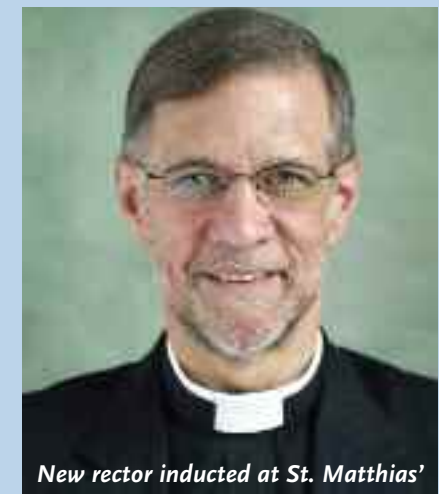


WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

January 13-14, 2009 We are Westmount Vol. 3 No. 1b



New rector inducted at St. Matthias'
Westmount profile
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Library contest encourages reviews

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The new year has been launched at the Westmount Public Library with a six-week contest to promote a new online feature that enables members to review and rate books, movies, recordings and other material they have borrowed.

The interactive feature makes it possible for anyone wanting to borrow an item from the catalogue to glean information on its suitability from other members.

“As far as we know, we’re the only public library in the Montreal area to offer this kind of opinion forum,” said reference librarian Benoit Morin.

In fact, because the feature is enabled by the particular system, Westmount is believed to be one of only a handful of public libraries *continued on p. 2*



Snow clearing on January 9. Photo by Robert J. Galbraith

Glitches plague city council web postings over holidays

Westmounters were out of luck over the holidays if they tried to access the dates of upcoming city council meetings, or online minutes and recordings of 2008 sessions. That portion of the city website was down, although some information was back on line by the end of day January 7.

A list of 2009 council meetings, starting with Monday, January 12, was subsequently posted.

Ongoing technical difficulties with the sound and recording systems in the council chamber are the reason for the absence or corruption of audio versions of seven previous meetings dating back to September 22, according to city clerk Mario Gerbeau.

Citizens attending the regular and budget meetings on December 15 were aware of the make-shift sound system but not of the recording glitches. “We’re hoping to get some of the problems resolved as soon as possible,” Gerbeau told the *Westmount Independent*.

Snow removal may seem simple, but details and uncontrollable constraints place limits on the possible.

John Monteiro, Westmount’s Road and Parks superintendent, explained at a media briefing January 9 that the major bottleneck for snow removal is the fact that there is only one main snow dumping facility available to Westmount, the Butler sewers near Verdun.

“Only so much snow can be dumped there and at a certain rate... If too much snow is forced into it, the sewer can freeze and block passage of the melting snow to Montreal’s main water treatment facility, where it is treated before being released into the St. Lawrence River.

“We can have extra crews, but if the dump can’t handle the truck traffic, we have people waiting around... Everything hinges on the dump.”

The sewer is not only used by Westmount (up to maximum of 28 loads per day), but by Montreal and other municipalities. For environmental reasons, no dumping *continued on p. 11*

St. Ambroise
Canada’s truly authentic Pale Ale.



Enter draw by Feb. 20

continued from p. 1

in North America to provide the capability to members along the lines of those offered by online retailers like Amazon.

Express yourself

The contest, whose slogan is “Express yourself,” is timed to benefit from holiday reading. It takes the form of a draw for prizes in various age categories on February 23.

Anyone who posts a comment or review until 9 pm on February 20 is eligible to enter by submitting one ballot per review either at the library or electronically as explained on the website at www.westlibcat.org. Those without a library card or PIN code can obtain one at a service desk. “The more people use the feature, the

more valuable it will become,” explained Jocelyne Andrews, head of Systems and Technical Services. “We want it to go viral.”

Reviews will be monitored for inappropriate or offensive language and comments, she said. “This is not the forum for that.”

Not only will the comments provide guidance but they will also offer insight into the feelings of the community, explained Lora Baiocco, librarian for Online Services and Archives.

Until now, the feature has been a little-discovered component of the library’s two-year-old online catalogue. A separate staff contest is also taking place as a training exercise.

This will enable them to assist anyone needing help navigating the new feature.



Launching the new feature are, from left: librarians Jocelyne Andrews, Benoit Morin and Lora Baiocco.



Among the new arrivals at the Westmount Public Library singled out by staff are:

Magazine articles for those with New Year’s resolutions:

“Detox your life: our three-part plan helps you banish harsh chemicals from your home, flush toxins from your diet, and free your mind of negative emotion” by Nora Isaacs in *Natural Health*, Dec/Jan 2009, p. 63.

“Manger bien pour vivre mieux: les conseils de dix professeurs de médecine et nutritionnistes” by Doan Bui in *Le nouvel observateur*, Dec 11/17, 2008, p. 8.

Canadian consumer alert: 101 ways to protect yourself and your money by Pat Foran.

Consumer Reports Smart Buyer’s Guide to Buying or Leasing a Car: Save Money, Avoid Dealer Tricks, and Get the Right Car at the Best Price by Rik Paul and David Champion.

For the hockey fans in the family

Legendary Stanley Cup Stories by Brian McFarlane. Hockey glory days, not tabled in statistics or lists, but in the wonderful retelling of behind-the-scenes moments experienced by one of the game’s more respected broadcasters.

