

He's back! Trent prepares to run

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

People have been calling for his return. And last Friday, Peter Trent revealed he is "very seriously" looking at running for mayor in Westmount's November 1 elections.

"We took our city back and now is the time for me to step up again to move the arena project forward, fix our crumbling infrastructure and defend our autonomy," he told the *Independent*.

Trent declared his intention only days after Mayor Karin Marks announced she would step down at the end of her mandate.

He had served continuously as mayor from 1991 through 2001 when his mandate was interrupted by the forced mergers. He refused on principle to sit on the



Montreal megacity council after fighting the mergers and chose to lead the island-wide demerger fight as "mayor-in-exile".

With the reconstitution of the city and the willingness of Marks to serve as mayor in 2006, Trent took a hiatus to write a book on lessons learned from the merger fiasco and ways to address ongoing regional problems. It is to be published in English and French next year by McGill-Queen's University Press.



lished in English and French next year by McGill-Queen's University Press.

He expects to make an official announcement concerning the mayoralty after ensuring there is a favourable chance of electing a strong council team.

"I'm taking the next two weeks to encourage good people with good ideas to run," Trent explained. "I'm not talking about a slate to support me. I mean independent free thinkers, professionals and people who reflect a cross section of the population."

"I want a strong council" continued on p. 2

Marks will not seek re-election



Mayor Karin Marks, at a press conference at city hall August 3, announces her decision to retire at the end of this council mandate. Story p. 8.

Chagnon hoping for arena grant news before September Tweakings on tap, no WAG study

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

With news of Westmount's arena/pool grant expected any day, city council decided August 3 to present a revised design at a public meeting in September, but forgo any assessment of an site at the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG).

As citizens for and against the WAG alternative packed the council chamber, WAG neighbours expressed concern about the possible loss of green space if two rinks were built on the athletic field. Propoents claim the plan could shave \$8 million off the \$36-million project.

"This is more an issue of taking away green space," said Aaron Fraser of Hallowell Ave. "What is the cost of green space?"

On the other hand, Gary Ikeman, of

4700 St. Catherine, asked on behalf of 125 petitioners that both sites be examined simultaneously. Rising costs and seven months of design work at the existing one "indicate the premise of the project is faulty," he said. He attributed this to a combination of site choice and project size and called for an immediate comparative analysis, including sustainability issues.

Dying days of council

Mayor Karin Marks told the meeting that alternatives could be discussed after the public meeting next month – even though it would take place in the dying days of council's mandate before the last council meeting Thursday, October 1.

"(This council) will bring to conclusion what we have been working on and provide the" continued on p. 15

See our listings p. 7

Edythe Berman
Pam Davidson McLernon
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ROYAL LEPAGE
HERITAGE


Everyone's talking arena!
See p. 4, 6, 12 and 13.



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Trent: 'I'll take on Harel any time!'

continued from p. 1

cil of people with disparate ideas who may even be in conflict with mine."

Trent said he believes he is in the best position to lead Westmount into the future given his experience with regional and provincial bodies and in streamlining the city's finances and management, and renewing almost all its facilities, including the library.

"I'll take on Harel any time!" he said, referring to the recent emergence of merger-architect Louise Harel as a Montreal mayoral candidate and potential agglomeration leader. "I know all the players. I feel I can continue the leadership that we started and that Karin has shown."

Trent, 63, retired last November as honorary colonel of Westmount's Royal Montreal Regiment. A chemist by training, he

invented and developed a new class of polymer building materials around which he built, and later sold, a multi-million dollar business.

As the architect of Westmount's pay-as-you-go policy, he plans to take a firm grip on the city's finances, including the \$37-million debt, most of which came from the merger period, and what he calls the city's "invisible debt."

This is the funding needed to repair and upgrade sidewalks, roads, and the water, sewer and electrical networks. "I've never seen the city in such a state of disrepair," he said. "It also comes from the merger period."

Seeking buy-in for arena

He is also "fascinated" by the challenge presented by the arena/pool project - especially after renewing the library, Protective Services building and Victoria Hall with its new gallery as well as building the underground electrical substation and lawn bowling clubhouse.

"I'm not going to take a position on the arena at this point," he explained. "It's the most important project that Westmount has ever taken on and it has to be done by

a council and citizens who are solidly behind it - as we did with the library. I would apply the same style."

This means treating a building project as four inter-rated elements: location, cost, facilities and appearance, he said. With a penchant for research and analysis, he typically proceeds with a range of comparative studies including traffic and impact "that must be released to the public so everyone knows what we're basing our decisions on. I don't do things half-way," he added.

His last council in 1999 launched an initial study into renewing the recreational facilities, but the project was shelved and priority given to fighting the pending mergers.

Born in England and raised in Toronto, Trent moved to Quebec in 1968 and taught marketing at Concordia. He first ran for council in 1983, serving as commissioner of Planning and Redevelopment with then-mayor Brian Gallery.

Choosing not to run in 1987, he was brought back in 1990 by Mayor May Cut-

ler as finance commissioner. She supported him for mayor in 1991 and he continued in office through two more elections. He also served as president of the 28-member Conference of Suburban

Mayors, and as a member of the vice-chairman of the Montreal Urban Community (MUC).

A SOM poll done for *La Presse* in 2001 as the mergers approached showed that right across the island of Montreal more people had confidence in Trent to run the megacity than in Gérald Tremblay.

With Marks representing Westmount on the megacity

council as borough president, "the plan was that I would return as mayor once Westmount was reconstituted," he said. "But when that happened, I considered it was time to take a breather and let things settle down. Also, I thought Karin should have the opportunity as mayor to continue the leadership she had demonstrated during the mergers."

Now, with her retirement, "I've been away long enough," he said.

"I've never seen the city in such a state of disrepair."

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Maccabiah Games update Westmounters bring gold home

Westmounters Sylvan Adams, Garry Garbarino, Allan Schouela and Morris Shore attended the 18th Maccabiah Games – and brought home four medals. The event was held in Israel from July 13 to 23.

Adams, the cycling team's captain and coach, won individual golds (including Canada's first at the games) in the time trial and the road race.

The Garbarino-Schouela-Adams trio was a part of the 13-member Canadian team that won gold in the team competi-



Garry Garbarino (left), unidentified, Allan Schouela (centre) unidentified, and Sylvan Adams (right).

tion.

Adams' three golds made him Canada's most decorated athlete.

Shore won a bronze medal in the triathlon.

"It was an incredible experience and I hope to win gold in 2013."

The event welcomed approximately 8,000 Jewish athletes from all over the world, including 500 from Canada, to compete in 30 events.



Morris Shore and medal.

Centaur fundraiser Garneau to 'fly to the moon'

Westmount-Ville Marie MP Marc Garneau never made it to the moon in his career as an astronaut, but the Centaur Theatre may be giving him that chance.

