

# WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

Weekly. Vol. 4 No. 1b *We are Westmount* January 12-13, 2009

## Aberdeen demo denied

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The house at 20 Aberdeen cannot be demolished to create a garden for the home next door because of its Category II heritage rating and social value to the community.

This was the decision reached by Westmount's Demolition Committee on December 21, committee chair Patrick Martin said last week. The committee took into account the home's past and potential role as part of the fabric of the community.

"Families have been living in that

house since the 1930s and it can have a role to play in society in accommodating families in the future," Martin said.

"We have to think carefully before tearing something down. Its heritage rating presented a fundamental factor."

It was also important to maintain a range of "accessible housing," he added. "The fact that it is valued at \$1.5 million indicates the value society places on it. So it's a valuable asset."

The house was purchased last July by Scott Jones, who lives with his family in the larger *continued on p. 21*

**Council agenda: Cedar permit refusal, see p. 22.**

*Westmount may appeal 'skirmish' in demerger case*

## Court won't hear city's \$22-million claim

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Westmount's \$21.8-million demerger claim against Montreal hit a legal setback when Quebec Superior Court ruled December 15 the case should not be heard by the court because it was political in nature.

"If we can't settle these things among elected officials, it seems to me the only recourse is the courts," Mayor Peter Trent told the *Independent* last week.

He expected the city would launch an appeal by the January 14 deadline to preserve its legal options. Future strategies could then be pursued.

"We're only talking about the first skirmish in what will probably be a long battle if we proceed," said city director general Duncan Campbell.

The recent judgment, he said, granted a motion for dismissal filed by the city of Montreal and *continued on p. 8*

## Budgets from Y2K to 2010: Forced fusion, fights and fiscal hikes

**Ruminations** BY GEORGE BOWSER p. 14  
**Comin' Up** p. 14

*See our listings p.10*

**Béatrice Baudinet**

**Pam Davidson McLernon**

**Martha Tsadilas**

**ROYAL LEPAGE**  
**HERITAGE**



*34 busloads of Westmounters join rally in 2000*

*Westmount goes to the anti-merger rally downtown December 10, 2000. See p. 5.*

Photo: Laureen Sweeney

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ALUMNAE

Direct Access

# Westmount voices opposition to Quebec’s Turcot plan

Westmount is working with neighbouring cities and boroughs to pressure the Quebec government to change its plans for the Turcot interchange reconstruction.

Council wants something that considers public transit, not one that brings more cars into the city, Councillor Theodora Samiotis, who is responsible for the dossier, told the *Independent* last week.

“The BAPE report echoed many of our concerns for the section of the Ville Marie through Westmount. At the December general committee meeting, council decided to pressure the government to make a plan that reflects the needs of the 21st century,” she said.

This coincided with an invitation from the city of Montreal to be part of a two-day meeting with Ministry of Transport officials to discuss the future of the autoroute. It was attended by director general Duncan Campbell and Urban Planning director Joanne Poirier.

A third meeting is being scheduled for elected officials.

“We will present a strong voice to Quebec City,” Samiotis added. “First we want to get the government working on the correct type of replacement project. Then we will ensure that it is carried out with the minimum of disruption.” DW

Java ‘2.U’?

The Café Java U at 4914 Sherbrooke will re-open Tuesday, January 12 after an eight-month hiatus.

The café has undergone a change in ownership and extensive renovations. New owner Anthony Musto says that the decor has been redesigned from the ground up, with everything from the furniture to the floors.

Musto has owned other Java Us over the past few years in downtown and Old Montreal locations.

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# Remembering permits clerk Mark Bibeau

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Many Westmount residents have become familiar with the smiling face and helpful spontaneity of permits clerk Mark Bibeau at city hall.

Now, staff who worked with him daily and those who knew him are mourning the loss of a man whose life was devoted to his work, his passion for music, and caring for his mother who had recently pre-deceased him.

Bibeau was discovered January 5 in his apartment in Westmount after he failed to turn up for work that day, after the holidays. When attempts to reach him proved unsuccessful,

colleagues sent a public safety officer to his home.

“He was such a pleasant person,” said Urban Planning director Joanne Poirier. “We will miss him dearly.” Bibeau had worked for her department for 22 of his almost 30 years with the city.

He had a knack for making people feel special. “I’m all yours,” he would say, and then give the visitor his full attention. “He was always in good humour,” Poirier pointed out.

She described him as “an excellent writer and an exceptional musician. Music was his *raison d’être*. He was the organist

at St. Andrew’s United Church in Lachine. He attended music camps in the summer, played the piano and even the clavichord, an early stringed instrument.”

Human Resources director Alan Kurlaga, who had worked with Bibeau at the

municipal court, also recalled the glint in his eye when he spoke about his music. “Mark was special in many ways. He was always ready with a hello and a big smile.”

Funeral arrangements had not been announced at press time Monday.



Mark Bibeau

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TOO MUCH EDITOR

I cannot be the only reader of the *Independent* to have noted the editor's penchant for adding notes, correcting and otherwise qualifying letters to the editor. The December 15 edition had no fewer than three such insertions, one of which was as long as the letter it was contradicting! This has the effect, albeit unintended, of invalidating the opinions expressed since the editor, like the teacher, always has the last word.

An editor already has discretion in the selection of letters for publication and weeds out any that are defamatory or profane. The role of the Letters to the Editor section of any newspaper is to afford readers the opportunity to freely comment and even criticize events and reports, without the expectation that they will necessarily be engaged in an argument with the editor. Although letters are addressed "to the editor," this is in fact just a formality, to signal the desire of the writer to enter the opinion forum. Nonetheless, there is a reason it's not called "Letters to, and from, the editor."

Editorial staff at the *Globe and Mail* and *The Gazette*, as at most other newspapers, rarely weigh in on any issue by tacking comments onto reader's letters. Instead, they employ the traditional tool that is available to them exclusively – the editorial – in cases where they wish to express an

opinion.

By constantly responding on behalf of the city and individual councillors whenever the administration is challenged, the *Independent* risks both alienating its readers and appearing to be the mouthpiece for the city. That is not the job of the editor of a newspaper.

MAVIS YOUNG, MELVILLE AVE.

*Ed.'s note:* Ah the irony: I must respond to a letter complaining about my notes – with a note!

I only weigh in with an Editor's Note if I think there is a factual issue within a letter or if there is a need for response (like here). When a letter contains only an opinion on one of the issues of day, you will not find one.

When writers mix new facts in with their opinions, we do our best to check the new information, not spread any false facts and correct anything we know to be wrong. To do otherwise would be a disservice to our readers and undermine the whole rationale for newspapers, namely to report news, not fiction.

I don't think it helps anyone – reader, protagonist or antagonist – if we let a writer fulminate against some situation that doesn't in fact exist. All that would do is raise the temperature needlessly and encourage people to waste energy.

In the three recent examples of Editor's Notes, I corrected what I thought were incorrect assertions about higher municipal

taxes, the lack of a rationale for the winter closure of the bike path and the city's role in approving a proposed house on Cedar Ave.

Inevitably, most writers will be critical about something, often municipal policy, so the corrections we publish may *appear* to favour the city administration or council. But I am just as quick to point out errors in "pro-city" letters.

In the case at hand, even though I corrected a fact here or there, I did not opine on each writer's underlying issue. Even with the corrected facts, there is a case to be made that the city spends too much money, should keep the bike path open all year or should, in the end, deny the attempted house-builder's request for a permit.

Can anyone guess what my opinion is on these underlying substantive matters?

I am getting used to being accused of all sorts of bias, including mutually exclusive allegations, such as here. If I am the city's "mouthpiece," why did I stand by our version of the facts – *in the very same issue* – regarding park patrols ("Hearing back: Public Security and parks," p. 4) and not acquiesce to the director general's interpretation?

