

## Camp issue, Part 3

Summer camp fair swings through Montreal.

Learn more, p. 6.



Profile: Astrophysicist Tony Moffat p. 14

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# RMR to send 18 to Afghanistan

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

As the Royal Montreal Regiment prepares to mark its 95th anniversary in August, a contingent of 18 reservists is about to set out for Kandahar, Afghanistan in April.

The unusually large group of mostly post-secondary students brings to 37 the number who will have served voluntarily in the current wartime mission from the Westmount infantry regiment.

### Contingent appropriate for 95th year

"It's very fitting that we are providing such a large volunteer contingent during this milestone year in our history," said Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Robinson, the commanding officer.

"We're very proud of the support we provide to the regular forces in peacekeeping and peace-making duties. We were formed for war, and we never forget our roots."

The Westmount regiment was raised in 1914 for overseas duty in World War I in which 1,192 of its members were killed in action. The armoury, funded by Westmounters, was built in 1925 on municipal land leased at a symbolic \$1 a year for 99 years.

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## Barbie celebrates 50th at the library



Dolls from the personal collection of library clerk Caroline Proctor are on display at the Westmount Public Library for Barbie's milestone birthday, March 9. See story p. 6.

## Coach: Ice time is 'huge need' for girls New arena petition urges progress

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Users of the Westmount arena and other sports-minded residents are being asked to sign a new petition that repeats an earlier one urging city council to move forward with the arena and pool renewal project.

Currently circulating among the city's various hockey teams and by word of mouth, the petition was re-launched some two weeks ago by veteran house-league

coach Jim Stein to address what he calls "a huge need" for increased ice time – especially to provide hockey, broomball and other programs for girls.

"I know their needs are not being fulfilled, and I want to be a voice out there – loud and strong – for the people who want the facilities as soon as possible," he explained.

He said one of his biggest concerns was that the process would be come "hung up" on poli-

continued on p. 11

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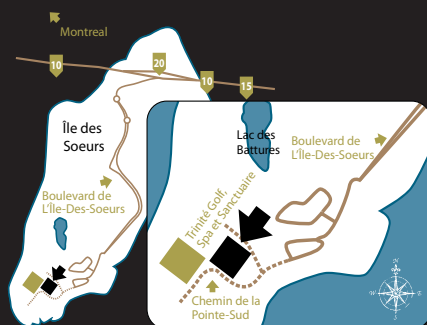
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## Of cars and equations



From left: Raquel Stevenson, Michelle Cooper, Charlotte Beard and Caroline Desnoyers check out the latest models at the Montreal Auto Show.

The traditional class trip has taken a new turn at ECS.

A group of grade 9 students from the girls' school recently attended the 41st Montreal Auto Show. Math department head Doria D'Ermo wanted to show the usefulness of "mathematical literacy" and improve on a numbers-only approach to math problems.

According to D'Ermo, there was a life lesson to learn as well, "I was hoping to help the girls and others see there should be no stigma attached to women shopping

for a car. It's really all about what you know."

Although the students came away with details on fuel efficiency, ergonomic designs and longevity, according to the school there was very little information on cars' overall cost of ownership. But even scarcity has its usefulness in education.

"They are learning to look behind the marketing materials for the real numbers that should factor into their decisions," said D'Ermo.

## Selwyn's Bantams win in double OT



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The Selwyn House Bantam hockey team defeated John Rennie for the GMAA championship banner February 24 in double-overtime at the LCC arena.

The score sat at 3-3 at the end of the third period, and the first overtime was scoreless. In the second overtime, Selwyn player Matti Parnanen made an unsuccessful pass at the net, only to whip around and score to end the game 4-3.

Scoring for Selwyn House were William Kendrick, Dan Ton-That and Matti Parnanen (two goals).

"It was an unbelievably entertaining game," said Selwyn assistant coach Bruce Maxwell. "Tim Shaw was absolutely outstanding in nets," he added.

## Shell-Schnitzer earns second to trip to Italy

Lisa Shell-Schnitzer has just landed and completed her first speaking engagement on the international circuit – with a trip to Italy at age 17.

How did this come about?

In October 2008, the Westmounter was one of the three representatives that Trafalgar School for Girls sent to the World School. The annual, two-week forum features students from 24 countries discussing a common theme. Trafalgar represents Canada every year. The 2008 topic was genetically modified foods, and the event was held in Milan, Italy.

