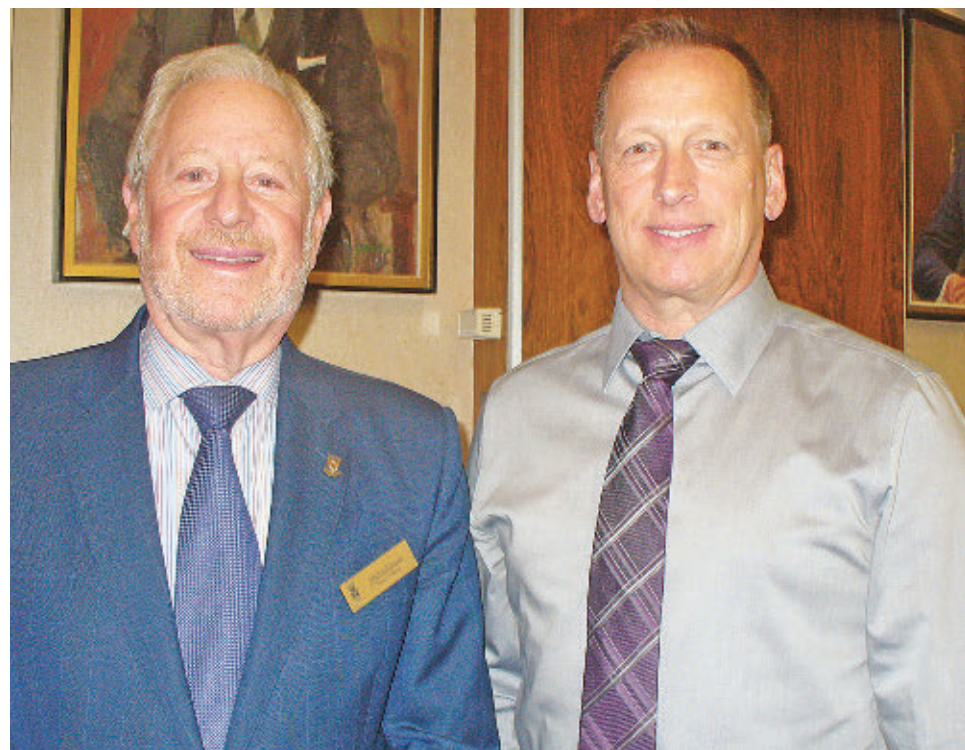


## Residents have questions for council members!



A long line of questioners led off the council meeting May 5 and kept growing longer throughout the lengthy session. Among numerous concerns expressed were the proposed changes in garbage collection schedules, the city's removal of trees at the 500 Claremont project, lack of volunteer-staffed city projects, a request to deny a permit for affordable-housing apartments and the ongoing closure of public stairs linking Wood/Holton and Mt. Pleasant.

PHOTO: LAUREN SWEENEY.



From left, Mayor Michael Stern and senior city employee Dave Lapointe.

### City HR, cont'd from p. 1

that law, which states the council "must always have a municipal officer or employee assigned to the custody of office and records."

While no other information on these positions was relayed as part of "new business" at the meeting, the *Independent* was told that it was an HR matter and as the resolution states the absences were "for an indefinite period."

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As seen on Sherbrooke at Claremont on May 5.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

## Not decorations, squirrel feeders



In Westmount Park between the dog run and the gazebo, about a dozen feeders for wildlife have been hung from several trees, as photographed May 5. The *Independent* incorrectly described them "Christmas-esque" decorations last week (p. 14), although in our defence their purpose is clearer when they have just been filled up with food, as seen here.

PHOTO: RALPH THOMPSON.



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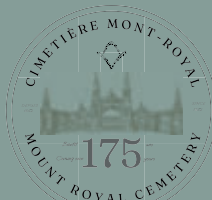


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*Letters to the editor, cont'd from p. 8*

sonable and responsible step toward reducing pollution and improving quality of life. Reversing it would be a step backward.

We encourage council to maintain its commitment to the existing policy banning gasoline-powered leaf-blowers and to demonstrate leadership in sustainable urban practices.

ROSS BROWN, LAURA BUTLER, RICHARD DUFOUR, MIRA KATNICK & JESSICA WINTON – FORMER MEMBERS OF THE WESTMOUNT ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, AND ELIZABETH ROBINSON

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## Police Report

# Suspect shatters window to rob Lululemon boutique

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

After several weeks of car thefts in Westmount, none were reported by police at Station 12 last week, although there was a rise in the number of commercial and residential break-ins.