I think council, administration and residents can rest assured that there is no agenda here. Leaving aside our one or two columnists (who are there to express opinions of their own), we are just trying to get the facts right. After that, it is up to residents to make their case to the relevant decision-makers, and vice versa. One thing is certain, though: if they choose to do so in our pages, they are most welcome.

### THIS BIKER SAYS NO TO WINTER PATH

First, let me state that I am an ardent recreational bicycle rider.

What I understand from city council meetings and personal encounters is that a certain few (and I mean a *few*) are demanding that Westmount should keep its bike path open and maintained throughout the winter.

Under present circumstances this is impractical. As it stands, de Maisonneuve Blvd. is a very narrow thoroughfare between Claremont and Greene. During warmer months, with the bike path on the south side and parking on the north side, very little space is available for motor passage. For example, when leaving the garage, I have noticed that safety posts have been struck and, occasionally, a parked car is dented.

Add to all this excitement the numer-

ous driveways along the street.

Regardless, some cyclists feel that they have an unquestioned entitlement to having the bike path maintained during the winter no matter what the costs and inconveniences are to their fellow residents.

Unlike motorists, cyclists are not required to: purchase licenses, own liability insurance, pay for parking, pay taxes for the construction and upkeep of the allotted paths.

Parking costs for motorists are steep; thus many make the sacrifice of using public transportation. Year-round cyclists can do likewise and use public transit.

STAN GROSSMAN,  
DE MAISONNEUVE BLVD.

### DOG DAYS OF WINTER

It's great to have a local paper that reflects what's happening in our community. Kudos to David Price and his team.

I'd like to mention the dog runs on Lansdowne and at Murray Hill park. The Public Works department has put up the winter fencing to protect our dogs. Thank you.

Until we finalize plans for the arena project and surrounding area, perhaps the city could leave the temporary fencing up all year as many of our dogs are very good at jumping the fence.

MERYLYN WILK, SHERBROOKE ST.

### THE DOOR: A SYMBOL OF FLAWED JUDGMENT

A recent front page report in the *Wall Street Journal* of December 26, 2009 headlined "As Slump Hits Home, Cities Downsize their Ambitions".

Unfortunately for the citizens of Westmount the previous city council must have been in "la-la land" while the economy was in recession because they spent \$70,000 on a new hi-tech oak back door for city hall. The "boondoggle" here is not whether the door works or not but the irresponsibility of spending \$70,000 of taxpayers' money on a back door – recession or not.

This type of lack of respect for the taxpayers' money goes hand-in-hand with the costly synthetic turf fiasco (cost still unknown) and the \$905,000 iron-gated and secluded Academy Rd. soccer fields along with the \$1.3 million spent on architectural plans for a "Mega Ice Palace" photo-op dream.

Sadly all of the above is in addition to a recent comment attributed to Mayor Trent that the citizens of Westmount can expect a tax hike for 2010 in the range of 10–12 percent.

## WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

**We are Westmount.**

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# Trent: How long can you go on raising taxes? Paying for merger fiasco

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Ten years ago, the signs said it all: “Hands off my city.”

Five years ago, advocates made it quite clear: “Take your city back.”

The forced Montreal mergers and eventual demergers have become the story of the decade in Westmount.

Now, as Westmount prepares to reveal its 2010 budget on January 18, the story of the decade continues into a new one as taxpayers pay the price through debt accumulated in their name by Montreal and soaring contributions to the agglomeration council.

“So far, we haven’t had any breakdown of the dollar figures for this year’s increases,” said Mayor Peter Trent last week immediately after a meeting with other suburban mayors on the aggro budget crisis.

“We’re hoping we can shame Montreal into reducing the tax bite when they table the aggro budget January 14 – but don’t hold your breath.”

Nevertheless, hefty hikes are expected,

and Trent has already been told that Westmount will shoulder an increase of 11.9 percent in its contribution to island-wide services and others to be passed on to the suburbs in the agglomeration budget.

All other things being equal, the nearly 12-percent rise in West- .....  
mount’s share could trans- *continued on p. 17*

## Aggro hikes ‘alarming’

“Alarming increases” in agglomeration costs were attributed Monday to “runaway spending” by the city of Montreal. The allegations were made in a press release from the Association of Montreal Suburban Municipalities of which Westmount mayor Peter Trent is president.

Examples included budget increases between 2006 and 2009 exceeding 5 percent inflation. Cited were fire protection up 15 percent, police at 19 percent and mass transit, 16 percent. Details for 2010 will be revealed in the Montreal budget to be unveiled this Wednesday and the aggro budget the day after.

## Letters cont’d.

The late Abbott and Costello would have asked “Who’s On First?” but unfortunately what happened is not a comedy routine. The citizens have been financially hurt at a time when they were most vulnerable and they have a right to be outraged. The serious financial blunders of the Marks council will stay with them for a long, long time. The Trent council can do better. The Westmount taxpayers deserve better.

LARRY KLEPPER, ST. CATHERINE ST.

## PARKVIEW’S ANTENNAE NOT APPRECIATED

Last summer, the members of the Parkview Tenants’ Association found out – almost after completion – that Cromwell Inc. had given authorization to Videotron to install five relay antennae on the roof of its building at 4501 Sherbrooke St. W. for the transmission of cellular telephony.

Our members were upset at having been deceived, but also concerned about the impact of the radiations on their health. A review of the voluminous literature available has confirmed that the jury is still out on this topic, but prudence is suggested by many.

Before entering into a contract with

Videotron, Cromwell should have considered that its building is located in a community-sensitive area, with a park across the street and four schools within a few hundred meters. Obviously, Cromwell did not live up to its motto: “The pleasure of living with complete peace of mind.”

We were sorry to find out that the proponent of such an installation does not need a permit from the city of Westmount. We hope that our recent intervention will convince city hall to adopt a by-law similar to the one enacted by the city of Toronto and other municipalities. We are well aware that Industry Canada is still in command via the exceptions in CPC-2-0-03, but at least the population would find out beforehand.

It is our opinion that Industry Canada caters to the cellular telephony industry, rather than taking into account the well-being of citizens. There is a need for the updating of its regulations to reflect the principle stated in their introduction: “Industry Canada believes that it is important that antennae be deployed in a manner that considers the local surroundings.” Health Canada also needs to update SC-6 in line with the international standards.

PIERRE PATENAUDE, SHERBROOKE ST.



On the West Island, now Premier Jean Charest adds his voice as Opposition Leader to those of Westmounters and others attending the first anti-merger rally.

Photo: Laureen Sweeney



Demerger results on referendum night, June 20, 2004: Councillor Cynthia Lulham, Peter Trent. and Karin Marks (then borough mayor).

Photo: Laureen Sweeney



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# 3 Macs history tells story of Montreal, MacDougall family

Investment firm MacDougall, MacDougall & MacTier (better known as “3 Macs”) is headquartered in downtown Montreal, but it would be hard to find a street in Westmount without a resident linked to the firm as a client, employee or owner.

And the firm’s history has just been written by Westmounter Michael Harrison and former Westmounter James Ferrabee.

Harrison visited the *Independent’s* offices on January 7 to explain the project. He “had a ball writing it,” including deal-

ing with an editor for the first time in his life. “I’m a bond trader. What the hell do I know [about writing a book]?”

The book, *Staying Connected*, is the story of the firm, the MacDougall family and the Montreal business community. Its publication was intended to celebrate the firm’s 150th anniversary, but research showed that it was founded in 1848 and so is over 160 years old.

In writing the book, Harrison, a former CEO of the company, also enjoyed finding parallels between current macroeconomic events and the ups and downs of the North American markets of the last century. “It has all happened before. It is very interesting to reread *Liar’s Poker* today.” The 1990 tell-all Wall Street memoir dealt with the origins of mortgage-backed bonds, which figured prominently in the financial crisis of 2008 and 2009.

More locally, the book follows the rise of Toronto and decline of Montreal as financial and business centres – a phenomenon that Harrison lived personally.