The drama company has named Garneau as the chairman of its fundraising gala, "Fly Me to the Moon". The event will feature jazz vocalist Kim Zombik and takes place on Tuesday, September 15.

"Centaur has provided audiences with 40 seasons of inspiring theatre. It is a true gem in Montreal's vibrant cultural life. I am thrilled to participate in this gala, and hope to see Centaur thrive for many more decades," said Garneau.

The event includes cocktails, the performance by Zombik and an auction.

For tickets and further information contact the Centaur's development department at 514.288.1229 Ext. 240 or go to www.centaurtheatre.com.

WMA presidency Grossman out of the running

Stan Grossman has pulled out of the "race" to be the president of the Westmount Municipal Association (WMA) for 2009-10.

Grossman has been the only candidate since Charles Bierbrier withdrew his name from consideration in June.

At the May 25 annual general meeting, Grossman unexpectedly declared his intention to run against Bierbrier, who was the nominating committee's candidate. The membership of the municipal affairs group voted to postpone the election until a later date.

Grossman has twice failed to be voted into power by the board, most recently on July 20. The board acquired the right to appoint its own officers at its June 16 meeting in order to avoid having to call a new general meeting.

"Basically, I'd like to see the WMA succeed," Grossman told the *Independent*, "I'm outspoken and I have touched raw nerves. For the good of the WMA, I'll resign."

Grossman will keep his seat on the WMA board.

No new candidate for president has officially come forward, although there are rumours of a compromise candidate being nominated.

There has been no president or acting president since May 2008.

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Editorial

On publishing, policies and politics

By DAVID PRICE

We certainly hit some nerves with our last two issues, especially with the July 7 story on Councillor Patrick Martin’s proposal for an arena at the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG) and the opinion pieces and letters that followed the next week on p. 5, 6 and 7.

No “Letters to the Editor” section purports to be a poll, but given some pretty wild speculation and accusations of pro-WAG site bias that are circulating in some quarters, I would like to dispel a few misconceptions about our July 14 issue:

- All Westmounters had an opportunity to read the initial July 7 news story about Councillor Martin’s WAG arena proposal and send letters for possible publication.
- We received no letters from opponents of the WAG site.
- We solicited no letters from known proponents of the WAG arena site for the July 14 edition, including the opinion piece by city councillor Patrick Martin, which he asked us to include.
- We did remind some of our frequent letter writers that our summer break was coming up; but we did not know their opinions regarding the WAG site, given that the story about it had just broken. One of them took the opportunity to write a letter supportive of the WAG site.
- When I realized that we were going to get many letters on the WAG issue, I emailed Mayor Karin Marks, asking if she would like to write, which she did. It is ironic to be accused of bias in favour of the WAG idea when the only piece solicited from a known protagonist in the

debate was opposed to the site!

- Some people have gone as far as to allege that the headlines for letters were biased and to inquire vigorously who wrote them. The editorial team writes headlines and I have final responsibility for them. We always try to make all pieces interesting to the reader by correcting spelling and grammar, by editing – and by coming up with catchy headlines. As is usual, most of the headlines for our July 14 letters (p. 6 to 7) were inspired by a phrase composed by the original writer.
- Since inception, we have published almost all of the letters we have received. We love getting them, because it shows that readers are interested in what we are writing about and want to reach their fellow residents through us. We take each one as an endorsement. Even if the writer is criticizing us, we take it as a sign of goodwill: here is someone who wants us to be better! For this reason, we have only *not* published letters when there has been a specific problem with a submission. In the July 14 issue, we published all the letters we received – a record 17 (two of which did not address the WAG site). For this issue (p. 12 to 13), we received six letters from opponents of the WAG site and are publishing all of them, except two that have already been published elsewhere.

Two views of city government

Some people are angry with the three WAG-interested councillors for having spoken out. Being less than pleased with elected officials is what politics is all about, and I express no opinion on this particular

question. I do, however, think that there is something deeper at work driving this specific debate.

There seem to be two concepts of municipal government current in Westmount. Some Westmounters seem to favour a “board of directors” style council – with council members talking (and perhaps disagreeing) in private, in order to come to a majority opinion that all council members publicly support – or at least not oppose.

Other Westmounters seem to believe in a more “parliamentary” approach, with each individual council member having a mandate to comment when and how they see fit (within the bounds of legally imposed secrecy). Among a group of nine people, it is not surprising that different members will choose one concept, or the other, or a blend.

The initial WAG story in our July 7 paper arose from Councillor Martin embracing, at least for a time, the “parliamentary” approach. Given that he spoke out, it became news. I find such a news story unremarkable in a free society.

I am not expressing an opinion on which governance style is better, but opponents of the WAG can at least take some solace in the fact that they now know that this idea is out there.

They can refute it and organize against it – as they have already done at the August 3 city council meeting and in this issue’s pages.

(WAG-site opponents were similarly served by the 15 pro-WAG letters in our July 14 edition. People are rightly attached to *their* right of expression, but a less obvious benefit of a free press is getting to know that your opponents are out there

and what they think – so you can organize against them.)

Best wishes to Mayor Marks

I am very sorry that this whole episode has been interpreted by some as an attack by this newspaper or by me on Mayor Marks. I have no axe to grind against her or her policies – or in favour of her opponents and their views. She has been nothing but friendly as one of her constituents – me – worked with other Westmounters to build a quality community paper.

Without endorsing (or criticizing) her policies or approach, I think Westmounters have been lucky to have had such a hardworking and high-quality person as mayor.

Looking back on my brief period of seeing her in action (i.e. since 2007), I think one of her highlights was the August 3 council meeting, just hours after announcing her retirement. An angry questioner asked the council why the WAG proposal had been brought into the public domain after it had been voted down in closed session.

Councillor Martin defended the substance of his views, but it was Mayor Marks who – eloquently – defended his right to express them.

And this was despite her personal opposition to Martin’s proposal and to his decision to talk about it publicly. The context was hard too: the council session was highly charged.

Mayor Marks: That performance was classy, diplomatic, and praiseworthy – and in keeping with your tenure as mayor. For all that you’ve done for Westmount over so many years, thank you from the *Independent* and best wishes for the future.

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Heward: Be wary of financial scammers

Former Westmounter James Heward wants to protect investors from fraud.

He is the Investment Counsel Association of Canada’s board director and spokesperson for Quebec. In that role, he has developed a checklist to help investors avoid Madoff-esque Ponzi scams.

Key considerations include: Is the individual/firm registered with the Autorité des marchés financiers (AMF), or other provincial regulatory commissions? And if so, exactly which services are authorized? Does the individual/firm use an independent custodian (e.g. a chartered bank) to hold client assets? What are advisors’ credentials/qualifications? Has the firm been audited and to what level of compliance? Potential “red flag”: Any individual/firm guaranteeing a high rate of return at zero or low risk.