Following a string of shoplifting incidents in the past few months, the Lululemon yoga fashion boutique on Sherbrooke St. at the corner of Prince Albert Ave. was once again the target of theft – although this time it was a case of burglary.

Around 5:30 am on May 2, a suspect broke into the store after shattering one of the windows on the building's Prince Albert side.

"The alarm went off," said Station 12 community relations officer Cst. Mike Yigit.

He said that when the investigators later examined surveillance camera images taken during the incident, a male suspect dressed in black, carrying a garbage bin, was seen.

"He ran in. He only spent about two

minutes in the store," said Yigit. "He filled it up and then he ran off."

An estimate of the value of the stolen merchandise wasn't available late last week as the investigators hadn't yet completed their report.

However, shopliftings over the past few months at the Westmount Lululemon store have led to thousands of dollars in losses per incident, according to Station 12 reports. According to Cst. Yigit, Lululemon stores in other areas of Montreal are also beleaguered by thieves lately.

"All Lululemon stores are being targeted with the same type of crime – it seems to be a very popular brand," he said, noting that as with the Westmount outlet, shoplifters typically just walk in casually and walk out with merchandise without paying.

### Copper heist thwarted at St. Stephen's

There was a second break-in in Westmount last week, although this time on the site of a residential project currently under development on the edge of Westmount's

south-east limits.

Around 4 pm on May 1, a suspect broke into the former St. Stephen's Anglican Church at the corner of Atwater Ave. and Dorchester Blvd. The church and adjoining property are currently being re-developed to create up to 17 units.

According to Cst. Yigit, the suspect was looking for copper to sell to a scrap metal dealer. After the arrival of police, he was found to be in possession of copper piping being used for plumbing in the church building.

"Someone broke in, the alarm got triggered, police arrived, the owner was summoned, and when they walked around they found the guy hiding on the second floor, and in his bag he had copper tubing," said Yigit.

The 30-year-old white male suspect faces charges of break-and-enter as well as theft.

### Porch piracy proliferates

While doorstep delivery of products furnished by web retail giant Amazon con-

tinues to be popular among many Westmounters, "porch piracy" incidents are being reported to police on a weekly basis.

In just two recent incidents, on May 5 and May 7, packages delivered by Amazon to residential addresses on Sherbrooke St. were never received because someone stole them while they were lying outside front doors in the open.

"Especially on Sherbrooke St., there's a lot of movement," said Yigit, "so if someone is walking by and sees a box, they can just grab it." He said that "every week we get one or two" thefts committed by porch pirates.

Amazon and other web retailers now offer a number of alternatives to safeguard against the theft of delivered merchandise, including package pick-up locations sometimes situated in post offices and convenience stores.

A suggestion made by the police for safe home delivery is to set up a dedicated delivery deposit box so that items are "not in plain view," and are less tempting for opportunistic thieves, said Yigit.

## Re-scheduled police meetings with Wood Ave. area residents set for May 20

BY JENNIFER BALL

The *Independent* received a statement from police officer Michel Yigit of Station 12 on May 6 indicating that the meetings at 1 Wood and the Westmount Square residential towers have been re-scheduled for May 20.

On May 8, the *Independent* reached out to the presidents of the respective condo association to get clarification of the dates

and times. Jonathan Green, who is the president of the 1 Wood condo association, provided a statement on May 8, confirming that the "meeting has been re-scheduled for May 20 between 10 am to 11 am," and Eddy Wiltzer, who is the president of the Westmount Square ownership board, said, "We have a meeting scheduled for 11 am on the 20th of May.

"We are waiting for a confirmation of this meeting."

As we reported in the April 21 issue (p. 7), "current obligations," was the reason Station 12's police chief Marie-Eve Lamarche of the Montreal police (SPVM) cancelled a meeting that was going to be held

with Westmount Square's Tower 2 and 3 residents on April 14, with a day's notice, as well as one with the residents of 1 Wood the same day.

The residents were planning to discuss their concerns about fluctuating protests that have taken place since October 7, 2023 outside the Israeli consulate on Wood Ave. near St. Catherine largely and ostensibly regarding Israel's reaction to Hamas' attacks from Gaza that day. 1 Westmount Square, the location of the Israeli consulate, is adjacent to these three large condo buildings as well as many restaurants and businesses.



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## Pothole Samaritans on Clarke?