Growing up in Westmount, he remembers a time when mothers told their sons three things: “Always bank at the Bank of Montreal, always travel on CP (not CN) and always deal with MacDougall and

MacDougall” (as the firm was then known).

After school at Roslyn and LCC, and “a cup of coffee at McGill,” Harrison headed down the 401 in 1960 to spend much of his career in Toronto. The rise of Toronto, according to him, preceded FLQ terrorism and the election of the PQ. “There was a [coordinated] plan to create Toronto into a juggernaut,” and the physical and spiritual proximity of Bay Street to the provincial legislature at Queen’s Park helped. The Toronto Stock Exchange’s early embrace of mining and petroleum stocks was also a big factor.

The traffic down the 401 was not one way, though: Harrison came back to Montreal in 1988 to head up 3 Macs (until 2000), which now has branches in Quebec City, Toronto, Kingston and London, Ontario.

In an era of consolidation and competition from discount brokerages, mutual funds and a plethora of other entities,



Michael Harrison.

what’s the secret to the firm’s continued independence and success? “The MacDougall family tradition is one of integrity and service,” says Harrison. “That really is what it amounts to. And those traditions remain today.”

## Marie-Laure Guillard

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The next few months promise to be very busy. As long as interest rates remain low, we expect the strong demand to continue, forecasting a great spring market. I cannot emphasize enough that those of you contemplating a change should but your homes on the market A.S.A.P. The typical spring scenario is that the well-priced homes that come on the market in January and February sell fast and at higher prices than houses that are listed only in April and May. So don’t wait for better weather or the nice garden, etc. just pick up the phone and call me for and up-to-date market analysis. Whether you are buying or selling in 2010, I will work hard to help realize your dreams. Please call me if I can be of help to you or to any of your family and friends.

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# Harper's prorogation interrupts work, shows contempt



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FOR WESTMOUNT-VILLE  
MARIE

As your elected federal representative, I divide my working time between Ottawa and Montreal. Under normal circumstances, it's roughly a 50/50 split: about half the year sitting in the house of commons and the other half in the riding. Everyday I spend in Ottawa is extremely important. I am your paid representative in parliament and I have important duties to perform on your behalf, on behalf of my party and on behalf of all Canadians.

I have been given the role of Liberal critic for Industry, Science and Technology. This means not only asking questions in Question Period but also sitting on the Standing Committee on Industry, which listens to witnesses, prepares special reports and most importantly approves government legislation.

For legislation to be adopted or for committee hearings to take place, such as the one on Afghan detainees, committees

must be sitting and this only happens when parliament is sitting. When parliament is prorogued, parliament shuts down and no committee work can take place.

Stephen Harper has prorogued parliament until March 3. It was supposed to reconvene on January 25. His argument is that he needs to "recalibrate" the government agenda as he prepares a budget for March 4. This decision demonstrates his utter contempt for the institution of parliament. Mr. Harper is effectively saying that the work of parliament is not really important and doesn't need to proceed. In reality, parliament can easily resume its work on January 25 while Mr. Harper simultaneously does his "recalibration."

Prorogation, while legal, normally occurs when government has more or less exhausted its legislative agenda and wants to make a fresh start. In this case, however, more than half the bills it was proposing to adopt (36) have not yet been passed and will die on the Order Paper. Some of these laws have been repeatedly delayed, not by the Opposition as Mr. Harper contends, but by his own manoeuvres; first when he called an election in September 2008 (despite his promise to wait four years), sec-

only when he prorogued parliament in December 2008 (fearing that he would be defeated) and thirdly when he prorogued again last month. Each time, parliament is prorogued, government legislation must be reintroduced and this causes serious delays. More than that, it is disrespectful to the people of Canada, almost two thirds of which did not vote for the Conservative party.

Mr. Harper has relentlessly accused the

Opposition of delaying his legislation dealing with criminal justice and other matters. Why then has he chosen to prorogue parliament? He has done so because he wants to change the channel. He wants to take the spotlight off issues such as the Afghan detainees and Canada's weak commitments on the environment. He wants to avoid his duty to be accountable to Canadians. My party, and hopefully Canadians, will not let him get away with it.

## Final sustainability plan near

Westmount's sustainable development priorities compiled by the previous council are expected to form the nucleus of the 2010 activities. The actual plan is due to be unveiled in February, Councillor Theodora Samiotis said during the December council meeting.

"Departments are already working on the issues that emerged last fall," Samiotis, who oversees SD issues, commented this week.

"With more now known about the budget, I met last week with director general Duncan Campbell and sustainable development coordinator Joshua Wolfe to get a clear idea of how we can move forward.

"I had already met the community life and environment committees of the Healthy City Project (HCP). During the month I'll be discussing the plan with the HCP steering committee and the general committee of council.

"We're not going to nickel-and-dime what are very far-reaching ideas," she added.

"However, a lot could be done without necessarily launching new projects – for example the need to get better results from the existing compost collection program. Much also depends on changing personal habits, of course." DW

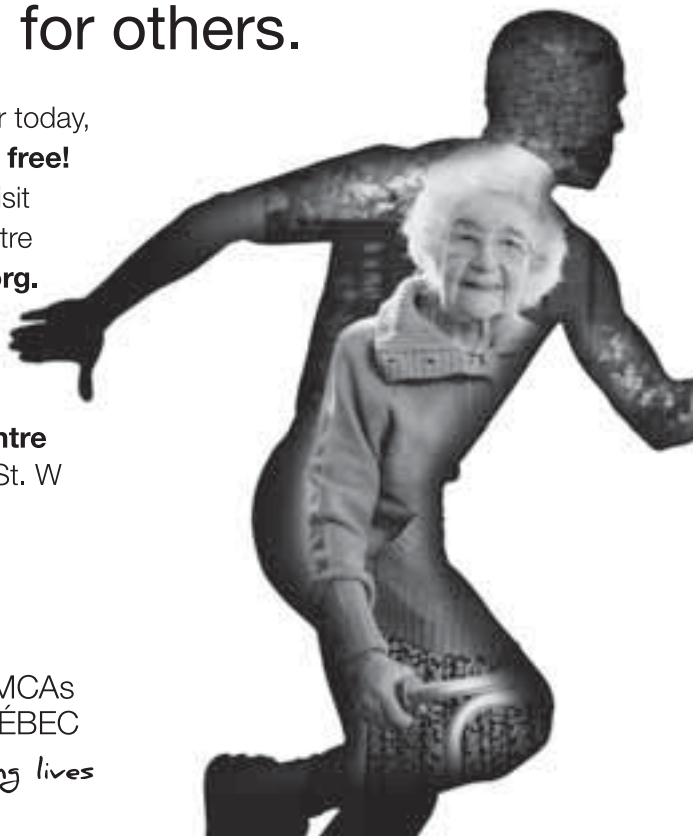
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## Cities sue each other

.....  
continued from p. 1

was not based on arguments of the case itself. These deal with alleged illegal appropriations, over which both cities disagree and which contributed to Westmount's \$40-million debt.

The case is one of several before the court in which Westmount and Montreal are claiming from each other.

In Montreal's \$2.4-million claim against Westmount, however, it has already withheld the amount of its claim from regular payments it makes to Westmount in areas such as garbage rebates, Campbell said.

### Not withholding aggro taxes

Westmount, on the other hand, had not withheld agglomeration payments from Montreal, he pointed out. The city was placed under trusteeship some 20 years ago in the time of Mayor May Cutler when it withheld its share of costs to the Montreal Urban Community over alleged taxation irregularities.

Westmount's claim against Montreal is based on an amount from the Transition Committee's accounting firm at the time

of the January 2006 demerger. Details continue to appear as supplementary notes in the city's annual audited financial results.

A sum of \$16.2 million relates to Montreal's financing policy for capital works projects for which the city contends Westmount taxpayers should not have been taxed during the merger period. The remaining \$5.6 million includes a number of items such as surpluses.