Heward works at C.F.G. Heward Investment Management with his father (Chil) and brother (Geoffrey), who are both Westmounters. Chil was profiled in the July 2, 2008 edition of the *Independent*.

Civic Alert

Tumultuous fall looms as mayoral race starts to unfold

By DON WEDGE



If there was a vacation in civic affairs this year, it ended with a jolt on August 3. Mayor Karin Marks announced in the morning that she would not run in the November election and, in the evening, that council was not going to look at the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG) alternative for the arena-pool. Well, not until September! Then, within the week, Peter Trent was the frontrunner to fill to the mayor's chair as our exclusive p. 1 interview details. The last few weeks have been anything but the placid Westmount normal, and now the scene has been set for even more tumultuous times ahead.

Trent is just not built for early retirement – he could have done so several times in his business career but instead renewed his working interests.

Trent admitted that people had been approaching him to go back to the mayor's chair. One of them that I identified was The Boulevard resident Howard Hoppenheim, a member of the hockey lobby.

"If he's really ready to be in the saddle again," said Hoppenheim, "I'd support him and I believe many other Westmounters would too. He was a good mayor in the past – and a good manager. The way he groomed Karin Marks to succeed him was evidence of that.

"With Louise Harel involved in local municipal affairs – possibly as the next mayor of Big Montreal – someone like Trent would be invaluable to counter her. And I can't think of anyone else with so much municipal experience and skills."

Just as enthusiastic was George Bowser. "If his hat is anywhere near the ring, I'll give it a waft," the musician-councillor promised.

Bowser may run after all

Bowser had been expected to retire his municipal mandate after this term, but surprised friends this week by revealing that he was "still mulling the possibility of a second term, now that Karin has withdrawn.

"It depends on who is to be mayor," he added. "I simply don't have the 40-50 hours per month that I have been devoting to the job. It severely curtails my creative output. Perhaps if the new candidate can promise a maximum 25 hours per month...."

Trent made way for Marks to be West-

mount's first demerged mayor in January 2006, and since then has made almost no comment on municipal topics. He was, he said, "keeping his powder dry" (*Independent*, June 2, p.5).

The regional leadership role Trent carved in the 1990s passed to his successor and will need to be picked up by whoever is the next mayor.

Mayors' tribute

This was demonstrated on Monday when eight current and former suburban mayors attended to hear that Marks, their leader, would not be running in the November election. From the doyen, Pointe Claire's Bill McMurchie, to Maria Tutino, the first-term mayor of Baie d'Urfé, they had nothing but praise for her.

"In 2005, we were 15 little guys with no leverage, facing not one but two goliaths – mega-Montreal and the Quebec government," recalled Montreal West's Campbell Stuart. "It was only thanks to her hard work that we got the changes we did – resulting in Westmounters, for instance, paying \$1.5 million less tax."

"I'm a Karin Marks groupie," Tutino commented. "She made sure every view was heard, always finding a consensus, even when she did not agree with the position herself. She turned out to be the perfect president for the mayors' association."

Bruce St. Louis, Westmount's former director general, now divides his time between working on the arena-pool renewal project and acting as consultant to the 15 mayors. He coordinates the team negotiating with Big Montreal and the government on outstanding Bill 22 issues like the sharing of centre-city costs. Additionally, each month he briefs the suburban mayors on issues being raised on the agglomeration council agenda.

"I wish Westmounters could see Karin Marks in action," St. Louis said. "It is like herding 15 very determined cats, but she keeps them focused."

Why the odd invitation?

The city's role in the region provided an odd sidelight to the organization of Marks' retirement announcement. It was timed for a Monday with the intention of making a big splash on the broadcast media and in the regional papers.

Jonathan Goldbloom's PR firm, specialists in such projects, was hired to make the arrangements. They insisted that no word be mentioned until 7 am on the Monday morning. But Marks wanted her friends, civic leaders and community

groups – and the suburban mayors – to be present. They had to be notified in advance because, unlike journalists, they are not accustomed to short-notice assignments.

So a series of invitations went out headed "Press Conference", but carrying a warning that recipients should ensure the media did not know about it!

There may be more odd events if we become embroiled in the changes Louise Harel might want to inflict.

What kind of public meeting?

That Monday evening, the council highlight, apart from Mayor Marks' announcement, was the attendance of towards 100 people provoked by the WAG proposal. It is easy to see this much interest recurring through the election period. The next step will be a meeting to focus on the present proposals and various options. Questioner Paul Marriott reminded council that a town-hall type meeting was the choice of many for examining these plans.

But I think we could go further. Westmounters were exposed a few weeks ago to a BAPE (Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement) public hearing to



Mayor Karin Marks receiving retirement wishes from Beaconsfield mayor Bob Benedetti.

consider the Turcot-Ville Marie Expressway rebuilding. Let Westmount have a mini-BAPE. Experts could describe their proposals. Citizens then could question them and have the option of making a written or verbal brief.

Joshua Wolfe, the city's sustainable development coordinator, previously worked as a public hearing commissioner. He could show the way.

Citizen activist Don Wedge's email address is dwedge@sympatico.ca.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

For letters about the WAG,
see p. 12 and 13.

THANKS FROM VIC VILLAGE MERCHANTS

As representatives of the Victoria Village Merchants' Association, we would like to express our appreciation to the city at how quickly and efficiently the repairs were handled during the past four weeks on Sherbrooke St.

Undoubtedly, we had concerns that ranged from store accessibility to parking for our clients, traffic problems and delays. Well, what a pleasant surprise. We encountered very limited traffic delays, the parking allowances that were made were more than adequate, and the construction crews, in both the preparatory work and in the ongoing project were always courteous, helpful and very professional.

The team from Public Works was terrific. They responded to all our concerns and managed to be finish two weeks before the scheduled deadline of Aug. 16.

I congratulate the effort of all those involved. We thank the city and appreciate in a really big way how well this project was executed.

SHELLEY KERMAN (LMNOP)
& GERARD FELLERATH (FOLKLORE)

FORGET LOCATION, RENOVATE THE OLD ARENA

The recent debate around the location of a new arena complex for Westmount is spurious because it neglects the fundamental questions.

We do not need two large indoor hockey rinks, and an assessment of needs has never been done for this major expenditure. It is not right that such a large amount of money – \$35 million or more – be spent without an understanding of the needs of the population.

Indeed, what is the real state of the rink? Is it actually structurally unsound? Is there any study indicating it will become so in the future? The reasonable ecological approach would be to carry out a substantial renovation of the interior surrounding the present ice surface, along with new exterior windows systems, and a new roof membrane.

To my mind, we are once again, as with artificial turf, putting the cart before the horse.

ROGER JOCHYM, LEWIS AVE.

HOW MUCH HAS BEEN SPENT?

A few questions for the mayor and council meant to inspire reflection so we do not waste any more money on bad

arena planning:

1) How many taxpayer dollars were spent on the ill-fated synthetic (toxic plastic) turf program that was cancelled and swept under the rug after severe public criticism? \$300,000?