Shell-Schnitzer is a five-year veteran of Trafalgar's debating program, and her speech at the gathering caught the attention of Benedetto Di Rienzo, the World School president. He invited her back – all expenses paid – to coach novice debaters and found the debating program of the I.T.C Enrico Tosi School, also in Milan.

In February, she traveled back to Italy to coach 32 novice debaters for six hours a day over a one-week period. Her students were the same age (or older) than her. Be-



Lisa Shell-Schnitzer

coming a teacher for a week and the age disparity constituted a "role reversal," according to Shell-Schnitzer. She taught in English to high-proficiency students, and her Spanish and French helped overcome any remaining communication barriers. She returned to Montreal on February 14.

When asked about the ..... trip's highlight, she told *continued on p. 11*



Selwyn's Bantam champions. Goal scorers are circled: Matti Parnanen (top row, centre), William Kendrick (middle row, centre) and Dan Ton-That (middle row, left). At bottom are the team goalies Tim Shaw (left-hand corner) and Jacob Cohen (right-hand corner). At top right, assistant coach Bruce Maxwell stands to the left of coach Michael Maurovich.



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# Earth Hour 2009

BY EVE ASPINALL  
MEMBER OF THE HEALTHY CITY PROJECT

A year has gone by since our first attempt to keep up with the rest of the world (150 cities in 50 different countries) by lowering our use of hydroelectric power for one hour on one day of the year.

Last year, we lowered our consumption by 1 percent. Sydney, Australia, where the initiative for this worldwide idea sprang to life in 2007, has consistently achieved a 15 percent drop.

A view of Westmount from the Lookout was disheartening – the area above The Boulevard was ablaze with light, residents in the mid-level had intermittently turned their lights off and lower Westmount was quite dark. Many of the houses on the upper slopes have a proliferation of lights to highlight their facades. This not only consumes energy, but contributes to the light pollution that prevents us from seeing the stars.

On March 28, Earth Hour takes place from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm. How can we do better?

Ideally, if all citizens would observe this one hour by turning off all electrical appliances, we would achieve a much larger drop in our energy use. As a bonus, we

might see a remarkable change in the night sky.

Some people said that last year they forgot the time or the date. How about marking your calendars and setting your alarm clocks?

While Earth Hour is a symbolic gesture, it is also an exercise to remind us of our extravagant use of energy that contributes to global warming.

It can demonstrate to us how we can incorporate some of the actions into our daily lives. Some of the activities that are being planned for Earth Hour in Westmount can foster a sense of community and a commitment to a greener city. Westmount still leaves one of the heaviest footprints of any city in Canada. This is quite shameful. We owe it to the world to lessen this blot on our reputation.

How much can each one of you do to make this hour a spectacular success?

## Elliott new Scouts commissioner



Virginia Elliott

The city of Westmount's assistant community events coordinator, Virginia Elliott, was recently appointed to be Stoney Point area commissioner for Scouts Canada succeeding Mark Brenchley. The area covers Lachine to downtown. Said Elliott, "I am the go-to person for the leaders who are out there every week running the programs. I am there to give them a hand."

## Westmounters praise pact

# Large-scale composting gets boost

The future looks green for composting in Quebec.

An unprecedented agreement was signed on February 17 by a province-wide group of municipalities and environmental groups. It is meant to accelerate the large-scale biological composting of organic materials in Westmount and elsewhere.

The pact promises industrial-scale facilities that, in three years, will compost 60 percent of urban Quebec's putrescible materials. Industry, commerce, institutions – sectors that produce more than residents, but have not been catered to by most municipalities – will be invited to participate.

The signatories for local governments were headed by Montreal mayor Gérald Tremblay, acting as president of the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal (CMM); his Quebec City counterpart, Régis Labeaume; and the presidents of both the Union and the Federation of Quebec Municipalities.

Formal endorsement for the environmentalists was given by Lysianne Panagis of Action RE-buts, the Montreal group that was at the heart of the resistance to a 1993 mega-incinerator project, and Jacques Ruelland, president of Quebec's environmental councils.

About 40 percent of the contents of Quebec's garbage bags are compostable. Last year, the province lagged behind its neighbours in diversions from landfills. Greater Montreal, which converted less than 10 percent of the possible total, has been particularly lax.