The New Game: How Hockey Saved Itself by Steve Paikin. The author, a lifelong hockey fan and political commentator, addresses the recent changes in hockey that have restored the fan appeal – hockey as it is supposed to be played, according to Jean Béliveau.

Open Ice: Reflections and Confessions of a Hockey Lifer by Jack Falla. Veteran sports writer Jack Falla writes about the hockey

he has seen and experienced over the past 50 years – the game, its players, the arenas and even the backyard family rink.

Classic comics revisited

Le sanctuaire du Gondwana – story by Yves Sente, art by André Juillard. Blake and Mortimer, Edgar P. Jacobs’ famous characters, are featured in this recent adventure. Mortimer will undertake a daring expedition to the Tanganyika, searching for a mysterious civilization whose cradle seems to be the crater of a volcano.

Spirou, le journal d’un ingénu by Émile Bravo. This is the fourth in series of one-shot albums where the famous redhead and his companions are born again through the pen of different artists. This is a top-notch piece of graphica in the Hergé tradition. Spirou, an orphan whose only friend is a squirrel, works as bellhop in a hotel. On the eve of World War II, intrigue is everywhere and Spirou will witness horrors that will mark him forever.

Films the whole family can enjoy

Whorton Hears A Who. Based on the beloved book by Dr. Seuss, Horton the elephant come to the aid of the residents of Whoville, bringing nothing but torment from his neighbours.

Kit Kittredge. A young girl enlists the help of her friends to solve a robbery in her home that threatens to put her family’s house into foreclosure after her father leaves town to look for work and her mother takes in boarders to make ends meet.



Ville de Westmount
City of Westmount



AVIS IMPORTANT

Reconstruction du complexe Turcot

Vous êtes tous invités à une séance d’information présentée par le ministère des Transports du Québec. Le projet de reconstruction du complexe Turcot pourrait avoir des répercussions sur l’autoroute Ville-Marie avec lesquelles notre communauté aura à composer.

Quand : le lundi 19 janvier à 19 heures

Où : Victoria Hall, 4626, rue Sherbrooke Ouest

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Reconstruction of the Turcot Interchange

You are cordially invited to an information session presented by the *ministère des Transports du Québec*. The plan to reconstruct the Turcot interchange may have an impact on the Ville-Marie Expressway, and thus an impact on our community.

When: Monday, January 19 at 7 p.m.

Where: Victoria Hall, 4626 Sherbrooke Street West

WWW.WESTMOUNT.ORG



Notaries

Durso & Toone

Andrea F. Durso • Phillip Toone

4635 Sherbrooke West
Westmount, Quebec

T. 514.931.2531
F. 514.931.2534

Totem going up at library

Westmount's totem pole will be going up in the Westmount Public Library sooner than thought.

Councillor George Bowser said that ap-

proval has been given to mounting it in its present condition, hopefully by the end of June, rather than pursuing proposed costly and lengthy work to restore the artifact.

Displaying it in its natural state will in fact be more authentic, he pointed out. The totem is currently being stabilized (see *Westmount Independent*, December 9, 2008, p. 1).

Restoration funds collected by various community projects of the Westmount Horticultural Advisory Committee will be used to provide some form of display unit.

Stuart Robertson back full time at CBC radio

Westmounter and former city councillor Stuart Robertson is back full time at CBC Radio One after a period of illness. He is now in charge of the English radio archives, which hold a record of all the programming from the Montreal station.

He is not regularly on the air covering his previous traffic beat or environmental issues, but has been already been on Radio Noon talking about gardening. He will return again when asked by the show's producers.

He told the *Independent*: "It's just plain nice to talk about gardening, particularly when there's snow on the ground and we can't get our hands dirty in the garden... I've missed talking to the listeners, because they're a great source of ideas and questions to deal with in my gardening columns."

Electronic *Independents* available

Enjoy the Indie at supper time on Tuesdays! Sign up by writing us: indie@westmountindependent.com.

Red Label day for AIDS/HIV

Westmounter and Villa Maria student Sophie Lee is part of the team organizing The Red Label Event, a fashion show to benefit the Bantwana Initiative of World Education. The initiative helps orphaned African children made vulnerable by the HIV/AIDS virus.

The fashion show will be held at the Bonsecours Market in Old Montreal on Saturday, January 17 at 7 pm. Tickets (\$25) are available at Boutique Suteki (1455 Peel St., 514.282.8800). Labels to be featured are Firetrap, Marshall Artist, Bench and Kanvis.

It is the second show that Lee has or-



Sophie Lee

Police: hide goods, remove registration

A number of thefts from parked cars in Westmount over the holidays have prompted police to remind car owners to lock the doors, to hide contents and not to keep the vehicle registration card inside.

"Don't leave anything in plain view," said community relations officer Alain Di-allo. Even items of little value can encourage would-be thieves to break in.

Pointing out that it is against the law to leave a vehicle unsecured, he said that doors must be locked even when the car is parked in a private driveway.

In the event a car is broken into, its registration card can be a prime target. Don't leave it hidden away in the glove compartment, but keep it safely in the driver's possession at all times.

ganized with Jade Wright, the founder of Fashion for Cause. The first was the Betsey Johnson Fashion Show, which benefited breast cancer research.