2) How many taxpayer dollars have already been spent on the rightly criticized arena project that attempts to shoehorn a mega-sportsplex into the already high-traffic present arena site? The just officially revealed (at the August 3 council meeting) amount of \$600,000? Is that what we have paid to threaten our cherished park? If the WAG site threatens hallowed athletic ground, doesn't Westmount Park deserve equal respect?

3) How many taxpayer dollars have been

spent on the newly seeded and fenced-in green space bordering Academy Rd. that has been closed to public use?

Calculating these costs should include all work and material costs, and the extra time charged and hours lost by Public Works employees who were diverted from their regular work. Has \$1 million been wasted?

Don't citizens deserve this honest and transparent accounting since the numbers being discussed around Westmount are in excess of \$1 million for these poorly planned and untimely projects?

Let's do some basic clear thinking about the real merits and dimensions of existing park space. And let's stop wasting money.

LARRY KLEPPER, ST. CATHERINE ST.

RE/MAX on the move

Local real estate brokerage RE/MAX Westmount Inc., which has been in the same office since its inception in 1983, is planning to move from 1330 to 1314 Greene. The firm will have a real estate showcase at street level and offices on the seventh floor.

The move is scheduled to take place in mid to late September.

The firm's Monkland Ave. location will be unaffected.

Right: RE/MAX principals André Campeau and Joyce Faughnan in their old digs.



Résidents!

Les juges visiteront Westmount le 18 août

Participer en grand nombre à l'**embellissement horticole**, à l'**initiative communautaire** et au **développement durable** de la Ville de Westmount, dans le cadre des **Fleurons du Québec**.

Qu'il s'agisse des commerces, des résidences, des institutions, tous sont appelés à participer à cet effort collectif.

*L'embellissement de Westmount
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Residents!

Judges will visit Westmount on August 18

Join together in beautifying the City of Westmount in the areas of **horticultural improvement**, **community initiatives**, and **sustainable development** as part of the **Fleurons du Québec**.

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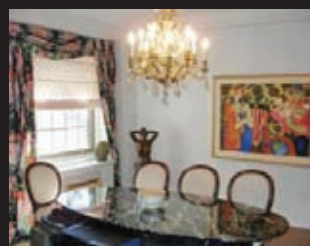
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Went missing late Thursday
July 16 in Upper Westmount

Mayoralty was 'rewarding, challenging and stimulating'

Marks to leave council after 18 years

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

It was a bittersweet moment for Mayor Karin Marks as she announced her retirement from council in front of numerous cameras, city directors, present and former council members, local residents and eight current and former suburban mayors.

At a hastily called press conference August 3, she revealed her decision not to seek re-election November 1 as mayor. She had made a commitment to her family that this would be her final mandate.

"I don't intend to be a lame duck mayor as my mandate draws to a close," she said. "There is still much time and a need for more hard work. Nor am I retiring from community life. I am a true Westmouter, born and bred. Community and public service are in my blood. My intention is simply to channel my energy and my commitment to social change differently."

Despite serving 18 years on five city councils - latterly as mayor - she had no



From left: mother Irene Marks, husband Brian Puddington, daughter Sue Puddington, Mayor Marks and granddaughter Kylie Savage.

ambition to seek higher office.

"Isn't this worth it all?" she asked, posing for a photo that included her 92-year-old mother, Irene, and 4-year-old granddaughter, Kylie.

While Marks said she had no hand-picked successor for the mayoralty she was sure someone would "step up to the plate." Marks is also president of the Association of Suburban Municipalities and vice-president of the Montreal agglomeration.

Using the words "exhilarating" and "rewarding" to describe her service on council, she noted the experience was "at times,

challenging, but always stimulating."

Later that day, Marks opened Westmount's city council meeting saying she hadn't wanted to announce her intentions earlier because she wanted to keep working until the end of the four-year mandate.

"Also, I had hoped to hear about the (arena) grant before, and that we'd be further along in plans for shared responsibilities (between the reconstituted cities and Montreal regarding centre-city and water costs)." Marks was instrumental in helping the suburbs obtain increased rights with the signing of Bill 22 in June 2008.

One of her goals, to bring in an action plan for sustainable development, is expected to become reality with its presentation at a public meeting in September.

Finalizing plans for the arena/pool renewal is still underway. "I will not be sitting here when the shovel goes in the ground," she told the council meeting.

At the press conference, Marks spoke of the project, saying that "in the Westmount tradition, the debate over the specifics is well underway." And on the grant, she said: "It would make a nice retirement present, don't you think?"

Marks joined the city council in 1991, serving 10 years on the councils of Mayor Peter Trent, fighting latterly against the forced mergers. When they came into being in 2002, she continued the fight for Westmount autonomy at the Montreal city council as an independent councillor representing Westmount as its borough president.

She later assumed the title of borough mayor and was elected mayor of the reconstituted city in 2005, defeating Gerald Glass. She considers these fights for an in- *continued on p. 13*



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FLEURONS DU QUÉBEC

L'arrivée des juges le 18 août

Depuis 2006, les Fleurons du Québec reconnaissent les efforts des municipalités et ceux de leur résidents en matière d'embellissement horticole. Les juges visiteront incognito et inspecteront Westmount le 18 août prochain afin de revoir le nombre de fleurons qui sera accordé à la municipalité. Qu'il s'agisse des commerces, des résidences, des institutions, tous sont appelés à participer à cet effort collectif. L'embellissement de Westmount c'est l'affaire de tous! 🌿



TRAVAUX PUBLICS

Renseignements sur l'état des routes : composez le 5-1-1

Offert 24 heures sur 24, 7 jours sur 7, le service téléphonique Québec 5-1-1 vous donne facilement accès à toute l'information dont vous avez besoin pour planifier des déplacements efficaces et en toute sécurité sur l'ensemble du réseau routier du Québec. Conçu par le ministère des Transports du Québec, ce service gratuit est également disponible en ligne sur le site : www.quebec511.gouv.qc.ca. 🌿



SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE

Restrictions de stationnement modifiées

Le 10 août, les périodes d'entretien des rues en après-midi ont été modifiées. Si vous stationnez dans la rue, vous pourriez être affectés par ces changements. Veuillez vérifier les panneaux dans votre rue.