In the lane that runs from Clarke to Olivier just south of de Maisonneuve, two men drove up in a SUV on April 22, unloaded bags of finely crushed stone, filled three “tire-munching” holes, tamped them flat and then “receded back to anonymity,” according to Westmount resident Nicolas Matossian on April 30.

“The surface is now smooth and like cement – a graceful gesture that beats the hundred complaints that preceded it.”

The city’s substitute director general, Dave Lapointe, told the *Independent* by email May 4 that the lane is considered public property and is “up for re-construction this year.”

Given the dim view that the authorities sometimes take of unscheduled improvements by the public to public property, the *Independent* has chosen to obscure the faces of the men. – WI.

PHOTO COURTESY OF N. MATOSSIAN.



## Rogue bin, hungry squirrel



As seen in Westmount Park near Melbourne Ave. May 11.

PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

## No end in sight



This house on Metcalfe below Sherbrooke has been under construction for at least five and a half years (see “Locked-down house?” October 27, 2020, p. RE-17), as seen May 11. PHOTO: INDEPENDENT.

# Levitt shares personal film about husband Hess' Alzheimer's



Travel

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Former Westmounter Heidi Levitt returned to Montreal for the première of her documentary *Walk with Me* presented by the Cummings Centre.

The film follows Heidi and her husband Charlie Hess through his four-year journey after his early-onset Alzheimer's diagnosis.

To understand the disease, Heidi documented their efforts to adapt, to find joy and to build a new life together. It follows how their life changed when Charlie, a 57-year-old graphic designer, father and community leader, discovered that his "fogginess" was due to Alzheimer's.

Heidi, his wife of 30 years, determined to better understand the disease, learnt how to live their best life with it and documented every step of the journey. Over the course of four years, what she captures as they crisscross the country is a testament to the strength, resilience and humour of

the human spirit.

While Charlie's cognitive facilities diminish, his charm and warmth take centre stage, illuminating what might otherwise have been a dark journey into a story of love and a reminder that life is really about our relationships.

Director/writer/producer Heidi Levitt has cast films from the Academy Award-winning best picture *The Artist* to movies for acclaimed directors including Oliver Stone and Wim Wenders.

She also executive-produces films with directors she casts for. She is a graduate of Barnard College and The American Film Institute, where she is a senior lecturer in directing.

Heidi Levitt has won four Artios Awards for excellence in casting and is a member of the Casting Society of America and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Cummings Centre will present *Walk with Me* as follows:

Wednesday, May 20 6:30 pm.  
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Charlie Hess, Marion Levitt, Heidi Levitt and Arthur Levitt.

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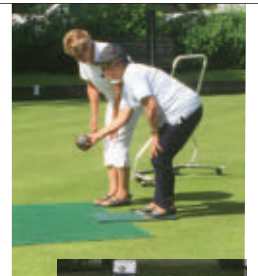


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# Simba – Westmount’s new feline king?



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER



to discuss your interest in Simba and make arrangements for you to bring him into his new home and family. Please bring your carrier to make the trip in the car or select one from the in-house boutique, where they offer a number of models and a great selection of accessories, foods and toys.

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Your neighbour,  
Lysanne

Being an orange marmalade is a wonderful look. Simba has it all: cuteness and personality. He is a wonderful companion and friend, needing a home after his transition to the Montreal SPCA cattery.

He is a very healthy four-year-old, up to date with his inoculations, neutered and microchipped. A happy fellow, he enjoys lying in the sun and watching the kitchen routine to arrive well on time for his meals.

You can find out more about Simba at the Montreal SPCA website [www.sPCA.com](http://www.sPCA.com), referring to his identification number, 2000420331, to then move on to his page with more information and photographs.

A visit is easy to plan as the shelter’s cattery is open every day, from Monday to Friday from 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.

The adoption coordinators are available



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LYSANNE FOWLER

Adorable and social, a wonderful one-year-old fawn-and-black mix in need of a family, gentle Rabbit was taken in by the Montreal SPCA from an overcrowded shelter.

She is very young and would be best in a family environment as soon as possible.

Fluffy Rabbit is affectionate and cuddly, quite playful and keen on meeting people and other dogs.

Rabbit is a very healthy youngster, up to date with her inoculations, spayed and microchipped.

For more information on her, please refer to the Montreal SPCA’s website at [www.sPCA.com](http://www.sPCA.com), scroll to her information page from her identification number, 2000419047, and plan your trip to visit her.

