

City preparing recession budget for 2010 Holding the line on taxes

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A number of constraints and uncertainties are challenging city officials in preparing Westmount's 2010 municipal budget.

The economic downturn is affecting municipalities worldwide, and will be a major topic at the annual conference of the International County/City Management Association (ICMA) taking place this year in Montreal from September 13 to 16.

In the Westmount budget, rising costs, reduced or unknown revenues and some new initiatives must be factored in to city council's guidelines, explained city direc-

tor general Duncan Campbell. These call for a zero tax increase on local controllable expenses.

"A big wild card is the amount of the Montreal agglomeration's deficit," he said. "We're worried about how much will be passed on to us." Westmount's four-per-cent share of a possible \$65-million shortfall could translate into more than \$2 million payable under the new budget.

A downturn in the real estate market with fewer house sales is expected to reduce revenues from the welcome tax, while smaller construction projects decrease amounts from building permits.

"On the cost side, we've seen a substantial increase *continued on p. 6*

Joan Rivers at the Shaar



Rivers entertains at the August 25 Hope & Cope fundraiser at Shaar Hashomayim. See p. 10 for story.

Thompson won't run

Makes room for others after 10 years on council

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

After serving Westmount in volunteer and elected positions for 23 years, city councillor Tom Thompson has decided not to run for a fourth term in the November municipal elections.

Announcing his decision August 31 to the *Independent*, Thompson said he felt it was time to open up a council seat for someone else and bring new ideas to the table.

"I looked at my collective 23 years and said now would be an opportunity to get others involved to experience the rewards and honour of representing citizens," he said.

His pending departure as the District 2 representative will leave a void in key areas. One is steering the Healthy City Project, which he has done for more than a decade. Another is chairing the city's Finance and Administration committee to which he brings professional background as the retired director of McGill fundraising and development.

As Thompson rhymed off a number of challenges awaiting the new council, one could only surmise he was stepping down somewhat reluctantly – and in the same spirit of community service. This includes 10 years on three city councils and previous leadership positions with the Westmount Mu- *continued on p. 3*

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Jerry Dolar to retire from city IT

Jerry Dolar, who built Westmount's IT department virtually from scratch over the last 25 years, retires as its director at the end of October.

While no successor has been chosen, the position has been posted. It includes responsibility for maintaining and initiating all the city's technical communications systems including the new telephony – voice over internet protocol – that Dolar is in the process of implementing.

His work put PCs in every office, took the city on-line, introduced the current phone system and established off-site disaster management – all despite the many challenges at the time of connecting the various municipal building sites.



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Thompson spearheaded 'green' programs as Healthy City chair

continued from p. 1

municipal Association, of which he was president.

Even when he sat out one council term on the reduced borough council during merger years, Thompson continued to serve as the volunteer chair of the Healthy City Project which, some say, continues to exist because of him. It was a position in which, over the years, he spearheaded the city's position in the forefront of recycling programs and anti-pesticides legislation.

The new council, he said, must keep an eye on the downloading of expenses by higher levels of government onto municipalities, "School taxes are excessive."

And, he cautions, "Montreal, through the agglomeration, will always find new ways to get money from us, so that's a key irritant that has to be closely monitored. We've always said we would pay our fair share regionally and not a penny more."

Within Westmount, the new council will have to find money for long-term funding of the city's pension plans, to pay down the merger debt, finance the arena/pool project, return to full pay-as-you-go financing for capital works and continue to search for offerings of government funding programs.

Watch the pennies

"We've got to look for every opportunity and make every penny count," he said. Priding himself on his ability to find dropped coins on the sidewalk, he added: "It's a bad day. I found only 26 cents!"



Although Westmount is a small community, it figures large on the broader stage, he pointed out. "It's always had a leadership role among municipalities." The demerger and transitioning work undertaken by Mayor Karin Marks with the other reconstituted cities and the Montreal agglomeration must be continued.

While Thompson joined council in 1995 and again in 1999 – both councils of former mayor Peter Trent – he agreed to sit out the merger term when the borough council was reduced in size. But on the eve of the reconstitution of the city in 2005, "I felt a responsibility to help in the renewal and help us return to the city we had been."

From pigeons to dogs

Over the years he has handled a number of sensitive challenges. These include reducing the number of pigeons in Westmount Park and lowering the level of noise emanating from the arena dog run at the Glen.

Latterly, he oversaw ways to welcome Marianopolis College into Westmount, overcome traffic and parking issues and smooth over other concerns of his constituents. Traffic will continue to make an impact on Westmount. "Whatever happens with the arena or wherever it is built, it needs underground parking."

Thompson's ability to negotiate and find compromise and consensus was one of his hallmarks. "It's how one addresses an issue or changes behaviour that makes the difference," he says.

Ribbon cut at the Gallery 10 years ago



On May 28, 1999, then mayor Peter Trent (right) opens the Gallery with, from left, then councillors Cynthia Lulham, John Bridgman, the late Jim Wright, Karin Marks (now mayor) and Tom Thompson.

Photo: Laureen Sweeney

The 10th anniversary exhibition of The Gallery at Victoria Hall will be open to the public from Thursday, September 10, to October 3. Hours are: weekdays, 10 am to 9 pm, and Saturdays 10 am to 5 pm.

The exhibit features the work of 57

Westmount artists who have displayed their drawings, paintings, sculptures, photographs and other works of art over the last decade.

The vernissage by invitation only is planned for September 9.

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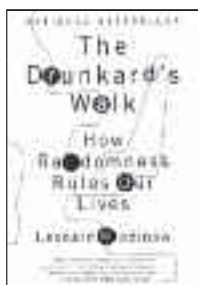
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**CLLR. DE CASTELL: NO
DENIAL OF CANDIDACY TALK**

The campaign has barely started and we already have our first controversy, albeit a tempest in a teapot. I am referring to a small article on p. 3 of last week's *Independent* entitled, "Trent 'surprised' by de Castell's denial after two meetings."

Let me try to clear up the confusion. When Peter Trent invited me to his home for "a glass of wine and a chat," neither of us proposed any agenda or subject matter for the discussion.

I went prepared to update Mr. Trent, a possible mayoral candidate, on a number of dossiers that I have been working on, with the intention of discussing his position on some of the important issues that the city is facing.