### Defending taxpayers' rights

In announcing the Westmount claim in August 2007, then mayor Karin Marks said the city's legal counsel contended the claim was in "full compliance with both the text and spirit of the various pieces of demerger legislation and related decrees enacted by the provincial government." The council, she said, "has an obligation to defend the legitimate rights of its taxpayers."

Director general Campbell, who had not joined Westmount at the time, said he did not know why the claim had not started out before the Quebec Municipal Commission. This is the route sometimes taken by Westmount in financial disagreements with Montreal.





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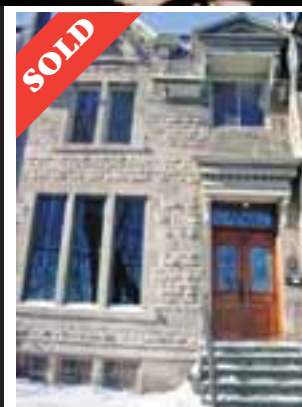
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# Westmount Y hosts Nicaraguan teens



Top left, José Luis Cortez Quezada, president of the Nicaragua YMCA, and to his right in the back row Gary White, director of the Westmount YMCA, with the local and Nicaraguan teenagers who are participating in the exchange.

BY ERIN STROPE

Eight teenagers from Nicaragua are visiting Montreal as part of an exchange organized by the Westmount, Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and Nicaragua YMCAs. The trip is a follow-up to the visit eight Montreal students took to Nicaragua last January.

The Nicaraguan teenagers arrived December 30 and will be in Montreal until

January 14. They are living with local families and doing volunteer work as well as seeing the sights in Montreal and around the province.

The Nicaraguan group has never visited Montreal in the winter, and José Luis Cortez Quezada, president of the Nicaragua YMCA, said in Spanish that the icy conditions have hit home “how Canadians really live.”

“You can’t believe [what Canada is really like] until you see it,” said Nicaraguan Roy Moncada in Spanish. He is enjoying the ambience of friendliness and safety, but is amazed by how hard Canadians work to maintain their standard of living.

Montreal student Xavier Girard Lachaine says that his experiences in Nicaragua made him more socially conscious.

“It was stunning to see the poverty and the living conditions in some of the small towns,” Girard explained. “It’s so important to take care of what we have here.”

The exchange is in its eighth year, with each group now having made four trips. The YMCA of Nicaragua has had a partnership with the Westmount and Hochelaga-Maisonneuve YMCAs since 1993.

## Hooff visits her old ‘hood and WHA’s digs

Thirty years after Sally Hooff and Aline Gubbay co-wrote and published *Montreal’s Little Mountain, a Portrait of Westmount*, Sally Hooff made a surprise visit on December 17 to renew her friendship with Doreen Lindsay, president of the Westmount Historical Association (WHA) and to see the office and archives located in the basement level of the Westmount Public Library.

“Hooff was thrilled to see the extent of our historical material and enlarged space since she had worked here,” Lindsay said.

Hooff noted that all first, second and third editions of *Montreal’s Little Mountain* were on the shelves. The book has been out of print for many years but is available for reading for WHA members. There are also copies in the Westmount Library.

Hooff moved many years ago from Abbott Ave. to Prince Edward Island where she continues to live.



Sally Hooff

## NDG SOCCER 2010

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**SAMEDI, 20 FEVRIER/SATURDAY FEBRUARY 20, 2010 (10H00-15H00)**

**SAMEDI, 20 MARS/SATURDAY MARCH 20, 2010 (10H00-15H00)**

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# Shaar Hashomayim welcomes showbiz star

Westmount's Congregation Shaar Hashomayim welcomed guests early this winter for the Feast of the Nations gala honouring **Tina and Stan Leibner**, Chai Life Award recipients.

The head table shone, literally, with a glowing gold tablecloth and matching napkins, topped with tall vases of huge, puffy, white hydrangeas. Two long buffet tables served a feast of food, enjoyed by the cocktail-clad crowd. The night sparkled in more ways than one. Not only were many ladies wearing bits of bling (real!) but dazzling diamonds were auctioned by witty Westmounter **Aaron Rand**. Precious pieces from DelMar and S.P. Diamant attracted keen collectors.



## Social Notes from Westmount and Beyond

VERONICA REDGRAVE

**Rabbi Abraham Cohen**, director of Chabad Seminary of Canada, welcomed everyone. Guests left the dining area to hear showbiz star **Dudu Fisher**, who wowed the crowd with his medley of songs. The son of a Holocaust survivor, Fisher has performed for former president Bill Clinton, and Britain's royal family, as well as appearing with renowned orches-

tras including the Israeli Philharmonic.

The final part of the exciting eve was the sumptuous dessert table, which was enjoyed by all, as guests chatted over coffee before gathering their valet-parked vehicles. (As always, Bob Perras' parking team whisked cars back and forth with ease.)

Guests included Westmounters **Rosemary and Mel Hoppenheim**, **Lori and Stephen Shiller**, and **Steve Gross**. Also noted were **Derek and Richard Stern**, **Sandra and Steven Mintz**, and **Jack and Maureen Dym**. Moneys raised went to the Stan and Tina Leibner Scholarship Fund at the Chaya Mushka Chabad Seminary of Canada.



Tina Baer-Leibner and Stan Leibner with Westmounter Vivian Billick.



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Westmounters Linda Smith and Aaron Rand flank entertainer DuDu Fisher and Rabbi Abraham Cohen.

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# The right to bare arms



## Ruminations

GEORGE BOWSER

Westmount city council holds sway over many important things such as windows and doors, garbage pick-up, and who gets to use Victoria Hall. It does not have any jurisdiction over federal firearms legislation, which is created by parliament and administered here by the Chief Firearms Officer. Councillors may have views on matters beyond their control, but they weren't elected to pronounce upon them. (See "Cutler, council take aim at gun registry critics," December 15, p. 4.)

If we are not behind the wheel of a vehicle, we Canadians are generally pleasant, tolerant, law-abiding people. To most of us, "the right to bear arms" means we get to wear a short-sleeved shirt. There are some Canadians who enjoy the various kinds of target shooting or hunting, and they are no different from the rest.

Target shooting and hunting are not

crimes, and target-shooters and hunters are not criminals. People who do these things know from personal experience that Canada now has very strict controls on the sale and ownership of guns and ammunition.

Very few of the people who call for stricter firearms controls know what the current laws require. I won't give a detailed account here because it would be very long, and it would amount to a guide. The process is intentionally labyrinthine and obscure.

In the same way, any soldier in the armed forces of the Commonwealth can apply to join the Special Air Service, but first he or she has to find out where and when the course takes place. That conundrum eliminates a large number of unsuitable applicants right at the start.

Quebec has some of the strictest controls on gun ownership, and the process includes a series of applications, background checks, courses and exams that can take as long as two years to complete, depending on who you are, where you live, and why you want to own a gun.

None of this matters to those who call for stricter controls, because what they really want is a total ban, and they will be sat-

isfied with nothing less.

Those who do know the laws, and own guns, are unlikely to step forward and identify themselves. Common sense dictates that you do not advertise the fact that you own a gun. Therefore any debate on this issue is going to be one-sided.

I looked up the 2008 crime statistics for Station 12, which includes Westmount. There were 8 offences involving firearms. There was a total of 4,308 offences of various types recorded by the police that had nothing to do with firearms, of which 275 were cases of assault, 111 were robberies,

and 338 were instances of mischief which probably include the few acts of graffiti vandalism where police were able to catch someone. There were 28 sexual assaults.

Based on these figures, we might do better to encourage council to pass resolutions banning crowbars, spray paint and penises.

Beware of those who like to call for controls and prohibitions, particularly when they disguise it as something that's "for the good of society." The next thing they try to ban might be something you like. It's happened before.