The shelter is open every day to receive you and discuss your interest in adoption. Drop by from Monday to Friday between 3 pm to 8 pm, or Saturday and Sunday from 11 am to 6 pm. It is located at 5215 Jean Talon St. West, Côte des Neiges, Montreal H4P 1X4.

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# Sicily's history might be cruel, but its present is a delight



Travel

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Poet T.S. Eliot refers to April as “the cruellest month,” and May often isn’t much better. So, as we wait for warmth, I invite you to a small town in Sicily: Cefalù (Chay-fa-loo), where I went in late April.

The old fishing village is a far cry from the chaos of Rome or the tourist-dense cobblestones of Florence. However, the island is not unknown: many civilizations have visited, and fought over it with much violence.

Greeks and Carthaginians ruled before the Romans rushed in after the Second Punic War. Then they too fell.

During the 9th century, Arabs were the next conquerors and their influence on Sicilian culture is notable today in the island’s food and architecture.

Speaking of architecture, another set of conquerors, the Normans, arrived in the 11th century, bringing a different look to town. Referred to as the “Arab-Norman”

style, it combined artisan talents: Byzantine mosaics, Islamic engineering and Romanesque design.

All can be seen in Cefalù’s Roman Catholic basilica or *duomo*, one of nine included in the UNESCO World Heritage Site called “Arab-Norman Palermo and the Cathedrals of Cefalù and Monreale.”

Built by King Roger II in the 12th century, the *duomo* makes a massive statement, signalling the power of church and state. Elegant Gothic pointed arches welcome worshippers while tiny holes seem ready for archers to resume a defensive role. Hidden in a narrow corridor, one such archer left his mark (see ..... photo below). *continued on p. 18*



High in a narrow corridor, an archer left his mark.



Sunset as seen from the rooftop South Beach-style terrace at Dokeio.



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Left, the enduring importance of craft. Centre, pop-art gelato. The Byzantine-style mosaic of Christ Pantocrator, above, in the *duomo*, below left.



*Travel, cont'd from p. 17*

The world-famous presbyterium mosaic over the *duomo's* altar was created by masters from Constantinople. Columns and side aisles are simple, leading the eye to contemplate and revere this golden work of art.

I wandered the town's narrow medieval alleys that cross parallel streets – many for pedestrians only. The streets were aligned that way on purpose by the Arab rulers, who excelled in engineering and agriculture.

They were laid out to take advantage of

winds and so encourage air circulation. Sicily gets hot.

And then there's the beach. Sandy strips sandwich the village up against its massive neighbour: La Rocca. The *Molo Vecchio* (Old Pier) was where a famous scene from *Cinema Paradiso* was shot.

Dinner at the Via Roma Vecchia restaurant was *buonissimo*. The sinking sun's magnificent last rays were noted from the roof at the Dokeio bar, where I enjoyed fabulous antipasto.

If you like visiting museums, the Il Museo Mandralisca di Cefalù features the world-renowned portrait by Antonella da Messina.

The artist's enigmatic unknown sailor sports the "second most famous smile in the world after the *Mona Lisa*."

Sicily is renowned for its olive oil. At Cefalù's neighbouring Sant'Amrogia, I had an informative olive oil tasting (bitter, spicy, fruity) with Giovanna Garbo at her family's Frantoio Garbo.

And then, once again, I watched the sun slip into the sea.

(PS: I did purchase some fabulous olive oil, but the 750 ml bottle was confiscated by security at the Palermo airport for being over the carry-on maximum for liquids, so beware. Next week, I'll take you to Castelbuono, and its special sites.)

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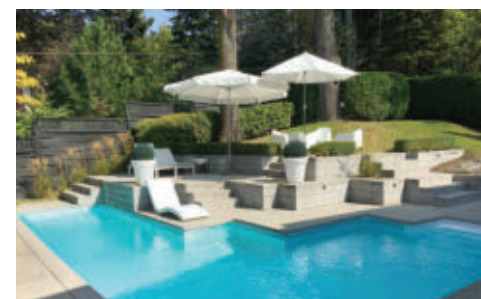


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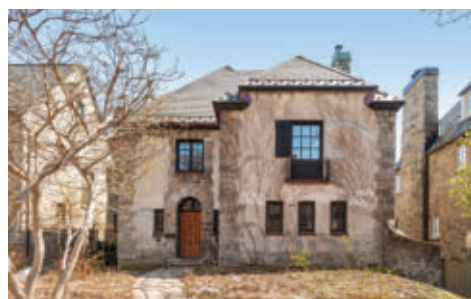


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