Mr. Trent recently told the *Independent* that the "whole object of the meeting" was to discuss my candidacy.

While that may have been his intention, it was not mine.

If Mr. Trent's only interest was to discover whether or not I intended to run, he could have saved us both some time by simply asking that on the telephone.

On the afternoon of August 25, I spoke to Wayne Larsen, editor of the *Westmount Examiner*, for about 15 or 20 minutes. The conversation, which unfortunately was not recorded, was centred on the Turcot project, how it had impacted my personal life and in particular my decision to run for council.

The reference to my meeting with Mr.

Trent was extremely brief and, while we have only Wayne's notes and our collective memories to go on, we concur on the following account.

Mr. Larsen asked if I had spoken to Peter Trent; I told him that Peter and I hadn't seen each other in quite a while, so when we met, we'd had a rather lengthy discussion of "a general nature...state-of-the-union type of thing." When he inquired if Mr. Trent had asked me to run, I hesitated as it has never been my practice to divulge details of a confidential discussion to the press. I answered by saying, "We didn't really get around to discussing it...put it this way, no decisions were taken and besides, you know Peter keeps his cards pretty close to his vest."

Regarding the prospect of serving on council with Mr. Trent again, I said, "We didn't do so badly the last time we worked together, so I expect we can do the same again."

I met with Mr. Trent for the second time the following day as a courtesy to inform him of my decision and the announcement that I had made to the *Examiner*.

There was no "denial" to the *Examiner*, as has been claimed in the *Independent*, only the use of discretion.

Hopefully this will be the end of this little saga because if this is an indication of the level of debate we can expect in this election, I worry that people may not be able to stay awake long enough to vote!

JOHN DE CASTELL, CLLR DISTRICT 8

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MORE PARK BENCHES

In reference to this quote from Councillor Cynthia Lulham, Urban Planning commissioner "Why can't they sit on grass?" (August 25, p. 3), I am a Westmount resident and therefore one of Councillor Lulham's "them." I am privileged to live near some of Westmount's civic jewels – the library, the conservatory, the art gallery and the park.

I am also 84 with cranky knees and a creaky spine. No possibility, then, of sitting on the grass as the councillor advises, even with the promise of cake.

Benches are a wonderful invention; their presence encourages me to undertake longer walks. In Britain, there is a tradition of installing benches, good sound teak benches, as memorials. One dedication I remember was "For a friend who loved this view." Perhaps a possibility for Westmounters?

In the meantime, I hope that Councillor Lulham will have a change of heart and lead her urban planning commissioners in planning more benches for Westmount parks.

MARION BLAKE, SHERBROOKE ST.

Editor's note: I think Councillor Lulham meant that *benches* should "sit" on grass, not people. The sentence before the direct quote from her was, "Lulham ... has opposed concrete pads for benches," after which came the question: "Why can't they sit on grass?" Perhaps it would have been clearer to put the two sentences in the same paragraph. Thanks for writing so we could clarify..

OPUS NOT SENIOR-FRIENDLY

The new OPUS card is not user-friendly to seniors, who are infrequent travellers on public transport.

The STM would like to encourage people to use their system. How are they doing this? By telling seniors to purchase an OPUS card.

How much is this card? Where can seniors purchase the equivalent of a strip of tickets? How much is the cash fare? (And we all know we must have the exact change!)

There is quite a discrepancy between the treatment of seniors in Quebec and in Scotland, where seniors ride the public transit system for free!

BEVERLEY HUTCHISON, KITCHENER AVE.

**TOO MUCH HAS ALREADY
BEEN SPENT**

It is interesting how quickly one of the city council members, Patrick Martin, came back with a response on the serious

problem of air pollution in Westmount ("Don't spend tax \$to increase traffic, unhealthiness", September 1, p. 4), while not responding to my letter in the *Westmount Independent* of August 11 (p. 6), where I asked how many millions of dollars have been wasted on the following projects:

1) Toxic synthetic turf project (status: cancelled); approximate cost with employee time: calculated at \$250,000;

2) Mega sports complex (status: unknown); \$600,000 already spent. How much is still owing to the architects and others?

3) Unused, gated and newly seeded soccer fields bordering Academy Rd. (\$905,100).

This careless expenditure is an outrage that has to be addressed and investigated, and not shoved under the synthetic turf.

LARRY KLEPPER, ST. CATHERINE ST

**WHAT'S BEHIND DIGGING
IN GLEN YARDS?**

I noticed that digging and earth removal was occurring September 2 at the end of the Glen Yards where a rumoured park is supposed to appear.

Any idea what is happening or what is the purpose of the dig?

I understand that the MUHC complex is supposed to be at the other end of the Yards near the Vendôme metro, yet there is no digging there. Thanks for the info.

OREST BLASCHUK, DE MAISONNEUVE

Editor's Note: Are we talking about construction of an emergency egress road and related decontamination (see June 9, p. 3)?

MORE SKATING OUTDOORS

I refer to Frank Moller's letter "An Outdoor Solution to Hockey Demand" (August 25), regarding the hockey rink dilemma. I hope the Westmount administration will consider this solution proposed by Mr. Moller.

It's wonderful for children to skate outdoors, and they should not be denied this experience. But then again, children have too much today, and don't learn to fend for themselves.

Mr. Moller's article warrants a reprint.

RENA WATSON, METCALFE AVE.

**NOT ENOUGH KIDS TO
WARRANT BRAND NEW ARENA**

Following my letter "How Many Children Are in Westmount?" (September 1), I have since found some statistics for Westmount children in the 2008 Census of Statistics Canada.

It seems there were 846 kids aged 0-4 and 1,235 *continued on p. 17*

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Civic Alert

What changes await a 'Mayor Peter Trent'?

BY DON WEDGE



Recent weeks have seen a number of citizens visiting former mayor Peter Trent, who is not stinting himself in the search for colleagues on a council that would support his ideas for running the city. Later this

month, we expect confirmation that he will be a candidate for mayor of Westmount in the November 1 election.

He has looked beyond the well-known, and it would be surprising if at least one environmental activist is not a candidate. The laws banning pesticides, idling engines and smoking in public places, as well as the end of the mega-incinerator, the introduction of hazardous waste, blue box and apartment recycling collection were all achieved during his 1991 mandate.