### Activist, mayor see Westmount opportunity

Local activists point out that a likely result of the new consensus is avoiding a repetition of the great public disquiet over the mega-incinerator proposals of the early 1990s. "We don't want another incinerator or another three-year battle over it," said Westmount's Healthy City Project's environment chair Jenny Patton. "The emphasis of turning waste into compost is exactly the way to go."

"It is much too valuable as a resource to go to a landfill or be burnt. The new approach means Montreal is joining the trend to bio-mimicry where end-of-life products are being returned back to the earth in a useful form."

Also welcoming the move was Westmount mayor Karin Marks, a vocal opponent of Montreal's grandiose plans for large-scale waste-handling plants. She noted that municipalities in other regions were expecting financing of facilities scaled to their size.

"We on the island should have the same right," she said. "Composting plants like some of those in Halifax might serve our needs – alone or in small partnerships with neighbours."

The deal is framed around a request to the government for infrastructure funding to construct facilities to biologically treat the vast-quantities of material expected to become available as Westmount-type kitchen and green waste collection becomes standard across the province.

### Gasification emphasis gone

Until late last year, the CMM had been planning large-scale construction and use of gasification plants – a modern form of incineration – as well as some composting facilities.

Its projected cost was \$1.1 billion, but its request for that scale of funding fell on deaf government ears. The proposed new compost plants are said to cost about \$300 million.

Last fall, the Conseil régional de l'environnement de Montréal (CRE) launched a campaign aimed at the gasification proposals. Others also had complaints.

At the time, Côte St. Luc was launching its kitchen waste collection for all its 4,800 houses. The two CSL councillors responsible for that program both have strong connections: Steven Erdelyi is the new vice-principal of Westmount High and Dida Berku is a lawyer with an office on Sherbrooke St. in Westmount. The duo publicly raised the issue of Montreal's tardiness in providing composting plants and joined in the CRE campaign.

At its peak, CMM director-general Massimo Iezzoni contacted the CRE with a view to forming a common front to apply for government funding and get the project moving.

He was told by the CRE that nothing was possible as long as gasification was the principal technique being used. Subsequently, negotiations spread to the wide partnership, resulting in the agreement.

"Gasification" was a word ignored by all parties.

## Notice to readers

The column "Earth Hour now!" that appeared in the February 24 *Independent* (p. 4) under Eve Aspinall's byline was not meant for publication. Due to an inadvertent email error, the wrong article was received by the *Independent* in place of the intended column.

# WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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# RMR open house in August

continued from p. 1

The first officially declared bilingual unit in the Canadian Forces in 1967, the RMR's community presence will be front-and-centre as it marks the 95th anniversary on Saturday, August 22.

The occasion will feature a daylong open house during which the museum will also be open to the public. A community sports day in Westmount Park will include races and other activities as well as a barbecue and corn roast. The day will wind up with a regimental ball at the armoury.

"We're very proud to be members of the community and of the imprint we make," said retired Lieutenant-Colonel Toby Glickman, the regiment's commanding officer from 1992 to 1996, who chairs the 95th anniversary committee.

The event will also be a kick-off to the centennial, explained Robinson, who is already planning the 100th as its committee chair.

Of the 215 reservists, the regiment is almost evenly divided between English- and French-speaking members. "And almost every ethnicity in Montreal is represented here," Robinson said. However, being an infantry unit, only eight are women, though another four from the administrative branch are also serving with the RMR.

Serving overseas is voluntary for reservists, he explained. And it's not everyone wanting to do so who is able to obtain the necessary time or job security from work. The Afghanistan mission, for example, requires at least 18 months of full-time service. This starts with a 12-month training period and at least six months overseas.

As a result, most of those serving are post-secondary students who are taking

the time between studies.

The regiment now has more applications than positions, Robinson said.

One reason for the regiment's success "is that we don't have social pretense; there is no social club. The mess for NCOs (non-commissioned officers) is the same size as the Officers' Mess. It's an equal partnership."

He also believes the regiment's emphasis on physical fitness is an important factor. The RMR won the Montreal Military Hockey Championship in 2007 and 2008.

When Robinson assumed command in 2005, he instigated the RMR Fitness Challenge within the regiment "because we wanted to improve the level of fitness." Leading by example, it was Robinson himself at age 37 who won a battle fitness challenge last year. This was a 13-km march carrying 60 pounds of gear. He completed it in one hour, 42 minutes compared with the military standard of 2 hours, 26 minutes.