## Comin' Up

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14

- The Gallery at Victoria Hall exhibits the work of **Bruce Roberts** until February 6.
- Cells for Life free information session on **cord blood stem cells** at Bloom Maternité, 4937B Sherbrooke St., 7 pm. Reserve: 514.739.9993 or for info: [www.cellsfor-life.com](http://www.cellsfor-life.com)
- Nathalie Cooke and Ariel Buckley give an illustrated talk on **CuiZine**, an online journal that explores food in Canada. Atwater Library's lunchtime series, 12:30 pm. Info: [tmayhew@atwaterlibrary.ca](mailto:tmayhew@atwaterlibrary.ca) or 514.935.7344.

MONDAY, JANUARY 18

- The monthly lecture series of the **Women's Canadian Club** of Montreal presents Peter Leuprecht on "The Unfinished Symphony of Human Rights" at The Unitarian Church (5035 de Maisonneuve), 12:30 pm. Cost: \$10. Info: Carolyn Roper, 514.932.4005.
- The **Montreal Camera Club** present "Life and Times of the Loons" with Mark Lachovsky, 7:30 pm at The Westmount Park United Church, 4695 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West (corner Lansdowne, rear entrance.) Guests welcome with donation.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21

The **Westmount Municipal Association** hosts a discussion on the latest developments around the Turcot complex. Professor Pierre Gauthier and urban planner Jason Prince will address questions, at the Westmount Public Library, 7 to 9 pm. Info: Maureen Kiely, 514.933.2474 or [maureenkiely@videotron.ca](mailto:maureenkiely@videotron.ca).

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24

**VivaVoce** chamber choir presents "**Spot-light on Poetry**," mostly "*a cappella*" settings of French poetry. Redpath Hall (3461 McTavish St.), 7:30 pm. Cost: \$30; regular; \$25, seniors; \$10, students. Tickets: 514.398.4547 or online at: [www.admission.com](http://www.admission.com). Info: [www.vivavoce-montreal.com](http://www.vivavoce-montreal.com)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 26

- Audition for the **Harmonia Westmount** women's choir. Contact choir director Fredericka Petit-Homme at 514.762.0216 or e-mail [harmoniawestmount@gmail.com](mailto:harmoniawestmount@gmail.com)
- The **Philatelic Club of Montreal** presents Tom Burpee on "The Fifteen Finest Canadian Stamps Sold at Auction in 2009". Westmount Room of the Westmount Public Library, 7 pm, free admission. All stamp collectors welcome. Info: 514.735.3941.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 27

Marianopolis College's Centennial Speaker Series presents HEC Montreal General Secretary and marketing professor **Jacques Nantel** on "Is Marketing Going Astray?" 4873 Westmount Ave., 7 pm. Free and open to the public. Info: 514.931.8792, ext. 204.



## Goya & Callot Looking at War

January 14 to February 20, 2010

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A lecture by Irwin Browns (collector)

Saturday, January 16, 2010, 2pm @ Battat Contemporary (in English)

Goya's Disasters or War:

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A lecture by Dr. Hilliard T. Goldfarb (Associate Chief Curator, Curator of Old Masters & Curator of Prints & Drawings @ the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts)

Saturday, January 23, 2010, 2pm @ Battat Contemporary (in English)

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## January at the Art Galleries

Gallery at Victoria Hall – Bruce Roberts: painting. Exhibit: Jan. 14 to Feb. 6. 4626 Sherbrooke St., 514.989.5226.

McClure Gallery / Visual Arts Centre – Ian Shatilla: "Defeating Victory". Exhibit continues to Jan. 30. 350 Victoria Ave.,

514.488.9558.

Parisian Laundry – Rick Leong: "I Am Nature" and David Armstrong Six: "The Dry Salvages". Exhibit: Jan. 14 to Feb. 20. 3550 St. Antoine St., 514.989.1056.





Westmount vous informe...

# Westmount Page

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Publié par Westmount • Published by Westmount



## HÔTEL DE VILLE Présentation du budget 2010

**Le lundi 25 janvier 2010 à 20 h**  
Le conseil municipal présentera le budget de la Ville de Westmount pour l'exercice financier 2010 ainsi que le programme triennal d'immobilisations pour les exercices financiers 2010, 2011 et 2012 lors d'une séance extraordinaire qui aura lieu le lundi 25 janvier à 20 h à l'hôtel de ville. 🌿



## TRAVAUX PUBLICS Déneigement

Westmount demande votre collaboration pour assurer l'entretien sécuritaire de nos rues et trottoirs en hiver. Il est interdit d'entasser la neige retirée des entrées privées sur les voies et trottoirs publics. On peut seulement l'ajouter aux bancs de neige existants le jour du déneigement.

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

**Déchets électroniques**  
L'élimination responsable et sécuritaire est en place à Westmount. Un dépôt permanent, situé aux ateliers municipaux de la rue Bethune, est ouvert de 7 h à 21 h, sept jours par semaine. 🌿



**ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES**  
**La galerie du Victoria Hall**  
La galerie du Victoria Hall est fière de présenter les œuvres de Bruce Roberts du 14 janvier au 6 février. Info : 514 989-5521. 🌿



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**The Stephen Lewis Foundation**  
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## DATES À RETENIR

**Le 13 janvier – 14 h**  
Conférences de 14 heures  
*Grandmothers of Africa and Canada*  
Bibliothèque

**Du 14 janvier au 6 février**  
Exposition : Oeuvres de Bruce Roberts  
Galerie du Victoria Hall

**Le 18 janvier – 18 h 30**  
Club de lecture française  
Bibliothèque

**Le 19 janvier – 19 h**  
Club de lecture anglaise  
Bibliothèque

**Le 22 janvier – 14 h**  
Club d'échecs et de jeux de société  
Bibliothèque

**Le 25 janvier – 20 h**  
Séance spéciale du conseil  
*Présentation du budget 2010*  
Hôtel de ville

millions d'enfants orphelins du sida en Afrique le 13 janvier à 14 h. Ce sera également l'occasion d'en apprendre plus à propos de la campagne *Grandmothers to Grandmothers*. Info : 514 989-5386.

**Club d'échecs et de Scrabble**  
Aimez-vous jouer aux échecs et/ou au Scrabble? La prochaine rencontre du club aura lieu le vendredi 22 janvier dans une ambiance amicale. Nous sommes toujours à la recherche de nouveaux joueurs. Info : 514 989-5386. 🌿



**SPORTS ET LOISIRS**  
**Cartes d'accès -**  
**installations sportives 2010**  
Les cartes d'accès pour l'année 2010 sont maintenant en vente au bureau des Sports et loisirs à l'Aréna de Westmount. Veuillez noter qu'une carte d'accès valide est requise pour les périodes de patinage libre et toute partie de hockey improvisée à l'Aréna. 🌿



**CITY HALL**  
**Presentation of the 2010 Budget**  
**Monday, January 25, 2010 at 8 p.m.**  
City Council will unveil the budget of the City of Westmount for the fiscal year 2010, as well as the capital works programme 2010, 2011, and 2012, to the public during a special meeting on Monday, January 25 at 8 p.m. at Westmount City Hall. 🌿



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

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

**Electronic Waste**  
Safe and responsible disposal is available in Westmount. A permanent depot is open at the Public Works Yard on Bethune Street from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week. 🌿



**COMMUNITY EVENTS**  
**The Gallery at Victoria Hall**  
The Gallery at Victoria Hall is pleased to present the works of Bruce Roberts from January 14 until February 6. Info: 514 989-5521. 🌿



**LIBRARY**  
**2 O'Clock Series**  
**Grandmothers of Africa and Canada:**  
**The Stephen Lewis Foundation**  
Please join Nina Minde, Jan McConnell and Thérèse Bourque for this presentation about the plight of millions of AIDS orphans in Africa and to learn more

**January 13 – 2 p.m.**  
2 O'Clock Series  
*Grandmothers of Africa and Canada*  
Library

**January 14 to February 6**  
Exhibition: The Works of Bruce Roberts  
The Gallery at Victoria Hall

**January 18 – 6:30 p.m.**  
French Book Club  
Library

**January 19 – 7 p.m.**  
English Book Club  
Library

**January 22 – 2 p.m.**  
Chess and Scrabble Club  
Library

**January 25 – 8 p.m.**  
Special Council Meeting  
*Presentation of the 2010 Budget*  
City Hall

about the *Grandmothers to Grandmothers* Campaign on January 13 at 2 p.m. Info: 514 989-5386.