Meantime, I have yet to hear from anyone who thinks that Trent will not run. But after eight years' exile, what changes will he find if, as seems probable, he is restored to the mayor's chair?

Westmounters themselves remain the same mix of both very committed neighbours and the completely aloof that Trent would have been familiar with in 2001. But new players have become interested in municipal affairs – among them, Henry Olders, who led the Westmount Municipal Association (WMA) for four years from 2005.

Progress on transparency

Olders has been among those critical of the lack of openness, but nevertheless he surprised me the other day by touting some progress towards transparency in the conduct of council business.

The agenda – bald and uninformative admittedly – is now posted on the city web site the weekend prior to a monthly council meeting. Eventually the minutes of that meeting are added to the web documentation and, wonders of all, the audio of the gavel-to-gavel proceedings is available to everyone, putting Westmount among Quebec's leaders of such democratic innovations.

However, the business of the standing committees remains contentiously

clouded in obscurity – or lost in time – and Trent is sure to hear again about that.

Olders is one of a number of citizens with various interests that has developed – in his case, after becoming a frequent evening worker at the 2004 demerger office. Others were “attracted” by such causes as Save the Park and the many facets of the arena-pool renewal project. Apart from these hot new topics, question times remain centred on garbage pick-up, gardeners with noisy tools, bikes and speed bumps.

More than anything, the incoming mayor Trent would notice a lot of new faces around city hall. Duncan Campbell left a top job in Big Montreal to succeed Bruce St. Louis as director general. Several department heads have retired: Fred Caluori (Public Works), head librarian Ann Moffat, the late fire chief Jim Adams, Richard McEnroe who led the Public Security Unit, and now Jerry Dolar, the information technology director who has supervised an immense transition in the way city hall works.

Urban Planning director Joanne Poirier, Recreation chief Mike Deegan,

and purchasing agent John Camia are still at the same desks. Alan Kulaga, the current head of Human Resources and deputy DG was clerk to the now non-existent municipal court when Trent handed back the chain of office.

The person closest to all the changes is the outgoing mayor, Karin Marks. “He will find a terrific spirit among the staff,” she believes. “They have a great sense of loyalty, and I think it was strengthened by having to go through the merger and demerger together.”

Locally, she feels that there are more events for the mayor to attend. “New ones are introduced, and they tend to become fixtures with the growing emphasis on community,” Marks said.

But the big difference *continued on p. 17*

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Budget: conservative approach

continued from p. 1

fuelled largely by the rising price of energy and the risks that contractors are undertaking on long-term contracts," Campbell said. This affects the purchase of supplies

as well as the rental of equipment such as snow removal vehicles.

Some municipalities in the US are particularly hard-hit by some of the constraints being experienced in Westmount but on a much larger scale, Campbell said. The housing market, soaring fuel costs, unemployment and capped taxes are presenting huge challenges there.

In Westmount, he said, "We're taking a very conservative approach. We're going through the budget line by line to see if we still need to continue certain services we've had for 20 years. New services, such as those related to sustainability, are more of a challenge. Maybe some will be offset by savings in other areas."

With the new council coming at the end of the process, he added, "We're open to change."

Councillor Tom Thompson, who chairs city council's Finance and Administration committee, said paying down the merger debt and phasing in the pay-as-you-go policy for capital works expenditures to the same pre-merger extent are council priorities.

The economic impact on the city's pension plans also must be factored in. Fortunately, he said, this has been mitigated by

Rouleau, Gardiner joining forces



Martin Rouleau and Chris Gardiner in front of one of their listings.

Westmount real estate agent Martin Rouleau of Groupe Sutton Centre Ouest has formed a business partnership with fellow Sutton agent Chris Gardiner. The partnership was formed to enable Rouleau to work on other real estate proj-

ects. Said Rouleau, "The success of my business meant I had to search for someone who shares the same ethics and business practices. I found that in Chris."

Everything remains the same in terms of staffing, website and phone numbers.

a conservative investment policy in which only some 30 percent was placed in the equity market.

Under new provincial regulations, the

budget will not require approval until the end of January. As a result, Campbell said, tax bills won't be sent out until the beginning of March, later than usual.



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Nomination forms for upcoming election

Residents interested in running for a seat on council can pick up nomination forms at city hall from city clerk Mario Gerbeau, who is the returning officer for municipal elections.

Application forms must be submitted to Gerbeau anytime between September 18 (8:30 am) and October 2 (4:30 pm). It is suggested to call prior to dropping by his office to pick up or submit the forms.

The city website, westmount.org, is expected to contain more details.