Robinson, who joined the regiment at age 18, is national accounts sales manager for Accolade Reaction Group, makers of promotional items. He lives in St. Henri with his wife, Kendall, and two sons, aged 1 and 3.

His two brothers are also in the Canadian Forces: Christopher, as commanding officer of the submarine *HMCS Corner Brook*, and Kevin, as recruit instructor at the forces base at St. Jean. "Interestingly," he said, "our mother wouldn't let us play with guns and war toys."

He'll be handing over command in May to Major Sean Nashrudi, now the deputy commanding officer, and will concentrate on chairing the centennial committee. "Once again, we'll be reaching out to the



Lt. Col. Colin Robinson, commanding officer.

community," he said.

And in the interests of the regiment's role in the community, former mayor Peter Trent completed research into its land lease with the city before his retirement last November as the regiment's honorary colonel. "I was intrigued by the fact that we were the only municipality in Canada to have donated land for an armoury."

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## Mega-size homes highlight agenda

New regulations to limit the size of houses and underground extensions were expected to be unveiled at the city council meeting March 2. The tabling of proposed by-law changes was included on the agenda at press time the same day.

The suggested modifications to Westmount's zoning by-law aim to restrict the

building of so-called monster homes by requiring that the overall size of the house, and its setback from the property lines, must relate to the size of the property. As well, underground construction could not extend beyond the building lines.

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# Summer camps, Part 3

## Annual summer camp fairs swing through town

BY ISAAC OLSON

Braving blustery winter weather, potential campers and their parents were given the opportunity to learn about summer camps both local and afar during this year's annual camp fairs.

Attracting both day and overnight camps from as far away as Maine, *Montreal Families*, a monthly magazine that serves as a resource for local parents, presented two camp fairs on February 23 and 24.

Held downtown and in Pointe Claire,

the events gave summer camps a chance to promote their programs while parents could pick up brochures and ask questions. With kiosks displaying photos and camp props, camp directors and counselors were on site to talk to the dozens of families who attended.

"The camp fair has been a great experience for us," said Pat MacWilliam, representing the 40-year old Parkside Ranch in Orford, Quebec. "It's a great way to promote our camp. We've been coming to these events since *Montreal Families* first started having them."



Simon Slowik, 5, tries out a saddle while Pat MacWilliams of Orford's Parkside Ranch watches. The saddle was part of a display during this year's annual camp fair downtown.

## Collector, doll share common birthday

### Barbie dolls on display

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Scarcely showing her age, Barbie turns 50 on March 9 with a special tribute to her milestone at the Westmount Public Library.

The 25 dolls on display represent only a few from the ongoing personal collection of 73 that library clerk Caroline Proctor has been amassing since the age of 3.

And she hopes that number will increase with her own birthday – her 29th – that she shares with Barbie.

"I loved Barbie from the get-go," she says, "though I never thought I had to look like her with the hair and the thin waist."

Proctor used to take her playmate on make-believe camping trips under the kitchen table and on real-life adventures to her grandparents' summer cottage.

She traded various accoutrements with friends, always keeping everything well organized and in excellent condition. "I guess that's why I work in a library!" she explains.

Years later, however, Proctor began buying the higher-end collector dolls issued periodically. These include the "princess"

line of foreign Barbies or theme items such as those from the Wizard of Oz.

#### For personal enjoyment

While she usually adds four or five dolls to her collection each year, she says they are only for her personal enjoyment. "I don't keep any of the boxes because I don't intend to sell them." Instead, the dolls repose in two display cabinets specially made by Proctor's brother.

Her collection also includes Barbie's red Corvette, pink Cadillac, camper van and hair salon.

The library display, which runs through March 13, presents members of Barbie's family, her friend Midge and longtime boyfriend Ken with whom Barbie was "re-united" in 2002 after their estrangement.

It also includes a doll that Proctor's mother received in 1963, 46 years ago, as well as Caroline's own first Barbie from 1983 – a gift from her mother. Since then, Proctor has been receiving one every Christmas as well as on other occasions.

And while she is not personally planning any birthday cake or special celebration for Barbie on their joint birthday, Proctor "most definitely" expects to be given yet another doll.