Lee, currently a Montrose Ave. resident and grade 11 student, plans to study commerce – with a focus on fashion – in CEGEP and university. "Fashion is what I do," she said definitively. "I am going to be in fashion my whole life."

What attracted her to World Education? "[HIV/AIDS] is everywhere in Africa. I feel strongly about finding a cure."

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sat: 10-5pm sun: 12-5pm



Mayor's Column

Addressing & readdressing public input into urban planning

BY MAYOR KARIN MARKS



With the end of 2008 comes not only a new year, but also the resolution of two litigious situations in our community dealing with the increase in new construction on the mountain and with the fact that views cannot generally be protected.

I was reticent during the litigation to discuss my attitude and my history of action vis à vis the heritage protection of our beautiful community and the rights of our citizenry to be fully aware of and involved in the changes to their environment that are the result of construction done by their neighbours.

I would like to do so now.

It is my belief that as a council, we have only two options in the way that we deal with the laws in our community: we apply and uphold them as they exist, or we examine and refine them when change seems necessary.

Over my 17 years on council, my orientation has always been one which valued preservation of the community over the encouragement of development through dramatically increased building sizes or increased density. I have initiated several pieces of legislation to support that philosophy. I do, however, believe that it is important to try to support those who are in our community and want to improve their homes, or change them to accommodate growing families or other needs – so that they can remain in Westmount. These two ideas can sometimes be in conflict.

I was first elected to city council in 1991 and immediately became the commissioner of Architecture and Planning because these were aspects of community life that interested me enormously. For 14 years, I spent every second Tuesday with the commission, participating and learning from the very capable architects who did an architectural review of every change to the exterior of a Westmount building.

History:

From general to more specific guidelines

While we had a list of protected buildings and a set of guidelines, they were very general and, early on, I became concerned that it was too difficult for the average resident to understand what was permissible when they wanted to undertake a renovation project. We began looking at not only which buildings were important to preserve, but also what it was about each streetscape that gave it its character. It was not only the few hundred outstanding pieces of architecture that made residents like their environment, but the general quality of the street they had chosen. Thus, with the help of a consultant and our own architectural commission, each house was rated according to its architectural and/or heritage value. The guidelines were then related to those categories, indicating what interventions, additions or changes could be made to maintain the overall character of the street.

While I, as a layman, wanted to have the guidelines be very prescriptive, I came to understand from the architects and our staff that we needed to keep the overall tone of the guidelines as clear directions, while allowing room for interpretation and

creativity. This meant that our commission of experienced architects would have to truly use its judgment, knowledge and expertise to apply the guidelines as consistently as possible, but always within the context of the individual house design and the street where it was situated – not an easy task.

A challenge: Very large houses on existing lots

In my readings on urban planning, and in my travels and attendance at conferences during the early 1990s, I became concerned about the new phenomenon in Vancouver, Toronto and many US cities where small houses were being demolished and replaced by very large homes that were erected on those same lots. This dramatically altered the quality of the streetscape because of the change in scale and because it severely diminished the amount of green space that surrounded the homes.

This trend had not really come to Westmount since the Montreal housing market had lagged behind that of many other major cities. However, it was obvious that in better economic and political times, we would experience the same thing if no proactive measures were taken.

I thus initiated a change in our bylaws that would diminish the percentage of the lot that could be built upon in order to discourage the practice that had exercised such a negative impact in other cities. Along with changing the restrictions on our heights and setbacks, this was helpful in minimizing the construction of out-of-scale homes.

These major changes in home sizes in many cities had been a shock to the neighbourhoods, causing dissension within communities.

Learning from other cities

It seemed to me that it would be better if residents could know beforehand what was to be built and could at least make their concerns known when there were major new buildings or additions being erected.

And so, I went about trying to see how we could have more public awareness or involvement. I spoke to architects in St. Augustine, Florida (where their architectural review board meetings were broadcast once a week on a public cable network), as well as to those in Charleston, South Carolina and in towns in California (where new construction plans were shown in a public forum). While there

were very few residents in these communities who participated in the process, it did have significant implications for the length of delays in obtaining permits for all applicants and for the politicization of the process. Our council of the time discussed options for public input – requiring the posting of plans outside a house before permit issuance or holding a public meeting to which neighbours could be invited to see permit applications.

We found that much of what we wanted to consider at that time could not be done legally within the framework of the Land Use Planning Act under which we operated. (Changes have been made since then.) Only in the case of demolition did we have a prescribed public process. There were also privacy rights issues, efficiency in permit issuance concerns, requirements for more administrative time if a public process was required and thus the possibility of more staff. The hurdles were numerous, although my desire and that of many others on council to have neighbours involved in the process remained.

It always seemed to me that if a project was being undertaken that it would be helpful for the owner to hear from neighbours what the impact would be and to have our planning advisory board and our councillors aware as well. For some who were planning to build, this might encourage changes to their plans that could take into account certain impacts and overall it might engender a greater sense of civic responsibility.