Permission de stationner la nuit

Vous aimeriez obtenir une permission temporaire de stationner la nuit ? Vous pouvez maintenant vous inscrire auprès du Service de la sécurité publique par le biais de notre site Web - www.westmount.org - et ainsi, éviter une contravention. Cliquez sur le bouton E-Westmount et prévoyez-vous de ce nouveau service dès aujourd'hui. 🌿



ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

Shakespeare-in-the-Park

La troupe Repercussion Theatre présentera la pièce *As You Like It* de Shakespeare les samedi et dimanche

DATES À RETENIR

Jusqu'au 15 août

Exposition : *Une question de détail*
La galerie du Victoria Hall

Les 15 et 16 août – 19 h 30

Shakespeare-in-the-Park
As You Like It de *William Shakespeare*
Parc Westmount

Le 20 août de 16 h à 17 h

Bricolage de dinosaure (8 ans et plus)
Inscription au comptoir des enfants
Bibliothèque

15 et 16 août à 19 h 30 au parc Westmount. Entrée gratuite. N'oubliez pas d'apporter vos chaises. Info : 514 916-7275 ou www.repercussiontheatre.com

La galerie du Victoria Hall

Exposition de groupe

Pour le cinquième été de suite, la galerie du Victoria Hall est fière de présenter une attrayante exposition collective. Huit artistes participent à cette exposition intitulée *Une question de détail* : Mona Agia, Ann Cecil, Marina Etingin, Douglas Allan Fales, Lindsey Fryett, Christine Henderson, Pierre Lessard et Beth McAdams. L'exposition se poursuit jusqu'au 15 août. Info : 514 925-1403. 🌿



BIBLIOTHÈQUE

Club de lecture vacances 2009

Cet été, venez découvrir le monde des animaux en participant au club de lecture vacances. Le thème de cette année est *Lire, c'est pas bête* ! Inscriptions : comptoir des enfants. Info : 514 989-5229.

AdosTeens

club de lecture d'été en ligne

Visite le blogue pour participer et gagner des prix au www.westlib.org/adosteens. Pour les ados de 13 à 17 ans. Caméra Flip® à gagner ! Info : 514 989-1622.

Club d'échecs et de Scrabble

Aimez-vous jouer aux échecs et/ou au Scrabble? La prochaine rencontre du club aura lieu le vendredi 21 août à 14 h dans une ambiance amicale. Nous sommes toujours à la recherche de nouveaux joueurs. Info : 514 989-5386. 🌿



FLEURONS DU QUÉBEC

Judges arrive on August 18

Since 2006, the *Fleurons du Québec* has recognized municipal and residential efforts in the areas of horticultural improvement of their communities. Judges will anonymously visit and inspect Westmount on August 18 to determine the number of florets to award the municipality. Businesses, homeowners and those who manage institutions are all asked to take part in this joint effort. Together for a beautiful Westmount! 🌿



PUBLIC WORKS

Call 5-1-1 for Highway Construction Info

The Quebec 5-1-1 telephone service, available 24/7, gives you easy access to all the information you need to plan safe and efficient trips on the entire Quebec highway network. Designed by the *ministère des Transports du Québec*, this free service is also available online at www.quebec511.gouv.qc.ca. 🌿



PUBLIC SECURITY

Changes in Parking Restrictions

On August 10, parking hours for afternoon street maintenance were changed. If you park on the street, this may affect you. Please check the signs on your street.

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Need permission for temporary overnight parking? Now you can register with Public Security through our Web site, and avoid a parking ticket. Use the E-Services button at www.westmount.org and take advantage of this new service today. 🌿



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Shakespeare-in-the-Park

This summer, Repercussion Theatre will be presenting Shakespeare's *As You Like It* on Saturday, August 15 and Sunday, August 16 at 7:30 p.m. in Westmount Park. Admission is free. Bring a lawn chair. Info: 514 916-7275 or www.repercussiontheatre.com

DATEBOOK

Until August 15

Exhibition: *Details, Details*
The Gallery at Victoria Hall

August 15 & 16 – 7:30 p.m.

Shakespeare-in-the-Park
As You Like It by *William Shakespeare*
Westmount Park

August 20 - 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Dinosaur Craft (8 years and up)
Please register at the children's desk
Library

The Gallery at Victoria Hall

Group Exhibition

For the fifth consecutive summer, the Gallery at Victoria Hall is proud to present an exciting group exhibition. Eight artists are participating in this year's exhibition entitled *Details, Details*: Mona Agia, Ann Cecil, Marina Etingin, Douglas Allan Fales, Lindsey Fryett, Christine Henderson, Pierre Lessard and Beth McAdams. The exhibition runs until August 15. Info: 514 925-1403. 🌿



LIBRARY

Summer Reading Club 2009

Until August 28

Explore the world of animals by joining our summer reading club. The theme this year is *Go wild, read!* You can register for this activity in the children's section of the Library. Info: 514 989-5229.

AdosTeens online summer reading club

Visit our blog to participate and win prizes. www.westlib.org/adosteens. For teens ages 13-17. Win a Flip® camera! Info: 514 989-1622.

Chess and Scrabble Club

Do you enjoy playing chess and/or Scrabble? Our games club will meet on Friday, August 21 at 2 p.m. New players welcome! Info: 514 989-5386. 🌿

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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Social Notes from Westmount and Beyond

McCord Museum Gala: O'Gala McCord

BY VERONICA REDGRAVE

The McCord's recent black-tie event was inspired by the museum's exhibition, "Being Irish". On May 21 (yes, we are only now catching up!), the party was held in the cavernous Marché Bonsecours, transformed into glamorous greenery by Flore. Beautiful Young Things (BYT) were invited to O'Gala After Hours, co-chaired by Alexandra Schwarz and Chloé Aucoin. *Délices* included oysters from renowned Joe Beef before the five-course dinner prepared by Dansereau Traiteur. Guests were amused by speakers Daniel Johnson,

Pierre Marc Johnson and Jean Charest. Committee members included Westmounters Sylvie Chagnon (chair), Denis D'Etcheverry, Cynthia Gordon, Nicole Mikula, Linda Leus, Andrea McConnell, Elise Nesbitt and Judith Webster, along with Béa Baudinet-Pungartnik, Annie Bergeron, Karen Potter Bienvenu, Carolina Gallo La Flèche, Helen Klinkhoff, Claire Krut, Diane Oliver, Joanne Pelletier-Charron, Line Rivard, Elizabeth Ryan, Kristin Shannon, Lorna Telfer and Nancy Wells. Guests included Montreal mayor Gérald Tremblay and Suzanne Tailleux, British High Commissioner An-

thony Cary, Heather Munroe-Blum and Leonard Blum, Power Corporation's Philip Ryan (with Elizabeth) and Peter Krut (with Claire), Manon Vennat, and Victoria Dickenson, executive director, McCord Museum.



(Top) Montreal mayor Gérald Tremblay, Michèle Dionne. (Above, left to right) Sylvie and Jean Chagnon; Julia and Stephen Reitman; and Elise and Graham Nesbitt.



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Fencing: Families with pets, young children or those just seeking a little additional privacy will appreciate the functionality and appearance of an attractive sturdy fence. Major home centers sell everything required for the do-it-yourself type, including attractive, low-maintenance PVC options. If your property is already fenced, take time to make sure it is well maintained.