Mattel's first Barbie, launched in 1959, cost \$3. She wore a black and white striped bathing suit and open-toed shoes. She now has her own fan club and will be marking her milestone in many ways, including her first fashion show taking place during New York Fashion Week.

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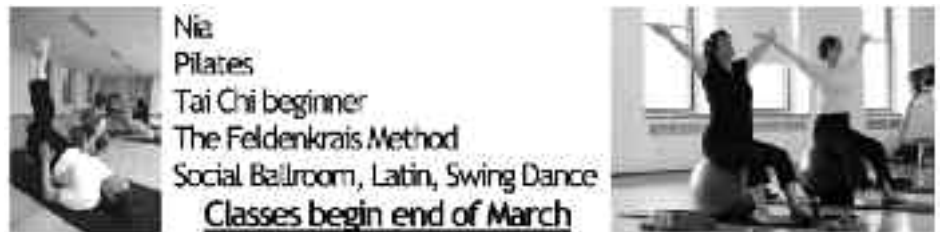
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**Colby opens at Vic Hall**



From left, Robin Berlyn, Sara Peck Colby and pianist Dorothy Fieldman Fraiberg of Westmount at Colby's vernissage for "Soundings" at Victoria Hall on February 18. The show runs until March 14. The painting behind is entitled "Road in Fall".

Photo: Robert Galbraith



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## ‘Empathy’ returns to Westmount



From left: mother Melissa Mitchell and son Jacob with Roots of Empathy teacher Sarah Brodie at Westmount Park School on February 24. The children are students in Mrs. Norman's grade 1 and 2 split class. Inset: Westmount Park student "big Jacob" shows "little Jacob" the mysteries of "in" and "out".

Roots of Empathy returned to Westmount and Westmount Park School on February 24. The program aims to inculcate empathy in young students by having them meet with a baby and a parent throughout the school year.

It was the fourth visit (of nine in a year) by Melissa Mitchell and her 8-month-old son Jacob. Roots of Empathy instructors also attend before and after each family visit, for a total of 27 visits per year per class. Sarah Brodie presided over this ses-

sion, the theme of which was "Emotions."

Jacob is "almost crawling" and strutted his stuff for the 14 students in Mrs. Norman's grade 1 and 2 split class. When he reached the further of two toys on his own steam, the students erupted in applause.

There are currently 25 classrooms (totaling 625 students in nine schools) participating in the Quebec branch of the program. Roslyn is also a participating school.

## 9 Lives: Supersweet Naomi

By LYZANNE

Naomi is an affectionate 7-year-old black tabby domestic short-hair. She is a very special cat, beautiful and sweet. She was abandoned by her owner, so she feels lost and alone.

She is ready for adoption as we speak. Her vaccines are up-to-date, and she is the picture of health. She is declawed on her front paws which makes her an indoor-only cat.

Naomi's Biblical namesake means she is a gentle and loving spirit – a forever friend to someone who makes her a life companion. For more on Naomi, please call Gerdy on her pager at 514.203.9180 or email [info@gerdysrescue.org](mailto:info@gerdysrescue.org).



Naomi

## Question arena plan later

continued from p. 1

tics. Once the council has produced its plan, he said, it would be the time to question it and determine how the work might be fast-tracked.

Stein, a father of girls and a hockey

player who can only find ice time in another community, pointed to "more demand than ever" from all age groups, including an aging and active population and an increased awareness of the value of exercise.

## Traf student teaches in Italy

continued from p. 3

the *Independent*, "Just being there was a rewarding experience and a huge honour. The last day there was a debate. It was great to see the students display the skills and techniques that I had been teaching them, as well as the result of their hard work – and mine."

What are her future plans? Shell-Schnitzer will be attending grade 12 at LCC next year and is planning to do a business degree after that. She is not interested in teaching as a career, but, when asked about law as a future profession, described that question as "undecided."

## Electronic *Independents* available

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

## You and the Law

BY BARBARA NOETZEL, LAWYER

### Public security loses against this defense

Nathan meets some friends for dinner at a new restaurant. He parks his car on a street two blocks away, after checking carefully to make sure there are no signs limiting parking.

He's always careful about where he parks his car and has never had a parking ticket — an accomplishment he boasted about to friends over the happy dinner.