In other cases, the neighbours' fear of change might be diminished, and they might accept it when they saw and understood what the finished project would be. The commission could then look at the plans and determine if it was well designed and if it met our guidelines. They would, however, also be aware of the neighbours' concerns and might, where appropriate, take them into account in their deliberations and have the architect address them.

Then, from 1999 until 2006, our main focus was preserving the status of our city during the merger/demerger debate and the question of public meetings did take a back seat to other, more pressing concerns.

Balancing property rights with preservation and information

Over the past couple of years, we have again become aware of the need to readdress these two issues – the control of the size and continued on p. 5

WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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Our Man in Ottawa

Economic slowdown means hardship and opportunities

BY MARC GARNEAU,
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR
WESTMOUNT-VILLE MARIE



Canadians certainly know that the world is in the midst of a major economic slowdown. According to various experts, the slowdown could last anywhere from several quarters to several years.

How well we are able to ride it out will depend on many factors. On the down side, there will be real hardship for those who lose their jobs or for those who face the prospect of retirement with diminished savings.

On the positive side, periods of crisis often unleash new thinking that results in opportunities for some positive changes in the way we live our lives. I personally hope

that, along with other improvements, a cleaner environment will be one of those positive changes.

Interestingly, our prime minister told us last fall that Canadians had little to worry about since Canada was in a healthy economic state and that he was not in fact anticipating a deficit this year. Surprisingly, the government appeared to believe this until quite recently when the story changed dramatically.

Dramatic action coming

Now, as we all know, Canada appears to be poised for dramatic and decisive action to stimulate the economy. The specific measures to be taken will be announced in the upcoming budget on January 27. One thing is certain: a deficit will be created in order to deliver this stimulus.

Canadians will be looking to the government for a sensible set of measures to address the challenging times ahead.

continued from p. 4

scale of buildings and the opportunity for residents to be informed and be heard on changes within their immediate environment. The commissioner of Urban Planning, the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC), and our staff have been exploring the means to control development such that we maintain the quality of our city without freezing any growth or change at all.

Citizen involvement better

We must also create an opportunity to inform our citizenry about or involve them in our process that seeks to balance good architecture, preservation of heritage and individual property rights. These are weighty questions and technically complicated ones, but I believe that we are better off if everyone knows what is happening before council is called upon to approve

the permit or before the shovel goes into the ground.

We as a council have committed ourselves to discussing and moving forward on these two projects, even though any solutions found will not please everyone. There are, however, some very important goals that propel us to move on them – the desire to maintain the quality and the beauty of our built environment and the desire to keep the sense of community cohesion and civic connection amongst all of our residents.



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Measures should not only lessen the pain for those most directly affected, but also kick in as quickly as possible in all the right places without leading to structural deficits that are very painful to eliminate once the economy recovers.

Most of all, Canadians will look to parliament to reassure them that there is a steady and competent hand on the tiller to get us through this trying period.

My own party, the Liberals, will also bear a great responsibility for the upcoming budget. It will be up to us and the other opposition parties to ensure that the government has addressed our most pressing concerns, for both the immediate and the long term, in the most responsible manner possible.

To finish on a positive note, I can assure you that all parties are conscious of the important task ahead.

Consulate blocked (and de-blocked) peacefully

Protesters against Israel's military operations in Gaza blocked access to the consulate at 1 Westmount Square, January 8, until being escorted outside by police. The demonstrations continued outside and were described as peaceful. The consulate could not be reached for comment.

On January 4, protesters marched from Cabot Square along St. Catherine St. and north of Wood Ave. along the eastern border of Westmount Square, before heading east downtown to Phillips Square. Thousands were reported to have been involved.

The consulate has been in Westmount since July 2008.

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Vol. 3/01

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DATEBOOK

January 14 – 6 p.m.

Special Council Meeting
Appeal of Demolition Committee decision
City Hall

January 15 until February 7

Anne Fish: a retrospective
The Gallery at Victoria Hall

January 19 - 7 p.m.

Public Information Meeting - Turcot Interchange
Victoria Hall

January 31 - 7 p.m.

Family Games Night
Library

submissions for its 2009-2010 exhibition season (September 2009 to August 2010). Artists and artisans who are residents of Westmount are invited to apply. The deadline for submissions is Monday, March 2. For complete details, please consult our Web site. Info: 514 989-5226. 🌿



LIBRARY

French Book Club

Join the French Book Club from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21 as they discuss books on Indian authors. Info: 514 989-5386.

Chess and Scrabble Club

Do you enjoy playing chess and/or Scrabble? Our games club will meet on Friday, January 23 at 2 p.m. Drop by for a friendly game as we look forward to meeting new players. Info: 514 989-5386.

Readers to Readers Book Club

Join our morning book club with a twist. Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 15 at 4 p.m. to talk about great books recently read. Info: 514 989-5386.