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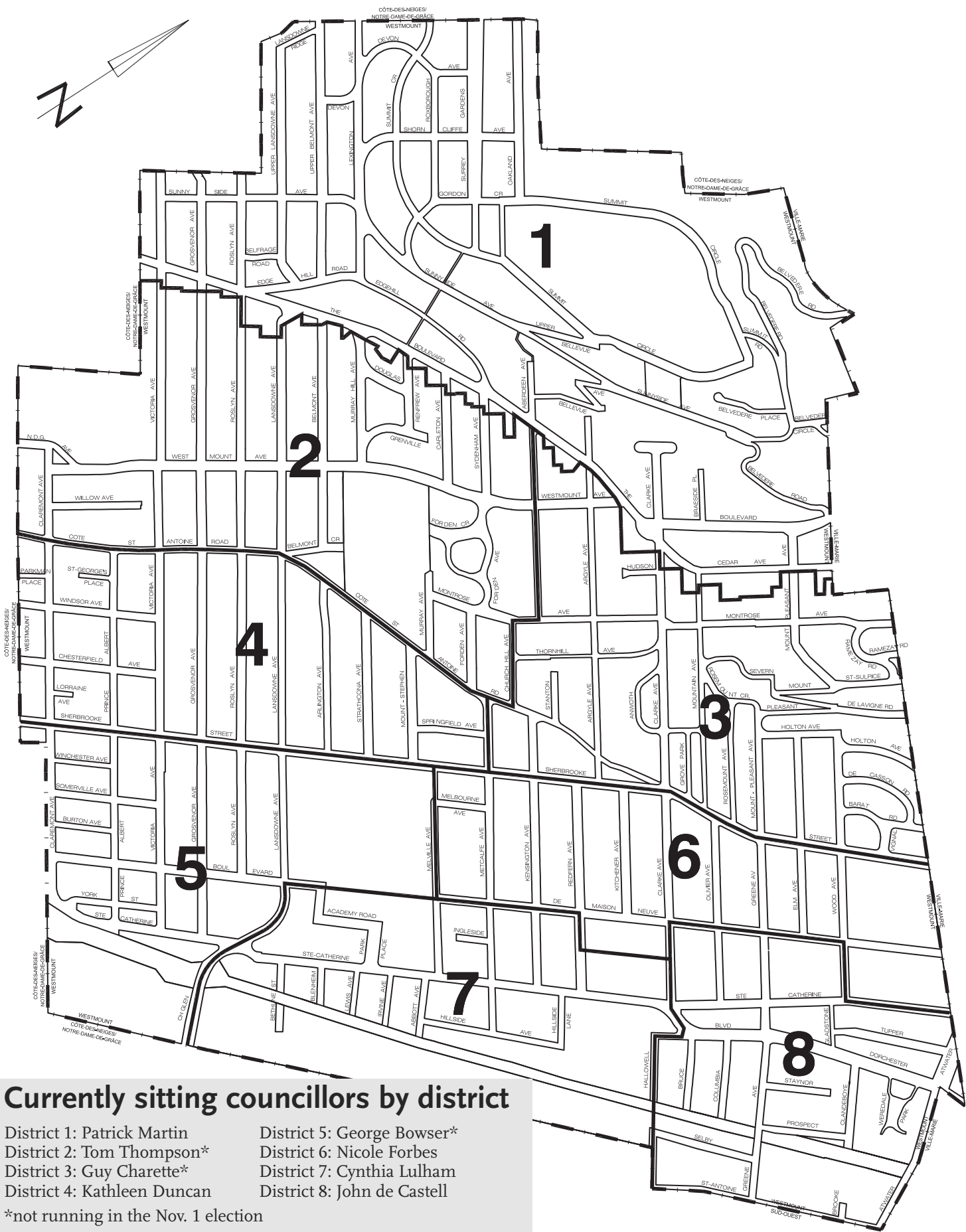


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Electoral map showing Westmount's 8 districts, each needing a councillor



Currently sitting councillors by district

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| District 1: Patrick Martin | District 5: George Bowser* |
| District 2: Tom Thompson* | District 6: Nicole Forbes |
| District 3: Guy Charette* | District 7: Cynthia Lulham |
| District 4: Kathleen Duncan | District 8: John de Castell |