Two hours later, Nathan returns to his car to find a nasty surprise: a public security officer is about to give him a parking ticket. It seems that he's been parked in a thirty-minute zone, even though there's nothing to indicate this.

When Nathan protests that there's no sign, the officer replies that it's irrelevant. "The law is the law", he says. The city has no obligation to post signs, he

explains: it's a mere courtesy toward motorists, left to the discretion of the municipality.

Who is right? Can Nathan successfully fight the parking ticket in municipal court?

Yes, he can - and the public security officer is wrong.

Normally, ignorance of the law is no defense. However, there are two Quebec laws which come into play in this case. The Cities and Towns Act says a municipality has the right to regulate parking within city limits - as long as it complies with the Highway Safety Code, which requires cities to post signs informing motorists of parking restrictions.

After all, it would be completely unrealistic to expect every motorist to know all the different parking zones in every municipality he might park his vehicle.

Barbara Noetzel can be reached at 450-671-3305, or [barbaranoetzel@yahoo.ca](mailto:barbaranoetzel@yahoo.ca)

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# BCS visits NYC



In front of the Angel of Bethesda fountain, back row, from left: Brandon Wickens, Mario Dao, Cameron Mitchell, Westmounter Geoff Matheson, Ryan Comeau, Michon McDonald. Front row: Westmounter Claire Matheson, Paige Martin, Mayowa Kupoluyi-Olusola, Westmounter Suzanne Stenason, Jason Yin, Felix Gmehling (exchange student).

Westmounters Suzanne Stenason and Claire and Geoff Matheson were among a group of Grade 12 students from Bishop's College School (BCS) that travelled to New York City recently for a trip that included shows *Equus* and *Billy Elliot*, a tour of Central Park, dining out in Times Square and more.

"The New York trip was a great experience. It was amazing to attend plays on Broadway, which we have been studying in our English class," said Stenason.

"Our trip to New York was the best school trip I've ever been on," commented Claire Matheson. "We were able to see two of the best Broadway shows...We also got to walk around Times Square, Central Park, and do a little shopping with our friends. It was a great time."

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## Comin' Up...

**TUESDAY, MARCH 3:** Stand-up comedy by **Yisrael Campbell** followed by his film *Circumcise Me* take place at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim (425 Metcalfe Ave.) at 7:30 pm. Free but reservations recommended. 514.937.9471.

**STARTING TUESDAY, MARCH 3:** Unwashed Grape presents *The Assumption of Empire* by Ann Lambert, directed by Westmounter **Paul Hawkins**. Plays at the MainLine Theatre (3997 St. Laurent Blvd.) until March 22. Evening shows and matinees. \$20,

regular, \$17 student/senior. 514.849.3378 or [www.mainlinetheatre.ca](http://www.mainlinetheatre.ca).

**SUNDAY, MARCH 8:** Concert with **Karen Young** & friends. 6:15 pm at St. Matthias Church. Songs of troubadours, Italian villagers, pilgrims and Sufis. Tickets: \$15 and \$10/students & seniors. 514.932.2764.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11:** 3-course home-cooked **luncheon for seniors** at Centre Greene at 12:15 pm. \$5. 514.931.6202.

**MONDAY, MARCH 16:** **An evening of music**

by Marianopolis students who compete in the judged recital, *Prix d'expression musicale*, starting at 7:30 pm in the Auditorium at Marianopolis. 514.931.8792.

**TUESDAY, MARCH 17:** Marianopolis is welcoming the community to its free **Canada Council for the Arts Reading Series** starting with Todd Babiak, Edmontonian novelist, journalist, screenwriter and board member of PEN Canada from 1-2 pm in the Amphitheatre. 514.931.8792.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 19:** "The Westmount Municipal Association: Celebrating a Centennial" from 7 to 9 pm at the Westmount Public Library. Speakers Tom Thompson and Kathleen Duncan. Organized by the

Westmount Historical Association. Coffee and cookies. Free for members, for non-members \$5 at door. 514.925.1404 or 514.932-6688.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 19:** Art Focus presents "The Spirit & Magic of Mexico", an illustrated lecture by **photographer Linda Rutenberg** at the Westmount Public Library at 1:30 pm. Reservations 514.937.6391.