English Book Club

Join the English Book Club from 7 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, January 20 as they discuss *Moral Disorder* by Margaret Atwood. Info: 514 989-5386. 🌿



HYDRO WESTMOUNT

Réduisez votre consommation pendant les heures de pointe

En prévision de la période de froid intense que nous anticipons, Hydro Westmount demande à sa clientèle de réduire sa consommation d'électricité pendant les heures de pointe suivantes :

- le matin de 7 h 30 à 9 h 30
- le soir de 16 h 30 à 19 h

Veuillez utiliser les appareils ménagers en dehors de ces heures de pointe, spécifiquement ceux qui requièrent de l'eau chaude (lave-vaisselle, lessiveuse, etc.). Info : www.hydrowestmount.ca 🌿



TRAVAUX PUBLICS

Déneigement

Westmount demande votre collaboration pour assurer l'entretien sécuritaire de nos rues et trottoirs en hiver. Il est interdit d'entasser sur les voies et trottoirs publics la neige retirée des entrées privées. On peut seulement ajouter de la neige aux amas avant leur enlèvement.

Cueillette des arbres de Noël

Participez à la cueillette des arbres de Noël en plaçant votre arbre sur votre terrain à l'arrière du trottoir les jours de semaine jusqu'à la fin du mois. Assurez-vous de dépouiller l'arbre de TOUTE décoration et emballage (aucun sac de plastique). Info : 514 989-5311. 🌿



SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE

Dommages aux clôtures du CP

Les résidents demeurant le long du chemin de fer peuvent contacter directement la police du CP afin de rapporter tout dommage aux clôtures ou des graffiti en composant le 1 800 716-9132. 🌿



ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

Galerie : appel de propositions

La galerie du Victoria Hall lance un appel de propositions pour sa programmation de la saison 2009-2010 (septembre 2009 à août 2010). Cet

DATES À RETENIR

Le 14 janvier – 18 h

Séance spéciale du conseil
Appel d'une décision du comité de démolition
Hôtel de ville

Du 15 janvier au 7 février

Anne Fish - une rétrospective
La galerie du Victoria Hall

Le 19 janvier - 19 h

Séance publique d'information - Complexe Turcot
Victoria Hall

Le 31 janvier à 19 h

Soirée de jeux pour toute la famille
Bibliothèque

appel s'adresse aux artistes et artisans qui habitent à Westmount. Les propositions doivent être transmises au plus tard le lundi 2 mars. Pour de renseignements détaillés, veuillez consulter notre site Web. Info : 514 989-5226. 🌿



BIBLIOTHÈQUE

Club de lecture française

Joignez-vous au club de lecture française le mercredi 21 janvier de 18 h 30 à 21 h pour discuter les oeuvres d'auteurs indiens. Info : 514 989-5386.

Club d'échecs et de Scrabble

Aimez-vous jouer aux échecs et/ou au Scrabble? La prochaine rencontre du club aura lieu le vendredi 23 janvier à 14 h dans une ambiance amicale. Nous sommes toujours à la recherche de nouveaux joueurs. Info : 514 989-5386.

Club de lecture pour ados

Aucune liste de lecture imposée et aucune date limite, seulement une discussion au sujet des livres que vous avez lus ! Nos prochaines rencontres sont prévues les jeudis 15 et 22 janvier à 16 h. Info : 514 989-5386.

Club de lecture anglaise

Joignez-vous au club de lecture anglaise le mardi 20 janvier de 19 h à 21 h pour discuter du livre *Moral Disorder* de Margaret Atwood. Info : 514 989-5386. 🌿



HYDRO WESTMOUNT

Reduce electricity consumption during peak periods

In anticipation of the upcoming cold snap, Hydro Westmount is asking its customers to reduce their electricity consumption during the following peak periods:

- Morning: from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m.
- Evening: from 4:30 to 7:00 p.m.

It would help considerably if the use of major appliances would be delayed until after these peak periods, especially those requiring the use of hot water (e.g. dishwashers, laundry machines, etc.). Info: www.hydrowestmount.ca 🌿



PUBLIC WORKS

Snow removal

Westmount relies on your cooperation to help keep our streets and sidewalks safe during the winter. Snow from private driveways and walkways must NOT be placed on public sidewalks, lanes or streets. During snow loading, snow may be added to the existing snowbanks prior to removal.

Christmas Tree Collection

Christmas tree collection continues through the end of the month. Make sure your tree gets composted by placing it right behind the sidewalk at the front of your property at anytime. You must remove ALL decorations and wrapping (no plastic bags). Info: 514 989-5311. 🌿



PUBLIC SECURITY

Damages to CP Railway Fences

Residents living alongside the CP Railway line in lower Westmount should take note that you may report any damages to railway fences, including graffiti, directly to CP Police at any time by calling 1-800-716-9132. 🌿



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Gallery call for submissions

The Gallery at Victoria Hall announces a call for

Westmount, à votre portée. Pour toute question ou commentaire, veuillez nous contacter :
Westmount at your fingertips. Contact us with any comment or question:

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Westmount Today, Yesterday and Before



BY DOREEN LINDSAY

Question: Who built the Well House at 555 Victoria Ave.? For the answer, please turn to p. 10.

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Letters to the editor

MORE LIBRARY, PLEASE!

Once again the Westmount Public Library was closed three days over Christmas and three days over the New Year's holiday. The banks, notorious for short working weeks, were closed only two days for both holidays and I cannot think of any Westmount department that was closed for three days each time. The arena, for instance, closed for only two days during the whole of last year.

Why can't the library follow suit?

The Côte St. Luc public library is open 365 days a year, recognizing the need of its citizens. Could at least the reading rooms not be open more often, if not the book departments? In winter, many seniors go for walks and it is pleasant to stop by at the reading room and warm up by catching up on some magazines and newspapers.