*not running in the Nov. 1 election

<div></div> <div>Westmount vous informe... Westmount vous informe... Westmount</div>		<div></div> <div>Page</div>	<div>www.westmount.org info : 514 989-5200</div> <div></div> <div>Vol. 3/17 Publié par Westmount • Published by Westmount</div>
<div></div> <div>ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES Assemblée publique sur le développement durable Venez partager votre point de vue avec nous ! Joignez-vous à d'autres résidents afin de discuter des objectifs et priorités pour le développement durable qui seront présentés lors d'une rencontre spéciale qui aura lieu le mercredi 10 septembre à 19 h au Victoria Hall. Info : www.westmount.org/durable.</div> <div>La galerie s'expose Venez célébrer le 10e anniversaire de la galerie du Victoria Hall. Dans le cadre de cet événement, une exposition-rétrospective regroupant 57 artistes sera présentée du 10 septembre au 3 octobre. Info : 514 925-1403.</div> <div>Récital de Daniel Taylor – le dimanche 20 septembre à 14 h La Division des événements communautaires est fière de présenter le récital du contre-ténor Daniel Taylor accompagné des musiciens du Theatre of Early Music et du duo de violes de gambe Les Voix Humaines, Susie Napper et Margaret Little. Le concert intitulé Les larmes de la muse regroupe une collection de chansons d'amour de la Renaissance. Vous pouvez vous procurer des billets au Victoria Hall du lundi au vendredi de 8 h 30 à 16 h 30 ou à la porte le dimanche 20 septembre prochain au coût de 25 \$ admission générale et 20 \$ pour les aînés. Les billets peuvent aussi être achetés dans le cadre d'une série incluant le Quatuor Franz Joseph qui se produira le 15 avril 2010. Coût pour la série : 35 \$ admission générale et 25 \$ pour les aînés. Info : 514 989-5226.</div> <div></div> <div>BIBLIOTHÈQUE Fête de clôture du Club de lecture vacances Venez-vous amuser à notre fête de tambours interactifs en compagnie du groupe Rhythm Exchange le samedi 12 septembre à 14 h. Ceux et celles qui ont participé au Club de lecture peuvent venir chercher un billet gratuit au comptoir des enfants. Inscription requise. Info : 514 989-5229.</div> <div>Club d'échecs et de jeux de sociétés Aimez-vous jouer aux échecs et/ou au Scrabble? La prochaine rencontre du club aura lieu le vendredi septembre à 14 h dans une ambiance amicale. Nouveaux joueurs bienvenus ! Info : 514 989-5386.</div> <div>Cercle de lecture Aucune liste de lecture imposée et aucune date limite, seulement des discussions au sujet des livres que vous avez</div>	<div>DATES À RETENIR Le 10 septembre – 19 h Assemblée publique sur le développement durable. Victoria Hall. Du 10 septembre au 3 octobre La galerie s'expose! Exposition regroupant 57 artistes. La galerie du Victoria Hall. Le 11 septembre – 14 h Club d'échecs et de jeux de sociétés. Bibliothèque. Le 12 septembre – 14 h Fête de clôture du Club de lecture vacances. Victoria Hall. Le 15 septembre – 10 h 15 Cercle de lecture. Bibliothèque. Le 16 septembre – 18 h 30 Club de lecture française. Bibliothèque. Le 23 septembre – 19 h Conférence d'auteurs. Claire Rothman. Bibliothèque.</div> <div></div> <div>avez lus ! Notre prochaine rencontre est prévue le mardi 15 septembre à 10 h 15. Info : 514 989-5386.</div> <div>Club de lecture française La prochaine rencontre du club de lecture française se tiendra le mercredi 16 septembre de 18 h 30 à 21 h pour discuter de vos lectures estivales. Info : 514 989-5386.</div> <div>Cercle de lecture – Pour ados ! Aucune liste de lecture imposée et aucune date limite, seulement des discussions au sujet des livres que tu as lus ! Notre prochaine rencontre aura lieu le jeudi 17 septembre à 16 h. Info : 514 989-5357.</div> <div>Conférences d'automne Joignez-vous à l'écrivaine Claire Rothman qui lira des passages de son nouveau livre The Heart Specialist le mercredi 23 septembre à 19 h. Info : 514 989-5386.</div> <div></div> <div>SPORTS ET LOISIRS Inscription automne/hiver La période d'inscription pour les activités de sports et de loisirs est maintenant terminée au Victoria Hall. Par contre il est encore possible de s'inscrire en vous présentant à l'Aréna de Westmount entre 8 h 30 et 16 h 30. Info : www.westmount.org ou 514 989-5353.</div>	<div></div> <div>COMMUNITY EVENTS Public Meeting on a Sustainable Westmount Make your opinion known! Join fellow Westmounters at Victoria Hall on September 10 at 7 p.m. for a special meeting to discuss sustainable development objectives and priorities. Info: www.westmount.org/sustainable. The Gallery Celebrates! The Gallery at Victoria Hall is proud to present a retrospective collection of works from 57 artists for its 10th anniversary. The exhibition will run from September 10 until October 3. Info: 514 925-1403. Daniel Taylor Concert – Sunday, September 20 at 2 p.m. Westmount Community Events is pleased to present counter-tenor, Daniel Taylor and the musicians of the Theatre of Early Music in concert with Les Voix Humaines, Susie Napper & Margaret Little on viola da gamba. The concert, Tears of a Muse is a collection of Renaissance love songs. Tickets are available at Victoria Hall during business hours 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or at the door on September 20. Tickets are \$25 / \$20 for seniors. The tickets can also be bought as a series with Quatuor Franz Joseph who will perform on April 15, 2010. The series is \$35 / \$25 for seniors. Info: 514 989-5226.  LIBRARY Summer Reading Club Closing Party Join us for an interactive drum party with Rhythm Exchange on Saturday, September 12 at 2 p.m. at Victoria Hall. Summer reading club participants may pick up a free ticket at the Children's Desk. Registration is required. Info: 514 989-5229. Chess and Scrabble Club Do you enjoy playing chess and/or Scrabble? Our next meeting is on Friday, September 11 at 2 p.m. New players welcome! Info: 514 989-5386. Readers to Readers Book Club Join our morning book club with a twist. Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 15 at 10:15 a.m. to talk about great books recently read. Info: 514 989-5386. French Book Club Join the French Book Club from 6:30 to 9 p.m. on Wednesday, September 16 as they discuss summer readings. Info: 514 989-5386.</div> <div></div> <div>DATEBOOK September 10 – 7 p.m. Sustainable Development Public Meeting. Victoria Hall. September 10 to October 3 The Gallery celebrates! Exhibition featuring 57 artists. The Gallery at Victoria Hall. September 11 – 2 p.m. Chess and Scrabble Club. Library. September 12 – 2 p.m. Summer Reading Club Closing Party. Victoria Hall. September 15 – 10:15 a.m. Readers to Readers Book Club. Library. September 16 – 6:30 p.m. French Book Club. Library. September 23 – 7 p.m. Author Lecture Series. Claire Rothman Library</div> <div></div> <div>Teen Readers to Readers Book Club No set reading list and no deadlines, just talking about the books you're reading and comparing notes with other teen readers! We will meet on Thursday, September 17 at 4 p.m. Info: 514 989-5229. Author Lecture Series Join us for an evening with author Claire Rothman on Wednesday, September 23 at 7 p.m. as she reads from her new book, The Heart Specialist. Info: 514 989-5386.  SPORTS & RECREATION Fall/Winter Registration Registration at Victoria Hall for sports and recreation activities is now complete. If you would still like to register, please visit the Westmount Arena, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Info: www.westmount.org ou 514 989-5353.</div>	
<div>Westmount, à votre portée. Pour toute question ou commentaire, veuillez nous contacter : Westmount at your fingertips. Contact us with any comment or question: www.westmount.org assistance@westmount.org</div>			



Social Notes from Westmount and beyond Shaar's Soirée raises over \$1 million



BY VERONICA REDGRAVE

Soirée Fantastique, held August 25 at Westmount's Shaar Hashomayim synagogue, raised over \$1 million. Proceeds support Hope & Cope programs provided free to cancer

patients and their families (jgh.ca/hopecope).

The event was sold out months in advance, thanks to the unflagging energy of Hope & Cope founder and chairman, the ever elegant **Sheila Kussner**, who was ably assisted by Westmounter **Sylvia Vogel**, with **Miriam Klein** and **Joan Ungar** and a tireless committee.

The delicious Giorgi-catered dinner (sponsored by **Jack Dym**) was accompanied by wines sponsored by Westmounter **Marjorie Bronfman**.

Honoured at the event were **Lillian and Stephen Vineberg**, philanthropists and art lovers. After dinner, the fabulous **Canadian Tenors** performed to a standing ovation before Hollywood personality **Joan Rivers** delivered her rapid-fire caustic comments.

Amidst the Westmount eleganza were **Paul and Jewel Lowenstein** (pretty in Pucci), **Joanne Leopold** (perfect in pink), **Rosemary Niro** (classic in pearls), **Linda Smith** (wonderful in white), **Marlene and Joel King**, **Miriam Vineberg**, **Stephanie and David Azrieli**, **Bernice Brownstein**, **Rosalie and Lewis Dobrin**, **Gail Gold** and **Norman Zavalkoff**, **Lily Kotler**, **Dr. Marcia Gillman** and **Mike Flinker**, **Allyson and Stephen Goldberg**, **Shirley Goldfarb** and **Elaine Dubrovsky**.

Also seen were **Betty Reitman** and her



Westmounters Leo Kolber and Ronit Gandell



Westmounters Joanne & Douglas Cohen

daughter **Sarah** with her husband **Allen Rubin**, **Morris Shiveck**, **Sondra Schwartz**, **Leila Paperman**, **Hazel Zunenshine**, **Felice and Barry Pascal**, **Shayla Wechsler**, **Harriet Waxman** and **Tsippy Wexler**.