**THURSDAY, MARCH 19:** The launch of **Claire Holden Rothman's** *The Heart Specialist* takes place at Nicholas Hoare Books (1366 Greene Ave.) from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. RSVP to [publicity@cormorantbooks.com](mailto:publicity@cormorantbooks.com).

## Always On

**Dramatis Personae** is currently rehearsing *The Ballad of the Sad Café* which will performed in early June. The play has been cast, but the group welcomes newcomers willing to work behind the scenes and who would like to become actors in our fall production. Interested people can phone 514.486.7423 or 514.484.2016 or [dramatis.personae07@gmail.com](mailto:dramatis.personae07@gmail.com).

**This month at Centre Greene** (1090 Greene): Tumbling Tots playgroup every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 to 11 am. \$3.50/child/morning. • Tai Chi-based Movement and Stretch every Wednesday from 11 am to 12 pm. • Ballroom Dance Classes for people living with Parkinson's on Thursdays at 2 pm. Please phone Ellen

Rubin at 514.484.2016 to register. No drop-ins. • For info on Centre Greene's activities, call 514.931.6202 or visit [www.centregreene.org](http://www.centregreene.org)

Featured this month in Always On, the **English Book Club** is one of six book clubs hosted by the Westmount Public Library. Joyce Macnamara leads the Club and provides background information about the book. Members are then encouraged to share in a discussion over coffee. Everyone welcome. No sign-up or registration necessary. Info: Donna Lach, Programming Librarian, 514.989.5386.

This month on Tuesday, March 17: The English Book Club discusses *The Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfeld at 7 pm.

## March at the Art Galleries

**Galerie de Bellefeuille:** Group show "Nature". Exhibit continues to March 9. Group show "Little Luxuries". Exhibit: March 12 to 23. Hunt Slonem: paintings. Exhibit: March 26 to April 6. 1367 Greene, 514.933.4406.

**Galerie D'Este:** Group Show: "Works on Paper". Vernissage: March 7 at 2 pm. Exhibit continues to March 21. 1329 Greene, 514.846.1515.

**Galerie Sandra Goldie:** Gallery closed until March 27.

**Gallery at Victoria Hall:** Sara Peck Colby: paintings. Exhibit continues to March 14. Homeira Mortazavi, Nathalie Guez. Exhibit March 27 to April 21. 4626 Sher-

brooke, 514.989.5226.

**Galerie V Trimont:** Quebec and Canadian artists. New gallery at 4259 St. Catherine, 514.658.7214.

**Han Art:** Group show, gallery artists. 4209 St. Catherine, 514.876.9278.

**La Galerie sur Greene:** New artists. 1368 Greene, 514.938.3863.

**McClure Gallery – Visual Arts Centre:** Catherine Y. Bates "Out of Line: Monochromes". Vernissage: March 5 at 6 pm. Exhibit: March 6 to 28. Artist's Talk: March 12 at 7 pm. 350 Victoria, 514.488.9558.

**Parisian Laundry:** Concordia MFA candidates group show "Collision". Exhibit continues to March 7. Alyssa Andrews & Kim Dorland: Exhibit: March 13 to April 18. 3550 St Antoine, 514.989.1056.

**West End Gallery:** New works by Mary Harman and new Inuit sculpture. 1358 Greene, 514.933.4314.



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### Luci & Ombre

(Light & Shadow)

Visual art exhibition by Teresa Maglietta

#### Espace Les Neuf Sœurs

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Vernissage: Fri. March 13, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Closing: March 22, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

## Westmount Profile: Tony Moffat

# Studying the heavens

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

**T**ony Moffat was only 10 when he first looked through a telescope. He saw the moon's craters. And it sent him spiraling.

"I knew it was another world," he says. "It was a revelation. It changed a 'small boy thing' into something real." And it had shaped his future.

His curiosity exploded into an ongoing 40-year career in international astrophysics in which Moffat's own discoveries, and those of the teams he has led, have made a significant impact on the research of massive stars and the structure of the galaxy.

"The ultimate goal is to discover the truth," he says.

One of his proudest achievements is his team's documentation of the first evidence that our galaxy had a flat rotation curve, implying that it contains a large amount of "dark matter."

### The Moffat Function

In early doctoral research in Germany in 1969, Moffat developed a technique to describe the precise form that the focused image of a star makes on a photographic plate. And today, even with so many advances in technology, the Moffat Function is still used in imagining by all telescopes, ground-based and in space.