Outdoor Sanctuary: With a little creativity and a few hundred dollars, it is easy to turn a problem spot into the center of attention. Get creative with an easy to install garden pond, butterfly or flower garden, wind chime and outdoor seating. Consider adding a decorative fire-pit to encourage family time on those warm summer evenings.

Update the Paint: Indoors or outdoors, painting is a simple way to give your home a fresh new look. If it has been more than five years since your home has had a fresh coat, make it a priority to paint. Do not stop with the house: concrete stains and unique drive-way art are other popular options designed to attract attention. Just be sure to keep them neutral.

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Underdog: Pebbles needs help, Lloyd got some

BY FERN BRESLAW



During our holidays, Pebbles was brought to us with much begging and pleading to feature her in the paper.

In desperation, I thought to adopt her myself as the thought of her waiting for weeks until the *Independent* resumed was too tragic to fathom. Unfortunately, my very concerned parents made me swear that I would not take on another dog, and so Pebbles is still waiting at the shelter.

Being at a shelter is fine for some dogs, not perfect, but they manage. But for dogs like Pebbles it kills them. She pretty much

went on a hunger strike over three weeks ago, and has lost huge amounts of weight. The volunteers and dog walkers are heartbroken, watching her fade away in her cage day after day. This often happens with depressed dogs, but usu-

ally they are adopted and all is well.

When no one came for her, mass emails went out to everyone who might take her, even just to foster, yet people who would take in a dog like Pebbles have already maxed out their dog limit, and so she continues to disappear before our eyes.

Yet Pebbles is fine: she is healthy, sweet, great in the house and likes other dogs. She is everything one would hope for in a pet. But she is a pitbull.

Yes, ANOTHER ONE.

You may be reading this thinking "Oh, how sad, I wish I could help, but a pitbull is just not right for me." Unfortunately, the guy next door is probably thinking that, and the woman next to him and so on up the street. The truth is that our collective view of pits will have to change because enough good people will give them the chance to be loved and be good dogs, or they will continue to wait, row after row of them, in our shelters.

If you are thinking of adopting, please, please think about a pit – they are little kids just like all dogs – mine is the most

delightful little boy I think I will ever meet. They need our help and today Pebbles is a way we can do something.

You can find out more about Pebbles by calling 514.969.3376 or visit her at the Montreal SPCA.



Three weeks ago we ran a column on a desperate case: Lloyd, a bulldog rescued by Sophie's Dog Adoption, had been pumped full of steroids by his abusive owners. His liver needed serious work, but there was no

money. Your response to his case has been amazing – with over \$3,000 raised to get him some amazing care, including a \$20 donation from a 12-year-old girl. We will keep everyone posted on his progress, but know that this dog wouldn't have had a chance without you. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts, but mainly: Thank you from Lloyd.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WAG debate rages on

WAG A 'BRILLIANT CONCEPT'

Brilliant new concept by Patrick Martin. Worth investigating.

JEWEL LOWENSTEIN, LEXINGTON AVE.

BOWSER: CONSULT ON WAG SITE, BUT I FAVOUR OPEN PARK SPACE

At the August 3 council meeting, a citizen wanted to know each councillor's views about the idea of using the WAG site for a possible indoor skating facility. Here is my reply.

Since it is not possible to have a rational conversation without mutual agreement on the meaning of words, I would like to clarify my understanding of the word "park."

The noun "park" is a term used to describe an area of land set aside for public use. There are national, provincial, municipal and community parks. Some national parks are under the ocean. Some parks are called other things: nature reserves, wild life preserves, sanctuaries. Some parks are not called parks, for reasons that have to do with their history: Queen Elizabeth Gardens is one example. The WAG is another. The word "park" therefore embraces a multitude and variety of spaces. They can be large, small, public, private, green, cultivated, untouched, partly paved, unpaved, full of trees or tree-less, on dry land or under water. There can be an infinite variety of structures and installations in parks, ranging from rest rooms to large works of art.

A park is usually understood to be an open public space, not developed for residential or commercial use, that is intended for the purpose of outdoor recreation ranging from organized sports to strolling or quiet contemplation. You can correctly say, "The WAG is a kind of park."

If someone wishes to advocate the construction, in a park, of a large facility intended for indoor sports, they are free to do so and the public is free to support it. Nonetheless, a park is a park. If you put a large building in it, then that area that is occupied by the building is no longer open space. It is a building. Before Westmount High was built at the WAG, the WAG was bigger. If you put a structure containing two ice surfaces at the WAG, it will be smaller.

It may well be necessary to engage in a public debate about the WAG proposal. If it is clear that the public supports the idea,

well and good. I am skeptical that it will receive universal approbation – few public projects ever do – and there may be other, better options. For myself, I am in favour of preserving the maximum amount of open park space.

GEORGE BOWSER,
CITY COUNCILLOR (DISTRICT 5)

PRESERVE THE WAG OASIS

Location, location, location!

This is a motto proclaimed by real estate agents to advertise valuable properties. Zen Buddhists and other spiritually minded people also talk of location – and they often mean something as literal as where you situate your house.

They believe, as do I, that the choices we make have an impact on our outlook, on who we are as a people and on our destiny. One's choice of neighbourhood, of schools and even of profession all impact one's outlook.

It is therefore with great sadness that I learned that there is a proposal to build an arena at the WAG, which is located on precious green space in my neighbourhood.

Councillor Patrick Martin (see inset) stated in his recent opinion piece that the net effect overall on green space would be zero, and that in fact green space will increase ... in Westmount Park. He also stated that it would not adversely affect Hallowell residents.

The citizens in this neighbourhood do not share his outlook.

We chose to locate here secure in the knowledge that this green space was there for us and believed that the city would not sell it to developers or alter its vocation. The WAG is an oasis that must be preserved.

Mayor Karin Marks outlined eloquently in her latest opinion piece (see inset) that the WAG is a green space that benefits and is available to all Westmount residents. Mayor Marks stated that the amount of green space is not evenly distributed throughout Westmount, that the eastern portion of the city does not have the same quantity of parkland and that the WAG is the only community green space for many blocks in this sector.

My husband and I moved from busy Clark St. in the Plateau to seek respite from the noise of traffic, and the sight of buildings, cars, concrete and asphalt. It is important for our children to experience nature and green space as they are developing, for it will shape their outlook and

WAG the what?

What people are talking about

The WAG is the Westmount Athletic Grounds, which is located between Hallowell and Hillside, behind Westmount High.

City councillor Patrick Martin's proposal for a two-rink arena at the WAG and a pool facility at the current St. Catherine St. arena site was originally described on p. 1 of our July 7 edition ("Cllr. Martin: Save \$8 million, build new rinks at the WAG").

The opinion pieces of Mayor Karin Marks ("WAG site for arena not appropriate") and Councillor Martin ("WAG arena – FAQs and facts) can be found on p. 5 of our July 14 edition, as can many letters on the subject (p. 6 and 7).