I invite the readers to respond to this letter and to press the city administration to adjust the working days of the library.

PAUL ANTHONY, DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

WESTMOUNT AS IT SHOULD BE

I agree wholeheartedly with Lesley Aiton ("Owners Buy Into Neighbourhood As Is", December 17, p. 4) when she writes that the legacy of our city council will be to have "allowed changes which will profoundly change the character of our community."

I have regularly walked up to the sum-

mit taking various routes from lower Westmount and am shocked at the number of oversized houses that have been constructed. They do not fit the ambience of the area at all.



Further down the hill on Bellevue, the city has permitted a major change to the height of a heritage home, which at the same time will block the view of the neighbours nearby.

And in lower Westmount, council has changed the character of the playing fields, placing a fence around 60 percent of the fields, making them a quasi-private space for organized soccer.

Now the mayor wants to build an arena mega-complex in a neighbourhood hardly suitable for such a giant project.

Council seems to think that we are a suburb, but it is my feeling that they are slowly eroding the reasons that most people come to live in the special urban environment of Westmount.

I have great sympathy for the people who have had their residential areas altered. I hope that something can be done to change the permit application process

to enhance transparency and to prevent this type of thing from happening to others. And I hope it can be done quickly before more damage is done to the character of our community.

MARILYNN GILLIES, MELVILLE AVE.

FOUNTAINS FOR WESTMOUNT

Fountains bring movement, life, sparkle and gladness to any location. In Westmount, they are conspicuous by their absence. There is one at 1 Westmount Square, but its raised location near the ex-

tension entrance to Atwater Metro is cunningly concealed from public view. It does not often play and its design is as clinical as the angular dark glass building itself. Except for a couple of spouts (which cannot be considered fountains) in Westmount Park pond, I cannot think of other fountains in Westmount.

But come spring, heads of passers-by will be turned by the sparkling waters of a graciously designed 3-tiered fountain opposite Westmount city hall. The apartment complex between Kitchener and Redfern has been renewed from the roof down to the exterior landscape; the walls repaired and cleaned; the copper cornices over entrances and coats-of-arms at windows painstakingly replaced. There only remains for the paint to be stripped from the main doors to bring out the warmth of golden oak and the beauty of the sparkling panes of bevelled glass they frame.

Constructed in the early 1920s, I would think that if the architect and first owner could return, they would approve its transformation (which deserves an award from Heritage Montreal).

I wonder: could Westmount be nudged to install a fountain in front of city hall?

It would bring sparkle to the triangle and landmark Westmount as effectively as Geneva's striking 140-meter 1891 fountain landmarks it. Taller than the city hall tower and colourfully lit in December, it would make Westmount's Jet d'Eau Christmas Tree play a truly Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!

STEPHEN CHIN
SHERBROOKE ST.

History quiz: Well House reborn in the 1960s

BY DOREEN LINDSAY

Question from p. 8. Who built the Well House at 555 Victoria Ave.?

Answer: Monica Grahame, artist, with the consent of Frank Jarvis, owner of Riverview, the 1847 Justine-Solomée Hurtubise house on Côte St. Antoine Rd.

Well, the Well House was of course built on top of an old well. If we could go back to 1847, we might see Justine-Solomée Hurtubise come out of the new red brick house (Riverview) that her husband Ephrem Hudon had just built for them on the old Côte St. Antoine Rd., lower a pail into the well to draw up water, and then carry it just a few steps to use for cooking and bathing in her new house. She might then scrub the floor before throwing the water on the plants outside. We can still see this house today behind the elegant additions and renovations made in 1879. Victoria Ave. was not ex-

tended north of the Côte Rd. until 1898.

Did Ephrem Hudon also build the first house around the well? I do not know.

I do know that it was not until 1960 that Monica Grahame, a local artist who lived around the corner on Grosvenor Ave., fell in love with the (then non-residential) structure and wanted to live there that the small red brick house as we see it today came into being. She arranged with Frank Jarvis, who had owned the Hurtubise property at the corner of Côte St. Antoine and Victoria Ave. since 1942, to rebuild it.

Her son Donald Grahame explained to me how he and his mother arranged with a Polish contractor, Mr. Jenquire (sp?), to do the renovation. He had his crew take apart the old building brick by brick, dig out a basement, lay a cement floor and reset the large beams. A fireplace was built facing the new bay window set in the front of the house, and a small addition for a

kitchen and bathroom was added. The well was capped and remains under the house, as do many throughout Westmount.

There is a very informative newspaper interview with Monica Grahame in the Christmas 1963 issue of the Montreal Star, in which she explained what this fairy-tale house looked like inside when she first saw it.

There were two rooms downstairs, one still had a well in it and the other was used as a potting shed. There was no foundation, only an earth floor. The beams supporting the roof were dovetailed, no nails. She told the interviewer that she saw a family of field mice running across the floor and birds in the attic. She also spoke about finding used bricks from the demolition of houses when Dorchester Blvd. was widened.