Fast-forward 40 years: his team's landmark discovery last year was to find and measure the most massive star in the galaxy ever weighed. Named NGC 3603/A1, "it is 20,000 light years away, in our own galaxy," he says. "It's over 100 times more massive than the sun, approaching the maximum limit of stars that can form."

One would scarcely deduce, therefore, that Moffat had officially retired last year as a research professor in the University of Montreal's physics department. His office is still a hub of activity where he continues his work as professor emeritus.

One ongoing project stems from his discovery that hot stellar winds from stars are "clumpy," not smooth, the consequences of which "were enormous," he says. And 20 years later, the reason still hasn't been completely resolved. "I and others are still working on it now."

It's this persistence that has pushed him since childhood to find answers to his insatiable curiosity. "I don't take 'no' for an answer," he says. "I rarely give up."

Moffat was also involved in the development of the Megantic observatory in southern Quebec, which led to the creation of the ASTROLab – a visitor centre for the public. This is part of a Dark Sky reserve "that is unique in the world." The absence of bright lights in a 50-kilometre radius resulted from all municipalities coming on board to use only low-level sodium lighting.

This is something he is now urging Westmount to adopt in his volunteer work with the environmental committee of Westmount's Healthy City Project.

### Dedicated environmentalist

Moffat's mission to protect the Earth stems from his "empathy for the underdog." It goes hand-in-hand with his politically leftist leanings. At his cottage in Huntsville in Muskoka, Moffat actively promotes the banning of motorboats on the lake. "It's an uphill battle," he says, "and I'm a bit outspoken." He is the co-founder of PURE (Peninsula-Lake Users Respecting the Environment).

He loves to sail and recently bought a Megabyte-class boat made by the former Laser company. "For me, the ultimate in physics was to sail faster than the wind – while going against it."

It's a passion he developed as a child in his native Ontario. It was here that his great-grandfather settled on arrival from Scotland to establish a metal foundry in Markham. Before long, Moffat stoves had become a household name.

By age 10, Tony had moved from Toronto to Owen Sound and then Midlands, both on Georgian Bay. "It was hard being uprooted," he recalls. "The small city was a letdown, and I couldn't wait to get back to Toronto."

But he loved walking in the woods to explore nature and wondering how it was that things happened. He wanted to grind and make his own telescope. "I didn't want any dinky little one," he says. "It goes back to the familiar German expression *Wenn schon, denn schon*: If you're going to do something, do it properly."

With 2009 as the UN's "International Year of Astronomy", it is now 400 years since Galileo first pointed the telescope upward, he points out.

### Obtained two PhDs

Moffat obtained his BSc in physics in 1965 and master's degree in astronomy a year later – both from the University of



Tony Moffat at the Healthy City Project's Live Smart, Live Green event October 25 at Victoria Hall.

Toronto. After his marriage to Ann the same year, they set out by ocean liner for Germany where Tony would pursue two doctoral degrees.

He returned to Canada in 1977 to begin his tenure at the University of Montreal, where mentoring graduate students has played an important role in his career. Interestingly, his own son, Bryce – father of his two grandchildren – is now a physicist in Germany. His daughter Lesley works in Amsterdam as an animal rights' advocate.

"The core to being successful lies in the idea," he says. "The original seed of an

idea is the crux of things. And you need time to think. Sitting back with a coffee and thinking is crucial. That's hard to do in today's world."

But it's something he hopes to be able to achieve in the future as he continues his search for massive stars and his work with Austrian scientists on a new satellite project.

He also maintains his advisory roles with the Canadian Space Agency and several international big telescope peer-evaluation committees. "I still have many poker chips in the fire," he says.



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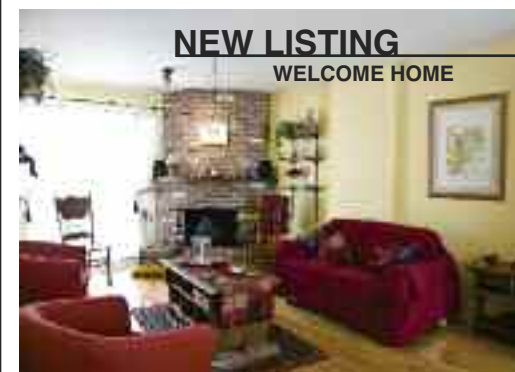
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