Noted admiring the fabulous floral arrangements (created by Gilbert Lanouette and Kevin Camara) were **Joey Adler**, **Russell and Phyllis Goldberg** (in divine diamonds!), **Dianne and Aldo Bensadoun** and **Judith Woodsworth**, president of Concordia University.



Joan Ungar, Miriam Klein and Westmounter Sylvia Vogel.



Thérèse Brownstein, Linda Smith and Evelyn Black.



Lillian & Stephen Vineberg surrounded by Westmounters Julia and Stephen Reitman.

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Here's a stumper

City removes remains of 'orphan' tree, but who owned it?

By DAVID PRICE

The city removed a tree stump last month on Prince Albert. That wouldn't normally be news, but this is no ordinary stump.

As previously reported ("Who's responsible for 172 'orphan' sidewalk trees?" October 7, 2008, p. 1), Prince Albert resident Nanette Neuwahl had extensive problems with the original maple tree (and then its stump), which was located on city property near her front steps.

The tree's roots allegedly caused damage to her drains and plumbing.

But that's not the only problem. Neuwahl believes that the city owned the tree (and is responsible for damages); while Westmount has contended that she owned it, even if it was on its land.

Neuwahl's report of a wasps' nest in the stump spurred the city into its removal and she sees that decision as proof of the city's ownership.

The *Independent* asked city clerk Mario Gerbeau: Did the city own the tree? "Yes, [because] the tree was on city property. Originally, it was our contention that it was not our tree, because we did not plant it. We have since found that position to be unsustainable in this case."

Neuwahl has sued the city for damages twice. The first case was dismissed because the 15-day time period to sue a municipality in Quebec had expired. The second, for exemplary damages, is still pending.

Neuwahl thinks she might still resuscitate the first case, since the city originally disclaimed ownership, which led to a late filing of the original lawsuit.

She mused, "I should go back to the first case, for the simple reason that exemplary damages are hard to get."



The former site of the former maple tree.



Nanette Neuwahl taken with the stump near the city sidewalk outside her home at 390 Prince Albert in October 2008.

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9 Lives Home by the hearth in the fall...with your adopted cat

By LYZANNE



With fall approaching, it's always nice to get back to home and hearth after a summer of activities and holidays.

With the children at school and plans centred around the home, it would be a wonderful time to adopt a cat.

A number of rescue groups have kittens and older cats that would be perfect for adoption right now. Please don't hesitate to contact the Montreal SPCA and Gerdy's Rescue for more information on

pets in need of a home.

If you have a few moments, you could speak to their representatives directly by visiting the Underdog Club Gallery on Friday, September 11 at 4922 Sherbrooke St.

Everyone will be around to help place dogs at the gallery event, but they also have many cats that need homes for in shelter and foster care.

Please support the rescue groups by contacting them directly or dropping by the gallery to encourage them.

Your neighbour,
Lyzanne

Artwork by Laura S. Cohendet

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Multi-family garage sale; antiques, clothes, collectibles, furniture, kitchenware, sports equipment, toys, much more, NO early birds. Saturday, September 12, 7:00 am-Noon 774, 776, 780 Upper Belmont Ave.

Victoria Watch BY ISAAC OLSON

Despite rocky economic times, three new businesses have cropped up in Westmount's Victoria Village – adding to the already wide array of specialty shops, offices and boutiques that dot the bustling avenue.

Pretty Ballerinas

Since opening on August 29, Pretty Ballerinas (392 Victoria Ave.), has been packed with customers as the store's handcrafted shoes – a smash hit in Europe – are quickly becoming all the rage in Westmount.

Be it ballet pumps or flats, Pretty Ballerinas shoes are handcrafted, ethically-sourced footwear produced in Minorca, Spain by a family-run shoe manufacturer called Mascaró Company.

Armed with rights to the North America market, a local couple is using Westmount as a launching pad. Nicholas Martire, president, and his wife Willa Leus, vice president, were both raised in Westmount and, after living in England for a number of years, have returned to their hometown to start the business.

The couple is aiming to open a store in Toronto by next year before expanding to

the United States.

Already, shoes have been disappearing from the shelves. With common sizes going fast, there's now a waiting list as customers eagerly anticipate the next shipment.

"Because they are handmade, there are often limited sizes and colours," Leus explained. "When you get a pair, there is



Nicholas Martire, president of North America's first Pretty Ballerinas and his wife and company vice president, Willa Leus.

usually only a few with that specific style."

Foot Solutions

"Better health for your feet," is the motto of Simon Bitton's newly established Foot Solutions that opened its 368 Victoria Ave. doors on August 24.

Although the franchise has 20 locations in Canada and more than 250 shops worldwide, his will be the first Foot Solutions on the island of Montreal. The store, complete with an onsite laboratory and full-time orthoprothesist, is equipped to outfit clients with customized orthotic footwear.

Mostly catering to people ages 45 and up, all their shoes come with different widths, sizes and styles to accommodate custom-made, removable insoles that, Bitton explained, can be specifically designed to suit a client's needs. Licensed to fill prescriptions for pain-easing orthotic shoes, the company uses various devices that measure gait, weight distribution and foot shape to determine the best fit for the customer.

"As part of customer service, we offer a free foot analysis," Bitton said. "It takes about 30 minutes. We then make recom-



Simon Bitton, owner of Foot Solutions in his store with Annie Grimard, the store's full-time orthoprothesist.

mendations for the best custom or over-the-counter orthotics and shoes for the customer. Because we fabricate on site, we can turn around the orthotics in three to five days."

L'Autre Choix Mini Marché

A young entrepreneur is taking her love of local continued on p. 16

GALERIE WALTER KLINKHOFF

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BUILDING PERMITS What's permitted

The following permits for exterior construction, alterations and renovation were approved by city council at the meeting August 19.