**Chess and Scrabble Club**  
Do you enjoy playing chess and/or Scrabble? Our games club will meet on Friday, January 22 at 2 p.m. Drop by for a friendly game as we look forward to meeting new players. Info: 514 989-5386. 🌿



**SPORTS & RECREATION**  
**2010 Facility Membership Cards**  
Sports Facility Membership Cards for the 2010 calendar year are now for sale at the Sports and Recreation office at the Westmount Arena. Please note that a valid Sports Facility Membership Card is required for general skating and pick-up hockey at the Westmount Arena. 🌿

# McKenzie launches new novel

Westmounter Catherine McKenzie and her publisher, HarperCollins, will launch her first book, *Spin*, on January 14 at 6 pm at the downtown Indigo (1500 McGill College).

The novel, which McKenzie describes

as “a fun read,” is about a journalist who goes undercover at a rehab facility to get the scoop about a troubled celebrity.

McKenzie is a litigator at Westmount-based Irving Mitchell Kalichman. She is the wife of the *Independent's* publisher.



# The Afghan mission: Going forward in 2010



## At Second Glance

HEATHER BLACK

This January marks the beginning of Canada's eighth year in Afghanistan. But with the recent death of four soldiers and a journalist, citizens are wondering if Canadian efforts – and sacrifice – have made a difference: Has the quality of life improved for the average Afghan citizen?

To answer that question, the humanitarian agency Oxfam interviewed over 700 Afghan citizens – men and women – in 14 provinces. Their report, issued in mid-November, was revealing.

### Impact of post-2001 intervention

The Afghan people have been exposed to war over the past three decades. For this study, Oxfam asked respondents to compare their current conditions with those of the Taliban regime, the Russian occupation and the civil war era. The result: 38 percent named the Communist era as the worst period; 22 percent, the civil war; and 33 percent, the Taliban regime. Only three percent indicated that the post-2001 period was the worst.

That is not to say that the present conflict has not affected civilians. The 2001 US air raids caused millions to flee to refugee camps in Iran and Pakistan, and during the NATO airstrikes between January 2008 and June 2009, 750 Afghans were killed. Also the Taliban mode of warfare – suicide bombers, IEDs, and retribution – has killed many. In 2008 alone, anti-government forces on average executed, every four days, three individuals suspected of cooperating with the government or NATO forces.

But there is progress. Two-thirds of the landmines – responsible for killing and maiming many – have been cleared. And in the current conflict, only two percent of citizens have reported property damage. Since 1978, a total of 43 percent had property damage, 71 percent of which occurred

during the Soviet and Taliban eras. However, the uncertainty and trauma of war is taking a toll.

One girl spoke of her fear that the Taliban will return and end her schooling. Another recounts the terror of night raids: “Someone reported that we had Taliban in our home so the international forces attacked our home at night. They killed my father, my sister and my mother and they took my brother away ... When the people demonstrated and told them that we are innocent people, all they said was that it was an accident.”

### Oxfam recommendations

According to Oxfam, international forces can “do more to protect civilians, including tightening restrictions on the use of force.” This includes limiting airstrikes, night raids and the “execution of house searches that are aggressive and abusive.” The agency also asks NATO forces to account for human rights violations and provide “mechanisms of redress.”

Since 1978, less than one percent of citizens have received an apology or compensation for harm caused by conflict. According to the Campaign for Innocent Victims of Conflict (CIVIC), apologies or other forms of redress were “positively received and led to a sense of closure.”

Moreover, Oxfam calls on the international community to pressure the Afghan government to stop corruption and patronage, reform the police and the judiciary, and recommit to a truth and reconciliation process. So a question is: Do Afghans consider the international forces responsible for the conflict?

Some (18 percent) think that NATO presence is a factor, but a similar number (17 percent) blame the international forces for not doing enough. Almost half (48 percent) consider government ineffectiveness and corruption to be a factor in the conflict, while 34 percent blame the Taliban and, 18 percent, Al-Qaeda.

### Going forward

The Oxfam report, by providing context, indicates that Canadian and NATO forces have indeed improved life for many. But the agency asks the international community to do more to ensure a stable and just society.

Hopefully these recommendations will be considered as Canada chooses a new role in Afghanistan.

Heather Black is a Westmount communication designer. Contact her at: [blackheajea@gmail.com](mailto:blackheajea@gmail.com)

### Electronic Independents available

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# Talkin' About a Revolution... (or Christmas Wish)

This Christmas I watched my daughter's attention span for each gift she received get shorter and shorter, as her pile of gifts got bigger. It left me feeling pretty much the way I felt on January 1: slightly ashamed, a tad nauseous, and determined not to let it happen again (and *that* is a story for another time).

There is a shop on Sherbrooke with the words "Give more, ask for less" in the window. At first glance it sounds hip, charitable and generous, but the message is clear: give to show love, buy to celebrate, spend to show you care. Therein lies my nausea.

Because the best gifts I received this year were not *stuff* – they were the turkey I enjoyed but didn't have to cook, the look on my sister-in-law's face when she opened her gift from my mother (a purse made of burgundy fur that very likely featured in *Pretty Woman* during Julia's hooker stage), and the look on my brother's face when he discovered that someone had given him a half-opened bag of Cheetos (it turns out they fell into his Christmas bag by mistake).

I propose a revolution, the kind that will one day make excessive buying as politically incorrect as watching someone throw their litter on the street. I'm tired of fighting off excess, of sending emails begging grandparents, friends, and even my housekeeper *not* to buy my daughter and me any gifts for Xmas, or at least to combine all their goodwill into one or two small items as opposed to 18.

Some presents we buy are presents we know will be enjoyed, and that's a wonderful feeling. What I have a problem with is buying out of duty, a duty that we pass onto the recipient who must either pretend to like the gift, or feels a duty to buy you something in return, so as not to appear cheap.

The spirit of Christmas is becoming a



## Parenthood Uncensored

SOPHIE TARNOWSKA

transaction.

You may suspect that I'm motivated by the fact that my 6-year-old received the latest iPod for Christmas, and that I'm bitter (I mean concerned) because: a) It took me over 30 years to get my first iPod and b) hers makes mine look vintage (and not in a good way)

But it's more than that. Every parent I know complains that Christmas has become increasingly...un-merry. I suspect that some of this is linked to the agony and the ecstasy that is being in the company of our relatives under four feet of snow, but if you're as tired of buying your Christmas spirit as I am, I propose:

- No more buying for people we barely know. These are the occasions that Body Shop gift baskets were created for. If you're tempted to buy one, you don't know this person well enough to buy them anything in the first place.
- No more panicky purchases for people we know too well, who have everything and would prefer not to receive more. My grandmother is a perfect example: I had no idea what to get her for Christmas, so this woman who practically brought me up received hand cream and socks (both of which she forgot when she left).

So how about instead of "Give more, ask for less" we switch to "Give more time/peace/kindness, ask for less soap/socks/bad jewelry."

C'mon people, this is a new decade, why not try something different?

# New budget

*continued from p. 5*

late into a tax hike as high as 7.5 percent if all the agglomeration has to be absorbed by taxpayers, Trent explained.

"The issue is just how long can you go on raising costs higher than the rate of inflation?"

Ten years ago, the city's debt stood at some \$11 million, much of which was about to be paid off. By the end of 2009, it was \$38 million, fuelled mostly by the *fusion* experience with Montreal.

Tellingly, Westmount's 2000 financial results showed the city at that time contributed just 36 percent of its budget to island-wide services (excluding fire and court) through the former Montreal Urban Community. Adding in the fire and court costs to compare to today's agglomeration council reality, the percentage climbs to about 44 percent of the 2000 budget, or some \$30 million in today's dollars.