Both issues are available online at our website (www.westmountindependent.com).

destiny.

Councillor Martin is an engineer and project manager, and Councillor Kathleen Duncan is an urban planning student. They have their own professional outlook with plans that appear logical, economical and sensible. They, however, do not live in our neighbourhood. Councillor Martin argues that the present arena project is getting out of hand fiscally and the WAG proposal will save costs. Why are we spending so much money? The plan needs to be simplified, scaled back and the constraints of the present location accepted.

Councillor Lulham, the commissioner of Urban Planning who served for 10 years as Sports and Recreation commissioner, has stated that the WAG is an athletic field and not a park. At the August 3 city council meeting, I was further saddened to hear Councillor Lulham refer to the protests against the destruction of the WAG as a "not in my backyard" (NIMBY) argument. She is missing the point completely. The loss of green space affects all of Westmount. It is all of our backyards!

This is the first test for the sustainability vision statement proclaimed by the city in February 2009. Does this green space not count? How would people feel if there was a proposal for building the arena in the field in Murray (King George) Park?

It is clear that Councillor Lulham does not represent my neighbourhood's outlook.

We Westmounters who live by the tracks need and deserve protected green space just as much as Westmounters who appreciate and choose to live near Summit Park, Murray Park and Westmount Park.

We will make our voices heard, express our outlook on the proposed plan and make our political choices known.

NANCY DRUMMOND,
HALLOWELL ST.

WAG IS UNIQUE, PROTECT IT!

As a citizen of Westmount for almost 20 years who sits on two committees devoted to the betterment of the city, I have been carefully following the arena project debate.

I recently learned of Councillor Patrick Martin's idea of creating a new arena complex at the WAG, while making the old complex into a swimming pool facility. As a resident living a few blocks away from the WAG, I would like to express my concerns.

The WAG is unique as the only large green space in the southeast corner of the city. Which of its many facilities will be sacrificed by the plan?

Councillor Martin maintains Hallowell residents would not be affected.

Firstly, they will no doubt lose much of the view to the south, especially if the complex is to double as a sound barrier. They will also lose their beautiful green expanse, a rare vista in this densely built area and certainly some of the WAG's facilities. The elderly residents of CSHLD St. Margaret's will probably lose their view over the WAG and the park area most accessible to them. (My mother, who resided at St. Margaret's for four years, took great pleasure in watching the goings-on from her window.)

Councillor Martin admits that "Football may need to be transferred to Westmount Park," and "It (the cinder track) would need to be reduced in length by 30 percent. But it may be possible to incorporate an indoor track in the new arena."

The playing fields at Westmount Park are already taxed enough. The city opted for natural grass there, but it has its limits!

Councillor Martin talks about a "net effect of zero" in terms of green space. Transferring such space from the WAG to Westmount Park will only penalize local

residents. He also maintains the project would cost less. Underground parking would not be needed because parking could be supplied by Westmount High.

This is not even close to a done deal, as far as I know. Use of the parking lot has increased in recent years because of the addition of night classes and other activities. As for the 25 spots on Hillside, the armoury and St. Margaret's also make use of that parking.

Finally, I would also like to add that the destruction of green space that Councillor Martin's plan requires is definitely not in tune with the city's goal of sustainability and the protection of our heritage.

If the city ultimately makes decisions that violate its own policies, how can it expect its citizens to respect them?

PATRICIA DUMAIS, GREENE AVE.

WILL WESTMOUNT BE TRAPPED BY GRANT?

I attended my first meeting of city council in 30+ years last Monday night because I was concerned about the spiralling cost of the arena project.

In her *Independent* opinion article (see inset at left), the mayor stated that the Westmount Park site was decided by council and that we could not look at and evaluate another site, i.e. the WAG option. According to Councillor Patrick Martin, using the back part of the WAG for one or two skating rinks would take up only about one quarter of a huge space, allowing the other activities to remain. It could also reduce the cost of the overall project (\$35 million) by approximately \$8 million and it would lessen the environmental impact (noise pollution) and parking congestion.

No one else questioned this issue and it was decided at the council meeting that it might be addressed only in September. This prompted me to ask: Can changes be made to the grant application regarding location and adding a second site without incurring any penalty? The answer I got was we have plenty of time in the fall.

Mayor Karin Marks had just explained that the provincial minister had told her we were at the top of the list and we would know soon. My next question was: What if our plan were given a grant before September? Would any changes to the grant application delay or cancel our funding?

It appears to me that the mayor's and council's refusal to consider the WAG option throughout the design process will trap the citizens of Westmount into either accepting or losing the grant.

Unfortunately, that grant will be attached to a very expensive design, while the alternative may prove to be much better and cheaper.

MERYLYN WILK, SHERBROOKE ST.

1.5 RINKS 'MORE THAN ADEQUATE'

Mayor Karin Marks' arguments in your July 14 edition (see inset at left) opposing the building of two rinks and an indoor track on the WAG are absolutely correct. Let's not destroy the great and unique facilities we have there now, which nicely complement those in Westmount Park.

I do not agree with Councillor Patrick Martin's defence of his proposal in the same edition that only a small part of the current park and facilities would be destroyed and that there would be a significant cost saving. Building two full-sized rinks and an indoor track would require most, if not all, of the WAG.

Also, I remain to be convinced by something more rigorous than a back-of-the-envelope calculation of potential cost savings.

We've got excellent facilities right now. The pool and 1½ indoor rinks are, I believe, more than adequate for most people in Westmount. The rink was renovated not so long ago and there does not appear to be anything wrong with the pool except that the mechanical equipment may need to be replaced.

Why not keep them as they are, do the necessary repairs, perhaps spend some reasonable amount on improvements – and thereby avoid too many disruptions in their use and save significantly on our future property taxes?

PETER A. STERN, BRUCE AVE.

EDITOR'S NOTE: It is our understanding the Councillor Martin's plan calls for the use of less than 25 percent of the WAG.

WAG OR ST. CATHERINE? STUDY OR REJECT BOTH

As discussed at the August 3 council meeting, I am advocating that we now do a proper analysis of the WAG option to assist the city and citizens in making a well reasoned and well informed decision about the arena project. Without a side-by-side comparison, most lay people cannot determine if the current project is reasonable or not. It is only through a rigorous analysis of the pros and cons of each option that citizens and councillors alike will really understand all the issues and implications.

Those citizens who reject the WAG option because it uses green space must also logically reject the current project because it encroaches on Westmount Park's green space.

In other words, if the project is not acceptable for the WAG, it is certainly *not acceptable for Westmount Park*. You can't have it both ways!