176 Edgehill: to build a rear extension to house an indoor swimming pool and sunroom;

19 Severn: landscaping;

156 Metcalfe: to replace two rear windows;

53 de Lavigne: to rebuild the front balcony;

310 Grosvenor: to replace rear balcony door;

4854 Westmount: landscaping;

624 Belmont: to build a new front portico, replace the door and rebuild stairs and walkway;

453 Mount Stephen: to replace two windows and a rear second-storey door;

368 Victoria: to install a sign for "Foot Solutions";

773 Upper Lansdowne: to replace windows;

631 Belmont: to replace windows and a door;

7 St. George's Place: to rebuild front stairs in wood with metal railing;

742 Upper Belmont: to replace the storm windows;

4291 Montrose: to replace the storm windows;

102 Columbia: to replace the front basement windows and one window at the rear;

486 Strathcona: to replace the front door;

372 Roslyn: to replace rear second-storey

windows and door;

654 Victoria: rear landscaping;

62 & 66 Arlington: to build a new fence between the two properties and at the rear;

52 Roxborough: to replace the front door and the rear patio door and install a light;

312 Metcalfe: to replace the windows;

426 Lansdowne: to replace the windows;

423 Claremont: to replace the front upper storey windows and balcony door;

100 Abbott: to replace a rear patio door;

551 Roslyn: to replace the windows;

66 Chesterfield: to replace windows;

384 Lansdowne: to replace windows and doors and modify rear ground-floor openings.



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**ASSEMBLÉE PUBLIQUE
JEUDI 10 SEPTEMBRE 2009
VICTORIA HALL, 4626 SHERBROOKE O. 19H**

Le conseil municipal invite tous les Westmountais à prendre part à l'établissement des gestes qui devront permettre à la ville d'atteindre ses objectifs en matière de développement durable.

SAISISSEZ L'OCCASION!



**TAKE A PIECE
OF THE ACTION
PUBLIC MEETING**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2009
VICTORIA HALL 4626 SHERBROOKE W. 7 PM**

City Council invites all Westmounters to participate in choosing the priorities for actions in order to attain Westmount's Sustainable Development Goals.

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Comin' Up

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
Council meeting at city hall, 8 pm.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10
 • Public meeting on "A Sustainable Westmount" at 7 pm, Victoria Hall, to discuss sustainable development objectives and priorities. Info: www.westmount.org/sustainable.
 • The Gallery's 10th anniversary exhibition. Continues through to October 3. See p. 3 for details.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11
 Opening reception for **The Underdog Club Gallery** from 6 to 9 pm. All welcome. Exhibition from September 11 to 27 at 4922 Sherbrooke St. (between Prince Albert and Claremont) Info: 514.969.3376 or fern@underdogclub.org. See p. 18.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13
Strathcona Ave.'s street party to mark the end of summer, 3 to 7 pm. Rain date will be the following Sunday.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14
 • **Indoor rinks** for hockey and general skating will be open to the public at Westmount arena.
 • "Chocolate Tasting and Beyond", a tasting and lecture by nutritionist **Yves Filion**, 7 pm at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom (395 Elm Ave.) Fee: \$15. Sign up in advance: 514.342.1234, ext. 7201.
 • The **Montreal Camera Club's** opening meeting, 7:30 pm at Westmount Park Church (4695 de Maisonneuve Blvd., corner Lansdowne, rear entrance). Info: johnzimmerman@videotron.ca or visit www.montrealcameraclub.com.
 • **Dramatis Personae**, Westmount's community theatre, holds its first meeting of the season in the Lodge Room of Victoria Hall, 8 pm.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15
 • "Introduction to Judaism", a 13-week course open to community. Begins at 5:45 pm at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom (395 Elm Ave.) Fee for materials. Register: 514.937.3575.
 • Westmount Healthy City presents Dr. Terry-Nan Tannenbaum, chief of Health Protection, Health and Social Services, city of Montreal, on H1N1 (Swine Flu), 12:30 pm at Victoria Hall. Open to the public.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16
 Author **Mary Soderstrom** leads the Atwater Book Club in a discussion of *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink. At Atwater Library Library (1200 Atwater), 7:30 to 9 pm. Info: 514.935.7344.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17
 • Westmount Historical Association presents **"The Turcot Interchange"** in Westmount: Then and Now" with speakers Brian Merrett, photographer; David Caruthers, activist; Jason Prince urban planner. Westmount Library from 7 to 9 pm. Free for members, \$5 for non-members at door. Info: 514.989.5510.
 • **Leonard Cohen You're Our Man** book launch by the Foundation for Public Poetry at Westmount High School auditorium, 7 pm, to be attended by 15 local-area poets. Raises funds for a new "Leonard Cohen Poet-In-Residence" program to honour Cohen on his 75th birthday. Cost: \$5 at the door. www.publicpoetry.wordpress.com.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
Theatre of Early Music: Daniel Taylor, 2 pm at Victoria Hall. Tickets available at Victoria Hall during business hours or at door on Sept. 20 Cost: \$25 / \$20 for seniors. 514.989.5226.

New shops on Victoria Ave.

continued from p. 14

goods and specialty products to heart by starting up a store that focuses on Quebec-grown, organic produce and hard-to-find, multi-ethnic goods.

With products and produce from both near and afar, the L'Autre Choix Mini Marché will host everything from organic mushrooms and unbleached flour to Korean noodles and locally-grown vegetables, said 25-year-old Clara Kwan, the store's founder. Located at 330A Victoria Ave., Kwan has been busy researching local farmers and products in preparation for her September 8 opening.

"I will be offering an alternative to box-chain grocery stores," Kwan said. "I grew up going to farms every year and picking my own food, knowing exactly where my food comes from, eating healthy and eating organic. I try to bring in my products directly from the farmers, rather than the suppliers. That's my goal: less storage time – less middlemen."



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MILR celebrates 20 years at McClure



From left, Westmounters Hannah Franklin, Gerald Guttman, Astri Thorvik (chair of the anniversary committee), Robert Asch and Nina Spiegel at the September 3 vernissage of their artwork and the work of fellow McGill Institute for Learning in Retirement (MILR) members.

Letters to the Editor...

continued from p. 4

kids aged 10-14 in 2008. So in ten years – 2018 – this cohort of 846 kids will between 10 to 14 years old. This is a huge drop in numbers for children and really needs to be evaluated.

Are we going to double the facilities for

two thirds of the present kid population at a cost of \$37 million?

Given the number of children declining by one third, spending this much money on a smaller cohort is foolish.

I think retrofitting the present arena-pool is the way to go.

MERYLYN WILK, SHERBROOKE ST.