By the end of 2009, however, Westmount was sending some \$40 million (50 percent of its \$80 million budget) to the agglomeration council – some \$10 million more in constant dollars.

One major difference between then

and now is exemplified by the cost of island-wide fire services, Trent said. "Then, we were paying the true cost of these services because we operated them ourselves. Now we're over-paying based on our property evaluation."

There are many other calculations and adjustments that can be made to arrive at a more complete analysis of increased costs following demerger, he notes.

In 2000 (when Trent was also mayor), the city reported that "in the past decade, as a result of tight-fisted financial management, the city has managed to cut local spending by 18 percent after inflation. After implementation of the pay-as-you-go policy for capital works projects, spending was cut by 11 percent in constant dollars."

Just how high the tax increases will go for 2010 will be known with next week's tabling of the new budget.

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**Bruce Roberts Equus** Exhibition January 14 to February 6, 2010  
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4626 Sherbrooke Street West Westmount (Quebec) H3Z 1G1 Canada  
Monday to Friday: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Telephone: 514 989-5521

# In with the old

By JESSICA GHERSI



## Underdog

FERN BRESLAW

Babies can ruin everything. Your figure. Your waistline. And, if you're an old dog, your life. If you don't believe me and can speak canine, ask Nikita. She's a 10-year-old shepherd/dobie mix up for adoption with adorably big ears that are permanently upright.

Nikita has been queen of the castle since she was a baby, but now a new one has taken over the throne. And this one is human and smells really good. Nikita can't compete with that; she loves sniffing too much. Nikita has been kept away from him since he started crawling, and she growls when she sees that squawky little thing moving around the carpet. Of course she does: she's confused and scared.

She's been evaluated and has not a single ounce of aggression; she's just dealing with something new and strange.

So now, at her ripe old age, Nikita's looking for a new place to call home. Preferably one that's baby-less. No offense, kids. It's not going to be easy since most people looking for dogs want a cute little puppy and instantly overlook the advantages of having an older dog.

If you're such a person, let me offer a few selling points on older dogs. For one, they require less time and attention than a puppy, so you can totally ignore them when *Jeopardy* is on. They also won't chew your Manolo Blahniks (especially if you don't own any). And lastly, they're probably already spayed or neutered. Plus, imagine all the karma points you'll rack up by

adopting an old dog.

Nikita perhaps?

If you're interested, please know that she does have a bit of arthritis, mostly in her hips and back legs, but she's doing just fine. To find out how to adopt Nikita, please contact Susan Newman at 514.569.2228 or visit [www.underdog-club.org](http://www.underdog-club.org).



Nikita

# Lifestyle and health go hand in hand



## Health Round-up

BARRY NASHEN

Over the past half-year I have been writing about how the choices that we make every day about what we eat and how we exercise ultimately affect our state of wellness. These daily decisions, when grouped together, can be characterized as our lifestyle. Do we sleep enough, eat fruits and vegetables every day, enjoy our free time that we spend with friends and family? Or, are we sleep-deprived, eating too much junk foods or skipping meals altogether, and can't find the time to relax?

My belief has always been that the lifestyle that we choose does indeed determine our state of health and our chances of living a long life full of zest and joy.

In a recent edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers from the University of Michigan reported some very counterintuitive findings: They looked at death rates during the Great Depression, the worst economic slump of the 20th century. From the stock market crash of 1929 through the early 1930s, economic activity fell sharply, dropping 14 percent in 1932 alone.

Black and white images from the era of bread lines and migrant farmers make it easy to assume that economic misery would have affected public health. But when the researchers looked at mortality rates among men, women and children from 1920 to 1940, they found death rates declined during years of falling economic activity and rose when times were better.

And so it is with no surprise to the re-

searchers that the same conclusions have already been drawn during the recent worldwide recession: When the economy gets sick, people get healthier. What's going on? How is this possible?

It seems that people adopt smarter lifestyles in recessions. People have less money to spend on alcohol and cigarettes. And less economic activity means people are working less, or not at all. Thus, they have more free time to go to the gym, or even for a walk. Exercise leads to weight loss, which in turn cuts down on the incidence of many maladies, particularly cardiovascular diseases. There's more time for sleep, which improves health. And with less money to spend, people drive less, which reduces pollution. Recent studies have linked particulate matter from cars and trucks and carbon monoxide with heart attacks and strokes.

A University of North Carolina study has found that a one-percentage-point rise in the unemployment rate reduces the death rate by 0.5 percent. Those are US results, but other studies show the same effect in the 23 OECD countries in aggregate.

The recent downturn in dead people is a reminder that the number one culprit for sickness and disease is lifestyle.

So, why wait for an economic downturn to become healthier? These statistics and studies support my very own enduring belief that the choices we make in how we live our lives determine our own health.

I am often asked for my opinion from friends on which foods are healthier, or which exercises give the quickest results, or how to lose weight and keep it off permanently. It is apparent that old habits are difficult to break and new behaviours are not easy to integrate into ..... our daily routine. Ostensi- *continued on p. 22*

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# In conversation: Sean Murphy

BY HEATHER BLACK

Last spring, the Visual Art Centre released Dr. Sean Murphy's excellent treatise *Dare to Draw*. I spoke recently with the distinguished ophthalmologist and Westmounter, who is a source of inspiration for all who pick up pencil or brush.

## A sense of place

*Dare to Draw* is full of delicate line drawings, many with watercolour washes. Part adventures in art, part travelogue, the book features sketches of familiar scenes, like the Westmount Public Library or the main office of the Bank of Montreal.

Other scenes are of more exotic climes: Istanbul, Portugal or Mexico. Full of intricate lines that suggest familiarity as well as complexity, sketching is Murphy's mode of "experiencing a place," of lingering long enough to see what is there. In "Church Dei Miracoli, Venice," an interesting perspective is intensified by spot colours.

Others like the watercolour "Workers and Ship" are more stylized or graphic – the repetition of workers and ship funnels creating rhythm and rhyme. As Murphy point outs, it is what each artist "adds to the scene."

## Drawn to expression

Although Murphy was not encouraged to pursue art as a pastime or profession, his mother introduced him as a child to great art on museum visits. When asked what artists inspired him, he replied Henry Moore.

That influence can be seen throughout the book. A shading exercise of Moore's sculpture is carried over to his rendition of animal bones given to him by a farmer.

In the spirit of adventure, "flying bones" appear in several fanciful drawings. One is found in a Renaissance port; while another is viewed through a barred

window. For Murphy, drawing is "such a pleasure." And it shows!

## Learn to draw

Murphy's message is that "anyone can be taught to draw." While searching for an activity to explore in retirement, he started lessons at the Visual Art Centre. He dabbled in painting, but it was only after taking a few drawing lessons that he was hooked.

He also considers doodles to be an art form. And indeed, his swirling lines and dabs are art. One entitled "Closing Ceremonies, Salt Lake City Olympics" consists of rhythmic multiple lines – a technique used by Lucian Freud. In another, "At the Cirque du Soleil" the thick-thin brushstrokes recalls those of Raoul Dufy.

His advice to budding artists is first "learn to draw" and then experiment. He recommends taking a few lessons to master basic skills, as well as to enjoy "a sense of community." He also suggests sketching art in museums or on location with friends.

## Art adventures

Murphy concludes: "If I can encourage one person to draw, I'll be happy." And *Dare to Draw* – with personal anecdotes and art adventures – does just that.

*Dare to Draw • La passion du dessin* is available at the Visual Art Centre or at select museums.

## Electronic *Independents* available

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



A drawing of Westmount Public Library by Sean Murphy, from his book *Dare to Draw*.

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## ON THE SHELVES

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

### Adult reading

*A Dangerous Liaison* by Carole Seymour-Jones – Recently discovered letters form the basis of this new biography of Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, revealing the darker side of their passionate and tempestuous love affair.