As to the cost issue: indications are that many arenas are built across North Amer-

Opinion: A work in progress

BY KATHLEEN DUNCAN, CITY COUNCILLOR (DISTRICT 4)

August 3's city council meeting was the best that I have experienced in the four years that I have served on council. The level of participation can only be rivaled in my memory by the demerger issue. It was testimony to democracy and Westmount residents' commitment to their principles. I applaud all citizens who took the time to attend the meeting, and I was impressed with the breadth of issues queried, given it was a mid-summer council meeting.

Following this, I think it is important to reiterate the stand that I have taken regarding our obligation as a council to further explore any viable options concerning our new arena project, regardless of where we are in the process.

It was obvious that the attendance at last week's meeting exceeded the April public information meetings. As the majority of the turnout was due to the controversy surrounding the proposed locations for the arena, I believed my priority last night, as a councillor, was only to listen.

During the second question period, I was very encouraged to learn of the civilized debate that had taken place on the lawn just outside city hall during the course of the business portion of the council meeting. Its end result found both sides not only establishing common ground but also working collectively, not

divisively, to find a solution. Several important questions were asked which could trigger further discussion; most importantly weighing what we really need in the new complex versus the potential environmental impact.

On the other hand, the "seven percent solution" doesn't exist, and in light of potential savings, ultimately council must find a balance between providing a service that responds to the community's expanding needs while respecting our commitment to becoming a sustainable community.

With that in mind, had Councillor Patrick Martin, an engineer and project planner, not publicly proposed his idea to explore the possibility of building on the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG) with a potential cost savings of \$8 million, we would still only be considering one plan on a site with considerable challenges. We wouldn't even have the debate on the table. The advantages of procuring diverse sources of professional talent to serve on council are an enormous benefit.

The success of the August meeting was the passionate interest residents expressed through their words and their presence, regardless of their position. This type of input from residents is exactly the kind of dialogue that, in partnership with council, could restore trust and ultimately generate the necessary momentum to achieve buy-in, and produce the BEST possible facility for our community.

ica for substantially less than our current \$35-million estimate. Again, without a side-by-side comparison of alternatives, we are all flying blind. We are disturbed that council is delaying this analysis.

We can still allow the architects to complete their plans, and do an analysis in parallel. Delaying this analysis is depriving citizens of vital information. Citizens need a choice, not an all-or-nothing ultimatum.

Logic says we must either reject both sites or analyze both sites.

GARY IKEMAN, WESTMOUNT ARENA MODERATION CAMPAIGN

GREEN SPACE – YES, FORK-TONGUED POLITICIANS – NO

Whether it is the WAG or former Marianopolis, it would seem that our precious downtown green spaces are under threat.

If politicians take this fork-tongued approach of promising to preserve, then threatening to pour concrete elephants into these urban jewels, the citizens will feel betrayed and enraged. Too many Westmount hearts and minds have been shaped by the beauty of the former Mar-

ianopolis campus, too many of us have played on the WAG, for us to be silent about their destruction. At the August 3 city council meeting, I was moved to see how many people feel so very passionately about not building on either of these sites.

We value nature and heritage, as we value our politicians who show us that they defend them.

ANUSHREE VARMA, CEDAR AVE.

Marks ...

continued from p. 8

dependent Westmount to be among her finest achievements.

Asked if she considered merger architect Louise Harel to be a threat to the demerged suburbs, she said "I don't think anyone wants to hear the word 'merger' again, but we have to be careful of losing certain powers by the back door."

Marks and her husband, Brian Puddington, live on Lansdowne where they raised two daughters (see Profile, *Westmount Independent*, June 3, 2008, p. 22).

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Chagnon hoping for grant news...

continued from p. 1

opportunity for people to tell the new council where this should go,” Marks explained.

It was only hours earlier at her retirement press conference that MNA Jacques Chagnon told the *Independent* he was “hoping” an announcement of an arena grant would be known “before September.” The extent of the project hinges on such funding.

Tweaking in the works

Recent tweaks to the current design, Marks said, include moving the outdoor pool and deck to the location of Academy Rd.’s junior tennis courts (which would probably be moved elsewhere in Westmount Park), and creating an exit for cars onto Lansdowne to alleviate traffic congestion at the St. Catherine entrance.

The meeting generated several new considerations.

One was the pending loss to the community of the indoor pool at the former Marianopolis sports complex, which is projected to be destroyed for the redevelopment of the historic Sulpician site.

In planning the new Westmount facilities, “Has this been taken into consideration?” asked François Laurin, a resident of Arlington.

“You bring up a very good point,” said Councillor Patrick Martin. “The city will have to consider the impact of that loss.”

One of Martin’s arguments in proposing the WAG option a month ago was that space would be freed up for an indoor pool to be built at a later date on the location of the current arena if the two large rinks being planned there were relocated to the WAG (see *Independent*, July 7, p. 1).

A resident of Bruce Ave. asked how three councillors (Martin, Cynthia Lulham and Kathleen Duncan) had arrived at the conclusion that the WAG was underused enough “to be supplanted with an arena?”

Noting both sites were in her electoral district, Lulham replied that it was the costs and “shoehorning” of all facilities into the existing site, a difficult one to build on.

Contrary to what had been stated in a flyer distributed in the neighborhood, she said, the council was not actively looking at the WAG. But after 14 years on council she believed it was important to do all due diligence.

Lulham raised another new element saying she had carried out a survey of 60 arenas in North America and was concerned by “the enormous cost of ours.”

A larger discussion was needed on the sanctity of green space, Aaron Fraser suggested.

He asked to poll council members on each one’s stand concerning the WAG, but Marks said that wouldn’t be fair. Interestingly, that practice has been undertaken occasionally by previous councils during controversial issues.

Resident Jim Stein, a developer, called the late-stage WAG proposal “political grandstanding.” Had lobbying taken place at the council level? He urged the council to move ahead quickly.

Common ground

Earlier in the meeting Marks suggested the proposal of an alternate site was “dividing the community” which she found “a little distressing.”

At the end of the meeting, however, Lansdowne resident Richard Bond said the two groups shared more common ground than might appear.

Both had assembled outside city hall to discuss their views and had agreed that a philosophical discussion was required involving environmental impact and the need for two rinks. “It was democracy in action.”



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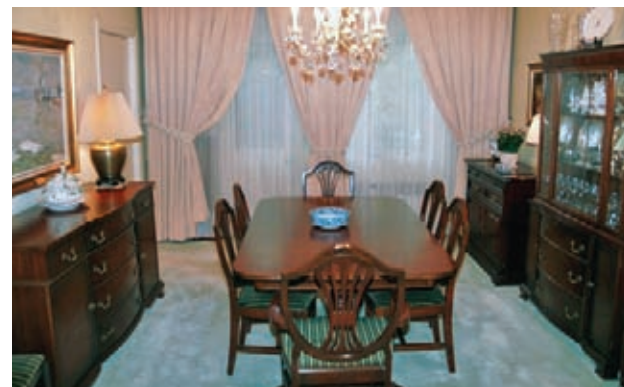
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