Changes awaiting new mayor

continued from p. 5

will be in regional affairs. Before, there was the Montreal Urban Community (MUC), which had structured budgets and fortnightly executive meetings, with sub-urban mayors forming half of the decision-makers. That has been taken away and replaced with the agglom.

“Now our energy is focused on vigilance. We need to question Big Montreal’s spending,” Marks warns. “It seems to take

up more time as we continually have to meet to create new strategies to combat Montreal’s attempts to spend our money.”

Another change that she expects the new mayor would find is the need to devote a lot of time to deal with the Quebec government.

So, whoever gets the job in the end, it will once again be more demanding than the traditional idea of a part-time post.

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

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Go Neutral: Unless your favorite color scheme is completely neutral, it's time to get out the paint and restore the color to something less noticeable. Eggshell, white tones and beige are good options. Don't forget the other senses – in addition to color, make sure that the smell of your home is also neutral. Never assume that what you find pleasant smelling will appeal to others. Instead, have your home professionally cleaned using an enzymatic treatment that neutralizes all odors, including heavy perfumes and deodorizers.

Minimize: Eliminate all unnecessary furniture, belongings and clutter as much as possible prior to photographing and showing the home. Not only does it allow people to see the property more clearly, but it helps break down the mental and physical barrier separating buyers from seeing the house as their own.

Highlight the Home: Never showcase personal belongings – instead, highlight the home itself. Tour the house room by room to discover the essence of each area. Create a beautiful view, ambient lighting or other inviting scenario that attracts visitors without overwhelming them. Eliminate distractions that identify the home as belonging to you while allowing them to see themselves living in the house.

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Underdog

Underdog Club launches first gallery of its kind, right here in Westmount's Victoria Village

BY FERN BRESLAW



It can be hard to see the beauty in rescue shelter dogs; they usually sit row after row in overcrowded and ugly shelters. These rescue organizations do their best, but at the end of the day they never manage to present their dogs in a way that makes them desirable or brings out the best in them.

The Underdog Club was designed to help do what they can't: to present and package the most needy of these dogs so that people can see how special and worth saving they really are. After nearly three years in operation, the club has partnered up with Cossette Group and is taking this challenge to the next level by launching a gallery to help promote and share underdogs with everyone who loves them.

The Underdog Club Gallery will be a gallery like no other – an interactive experience designed to educate Montrealers about animal abandonment, raise funds for local animal rescue organizations and help hard-to-place dogs find homes.

The gallery will feature a collection of dogs both in pictures and in person for

people to view, play with, and, hopefully, adopt.

The dogs selected for the gallery are the real “Underdogs” – the older, uglier, less-popular animals that are overlooked day after day in local shelters. The goal of the exhibit is to allow people to see something beautiful in these needy animals that others have missed, and, most importantly, provide a creative and interactive way to raise money and awareness and help them find homes.

Gallery highlights

- A daily selection of four different dogs available for adoption, provided by local rescue organizations Sophie's Dog Adoption and Gerdy's Rescues and Adoptions, as well as by the Montreal SPCA.
- Fine art portraits of the Underdog Club's most memorable dogs, photographed by local photographer Jamie Leblanc and available for purchase (all funds will be donated to the participating rescue organizations).
- A comprehensive resource library, including information on the services of reputable dog walkers, boarders and trainers to educate and prepare potential dog owners.

• A volunteer recruitment drive for people interested in becoming involved with rescue organizations.

What's more, the gallery will be staffed entirely by community volunteers, including students from area schools.

The Westmount community has gone well beyond the call of duty to get the gallery off the ground, proving just how dog friendly this city is. Campbell's Picture Framing, Bark & Fitz, POW productions, Ben & Tournesol, Leber & Fils and National have all supported the project in a truly remarkable way by printing, framing, painting, promoting, and equipping the gallery with everything needed to make this show a success.

The Underdog Club Gallery runs from September 11 to September 27, and will be open on Tuesdays through Sundays, 11 am to 7 pm. A vernissage will be held on September 11 from 6 to 9 pm. It will be located at 4922 Sherbrooke St. Check out www.underdogclub.org, on Facebook or by calling 514.969.3376.

Children interested in volunteering at the gallery are invited to contact us for a chance to participate in this limited time event.



Trees cut without a permit

Two large spruce trees were cut down on Argyle Ave. the week of August 24 without a permit, city officials have confirmed. A concerned neighbour said she approached the men working on the site who refused to disclose their customer.

The city's director of Urban Planning, Joanne Poirier told the *Independent* the trees were cut down without the required permit and that the owners had been issued a statement of offence, which includes a fine.

By-laws state that a tree whose diame-

ter measures more than 0.5 feet at a height of 4.5 feet above ground in the front yard of private property requires that owners apply for a certificate of authorization from the city before it is cut down.

Last week, the owners applied for a permit (which is required even after the deed is done), and the city issued a certificate of authorization, which requires that two new trees be planted.

The owners did not return the *Independent's* request for comment.

Poirier said the by-law was adopted in



Before



During

2004 and is currently up for review. This was the second offence of this nature in Westmount this summer.

Shave-a-thon raises \$5,000 for Canadian Cancer Society



In praise of their newly shaved heads, Nancy Burnstein and Brigitte Stanké are supported by fans on August 26 at Salon Pierre Mon Coiffeur on St. Catherine. Pierre-Olivier joins them to their left. Back row: Manon Lavoie, Carla Cimmino, Paola English, Josée Asselin and Carolina Ruano. Burnstein and Stanké raised their objective of \$5,000. Asselin, owner of Salon Pierre Mon Coiffeur said "It's wonderful that people have the guts to do this, and it's for a good cause. Everyone knows someone who has cancer." The coiffeuse also said that it gives hope and sends the message that people can still be beautiful without their hair, and that "hair is not everything."

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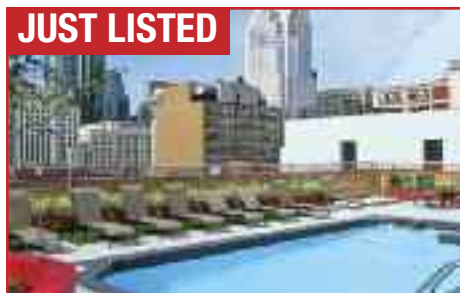
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