To become a member of the Westmount Historical Association, phone 514.925.1404 or visit www.westmounthistorical.org

Monica Grahame died on Christmas Day 1964, just one year after this article featured her beloved house. When Jarvis died on February 6, 1970, the executors of his estate sold the Well House to his housekeeper, Joan Verreault. They also sold the large house now numbered 513/515 for \$58,000 to Laurette Payette Sauvé on September 30, 1970. Today the Well House is again owned by the proprietors of the main house at 513/515 Côte St. Antoine Rd.

During the Christmas holidays, Westmounters used to take delight in walking past or taking friends over to see the gaily-decorated little Well House. This year there were no pine branches, big red bows or green wreaths as in previous years.

Doreen Lindsay is the president of the Westmount Historical Association.



Shiny

Underdog

By FERN BRESLAW

2008 was a big year for dogs and dog lovers in Westmount.

The puppy mill crack-downs motivated more of us to get involved in animal rights than ever before. Underdog saw some amazing people extend themselves to dogs who really don't have a chance without them.

So instead of starting off the new year with something shiny and new, we are keeping with Underdog's mission and opting instead for the old and forgotten. One such character is a well be-



haved and affectionate rottweiler-Lab mix who has been sitting at the SPCA since September, slowly collecting dust.

Her name is Shiny, which is a little ironic given that she is going on 10 and not exactly in high demand.

Still, despite her lacklustre status, Shiny is a real favourite among SPCA volunteers who desperately want her to find a loving home, preferably one without other dogs or small children.

Who knows, after all we have learned from 2008, maybe someone will opt to give Shiny a new start for 2009. She can be visited every day at the Montreal SPCA.

Snow clearing

continued from p. 1

is currently allowed at last year's emergency site – the Turcotte yards.

There are other bottlenecks. Some mechanical break-downs can be handled on the spot, but if not, a replacement piece of equipment must be brought in.

Also, heavy equipment workers, by law, can work no longer than 14 hours a day, even if many of the other crew members can and do work longer. Last, but not least, speed is not the only criterion, "It's all about efficiency and safety, rather than speed of removal," said Monteiro.

For more coverage of Westmount snow removal, see our February 20 edition available online at www.westmountindependent.com.

Déneigement

C'est l'affaire de tous !

La Ville de Westmount a besoin de la collaboration de tous les résidents afin de s'assurer que le déneigement s'effectue rapidement et efficacement pendant tout l'hiver.

Chaque fois que vous stationnez votre véhicule, n'oubliez pas de vérifier les panneaux orange comme ceux indiqués ci-contre. Les véhicules qui entraveront le déneigement seront remorqués.



Snow Removal

Everyone has a role to play!

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Snow from Private Driveways

Snow from private driveways and walkways must never be placed on public sidewalks, lanes, or streets. During snow loading, snow may be added to the existing snowbanks prior to removal, but this snow must never obstruct the public roadways or sidewalks. Fines may be levied on home owners and/or contractors who violate these regulations.



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WEDNESDAY, JAN. 14: **Special city council meeting** (310 Côte St. Antoine demolition appeal) at 6 pm at city hall.

THURSDAY, JAN. 15: Retrospective of **Anne Fish paintings** runs from Jan. 15 to Feb. 7 at The Gallery in Victoria Hall. Gallery hours are Mon-Fri from 10 am to 9 pm, and Sat-Sun from 10 am to 5 pm.

FRIDAY, JAN. 16: Dr. Howard Chertkow, McGill Professor of Neurology and Co-Director of the JGH-McGill Memory Clinic speaks on "**When forgetting becomes a problem**" at 12:30 pm at the Atwater Library and Computer Centre (1200 Atwater). Free. 514-935-7344.

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Westmount Profile: Rev. Kenneth M. Near

Connecting with roots

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

After 30 years as an Episcopalian priest at landmark churches in the United States and even longer as an inner city community worker, Rev. Kenneth M. Near has taken up a new challenge in Westmount.

The former professional musician, who played French horn in a touring production of Jesus Christ Superstar, was inducted January 6 as rector at St. Matthias' Anglican Church. And already, he says, he feels right at home in the new position.

"It's an empathic attunement," he says, "a perfect fit for who I am, what I have been doing and what I hope to achieve going forward."

Near says his move to Canada is also a reconnection with his family roots that include a French Canadian grandmother and United Empire Loyalist farmers in Ontario. It also comes full circle with his own theological training at Trinity College, University of Toronto.

Lived the cultural revolution

"I've lived the cultural revolution. I was born into it, and it's part of the mix of my life," he says. "I will eventually become more involved in the whole region, though I'm mindful I have to speak French better than I do."

An American and father of two married children, Near retired last June after a career of three decades. The last 16 years were as rector of St. Paul's Church in Englewood, New Jersey, one of the first racially integrated churches in the US – in 1870 right after the Civil War.

At age 56, however, and "highly energetic", Near began looking for new opportunities after completing his certification as a pastoral counsellor and clinical chaplain.

"I was fascinated by the proximity of St. Matthias' to downtown Montreal, its anglo-francophone culture, and its deep commitment to worship, music and community work as the original site of the Meals on Wheels program."

While his first Sunday at the Westmount institution came at the start of December, being a seasoned priest, he was able to step right in during the busy Christmas season at the same time as dealing with immigration, moving to a new home and downsizing.

Though typically serving in affluent parishes, Near is passionate about out-

reach work with people in high needs. His calling to the ministry stems from long-time work in the impoverished and often violent inner city Cass Corridor of Detroit.

Visited Hebron camps

Of "great significance," he adds, was his participation in a delegation of the Christian Peacemaker Teams that visited Palestinian refugee camps at Hebron on the West Bank in 2002. Three years later, two CPT colleagues were taken hostage on a similar Iraq mission: Canadian Jim Loney from Ontario and Tom Fox, an American who was later murdered.

As one of Westmount's newest residents, Near now lives at the rectory at Redfern and Sherbrooke. But for now, he explains, "We're a family in transition." In April, Karen, his wife, will join him after completing her term as a grade 5 public school teacher of children with special needs in Englewood. Two cats, Benny and Ozzy, have already taken up residence, however.

Among many family members and friends who attended his induction were son Martin, 29, with his wife, Jennifer Ashe. Professional musicians living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, they both sang during the service.

Daughter Lydia Kaspar, a medical student in New York, is on surgical rotation at St. Barnabas' Hospital in The Bronx and was unable to attend. She is expecting the Nears' first grandchild, a girl, in June.

Music continues to be a driving force in Near's life. Playing French horn since childhood, he now enjoys singing the church liturgy and listening to music at home. "I'm an audiophile," he says with an admiring glance at two huge speakers that preside over the living room.

Born in Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan, Near grew up in and around Detroit as the son of educators and peace activists. He graduated in arts in 1975 from Wayne State University, and then in theology from Toronto in 1978. His first ministry was in the small northern Michigan town of East Tawas on Lake Huron.

After seven years, he made a "huge adjustment," becoming the liturgist canon at the Cathedral Church of St. John in the Wilderness in Denver, Colorado, one of the largest Episcopalian churches in the country.

Another seven years brought another move, this time across the country to Englewood so his musically gifted son, then



Kenneth Near (centre) with Karen, his wife, and Martin, their son.

age 10, could accept an invitation to become a chorister at St. Thomas Church on New York's Fifth Avenue. Its boys' choir is considered to be one of the finest in the world, Near explains.

Now, with his move north, he plans to take the arrival process slowly, he says. "But then I plan to call on the congrega-

tion to clarify our work."

He views the future of the church as being "a clear clarion for justice in a place where people can express their deepest values of love and reconciliation." And for Near, on a more personal level, this is achieved through "music, worship, direct action and community outreach."



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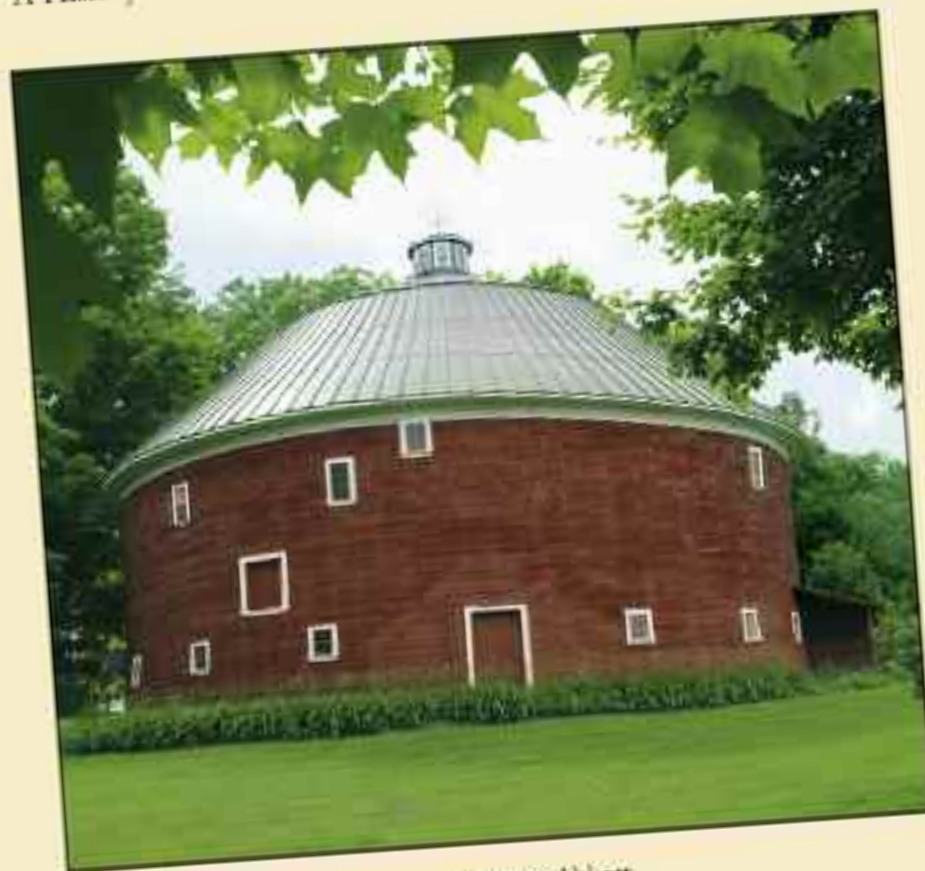


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