*The Secret Lives of Somerset Maugham* by Selina Hastings – Through access to Maugham's extensive private correspondence, Hastings delivers a detailed examination of the private life, loves and secret facets of one of the world's greatest writers.

### Adult French – For history buffs

*Napoléon mon aïeul, cet inconnu* by Charles Napoléon – Written by a descendant of Napoleon, this book has been described as easy to read and a fresh take on the emperor's life.

*La saga des francs-maçons* by Marie-France Etchegoin, Frédéric Lenoir – A companion read to the new Dan Brown novel, it gives an historical overview of Freemasonry and a chapter that helps the reader decode *Le symbole perdu*.

### Books for children – Learn about...

*Panda Kindergarten* by Joanne Ryder – This book is a fascinating look at sixteen panda cubs living at the Wolong Nature Reserve in China. Under the watchful eye of the scientists, the pandas are raised together to learn the skills they will need for their eventual release into the wild.

*Les techniques artistiques* by Claudio Merlo – With step-by-step instructions, children will learn about different art techniques, including drawing painting, sculpting and engraving. Thirty creative activities are included.

### DVDs

*Julie & Julia* – Julie Powell is a frustrated insurance worker who wants to be a writer. Trying to find a challenge in her life, she decides to cook her way through Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* in one year, and to blog about it. As Julie begins to find her groove as a cook, and her voice as a writer, the project takes on a life of its own.

*The End of the Line* – In a single human lifetime, overfishing has inflicted a crisis on the oceans greater than any yet caused by pollution. This documentary takes a journey around the world to explore the controversial aspects of the fishing industry, and to reveal the extent of the damage inflicted in order to satisfy consumers' appetite for fish.

### Magazines – New subscriptions

*Bon Appétit Magazine* – This magazine explores regional American cuisine as well as travel destinations and gourmet delights from around the world. Each monthly issue features recipes, articles on wine and spirits, menus and entertaining ideas.

*Essential Kitchen, Bathroom, Bedroom Magazine* – This U.K. publication is dedicated to offering everything there is to know about the very best in luxury kitchens, bathrooms and bedrooms.

*Le Must alimentaire: le magazine pour tout savoir sur votre alimentation* – A Quebec foodies' magazine featuring local restaurants, chefs, recipes, regional cuisines and products.

### Reference – New electronic resource

Library members now have free access to the *Consumer Reports Magazine* website. Search for reviews and ratings on consumer products and services. Access is available through the library website at [www.westlib.org](http://www.westlib.org). Click on the link for "Research and Reference" and submenu link for "Databases".

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# Feb. 1 deadline home needed for this senior but spirited cat



As you might remember from my previous columns, my shitzu Suyeung is a senior dog, 16 years old now. She can barely walk because of arthritis but has an incredible spirit and a healthy appetite.

She still has an avid interest in guarding the front door from the mailman and anyone who dares to ring the bell. And once in a while, on sunny days, she surprises me by standing on the front walkway, lifting her head to the sky and barking vigorously with the chorus of neighbourhood dogs.

So, having a senior dog with a great spirit brings me to this 9 Lives column about a senior cat with a great spirit: Jasmine. She is a strikingly beautiful domestic longhair tortie, a true glamour cat at the age of 15! She urgently needs a new family, by February 1



Jasmine

actually. She is elegant, active, playful, and affectionate. Jasmine is a very healthy indoor cat, spayed and not declawed.

If you would like to know more about Jasmine, please call Gerdy's Rescue and Adoptions at 514.203.9180 or email [info@gerdysrescue.org](mailto:info@gerdysrescue.org).

Wishing you a wonderful year, filled with the most important things in life: health and compassion.

Your neighbour,  
Lyzanne

Artwork by Laura S. Cohendet

## Demo ruling to be appealed

continued from p. 1

house to the north at 26 Aberdeen. His request for a demolition permit was heard by the committee December 8 (see story December 15, p. 4).

Architect Bruce Anderson, who presented the case at the hearing, told the *Independent* that "it's my understanding Mr. Jones will appeal the decision within the time period." Appeals are heard by city council.

Anderson's plans for landscaping the property after demolition had met with approval from the city's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC). This architectural review group of consultants, however, had advised against destroying the house based on heritage and aesthetic grounds.

During the hearing, the 1932 house was described as representing the "simple style" of the Depression period and fitting well with the streetscape. It was reported to be in good condition. Its demolition would go against "the spirit of sustainable

design."

Martin said he and the other two members of the Demolition Committee (councillors Kathleen Duncan and Theodora Samiotis) had independently visited the site to physically assess the situation.

The demolition decision generated a flurry of news articles and opinion pieces in other media over the recent holiday period, even though the ruling had not been announced.

Issues raised during the hearing had included potential tax loss to the city as well as sustainability: reuse of an existing house versus creation of more green space, which could be built on in the future.

Arguments favouring its demolition included difficult garage access, its blocking of windows on the south side of 26 Aberdeen, and how the property had originally been part of the garden belonging to 18 Aberdeen, the house directly to the south.



## SHOP WESTMOUNT!

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# Real estate and art meet



From left, real estate broker Joan McGuigan and artist Susan Pepler with one of her paintings.

It was a busy holiday season for the agents and staff of local real estate broker McGuigan Pepin. In November, they celebrated 15 years as an independent firm. On December 15, they held a more sub-

dued affair to inaugurate their new, St. Catherine St. office (at Kensington), and used the occasion (and space) for a showing of work by local artist Susan Pepler.

## Health

continued from p. 18

bly, most of us want to improve our health and happiness, but without a change in

lifestyle, it doesn't seem to me possible. My response invariably is to choose one modification in behaviour, perhaps going for a half-hour walk every evening, learning a new sport, or attending a weekly lecture and then discover the enjoyment in

# Agenda includes Cedar permit refusal

Building plans for a controversial house at 3283 Cedar Ave. were expected to be refused by city council at its meeting Monday, January 11, after the *Independent's* press time. The item was listed on the agenda based on recommendations of the city's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) December 15 that the "architectural elevations are not acceptable" and its impact on adjacent buildings was too great.

The new house would replace a Category I heritage home that had all but disappeared during renovations not approved by the city and years of litigation. It was eventually ordered demolished by court order in 2002.

this simple pleasure. Why not start 2010 off with a new commitment to enhancing your own lifestyle?

Barry Nashen is a Westmount IT consultant who is interested in health issues and shares his personal experiences in this column. He is not a health professional and his comments should be read in that light. Medical problems should be discussed with a doctor or appropriate health professional. For comments: [barry@nashen.com](mailto:barry@nashen.com), or <http://goodhealthguru.blogspot.com/>

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# In Other Words

## Chea on anti-aging

Westmounter Nealy Chea was singled out by reporter Lynn Moore in the December 12 issue of *The Gazette* for her work on anti-aging. The aesthetician works with clients from her Decarie Blvd. facility and begins the day with her own workout: including pliés and 1.5 liters of water before breakfast. At the office, some of her clients break the stereotype, such as the octogenarian male who gets facials. The 56-year-old advises clients to avoid soft drinks, drink green tea and dance at every opportunity. And it doesn't look like she's going to be slowing down any time soon. "When I have five minutes, why should I stand still and do nothing?"

## Library custodian Diaz saw some things during his day

Longtime Westmount Library custodian Luis Diaz left on retirement in December. *The Gazette* ran a p. 3 profile of him on December 22. Diaz recalled a number of anecdotes to reporter Jeff Heinrich, from the older naked man who was attacked by his son to the fistfight between two middle-aged men over the morning newspaper. On a less violent note, he promises to be remembered fondly by staff, for whom he sang every morning. The refugee from Pinochet's Chile, now 55, came to Canada in 1979 and was hired

by Westmount in 1985. He summed up his Canadian experience, "People [in South America] say *gringos* are cold. But it's not true. People care for each other here."

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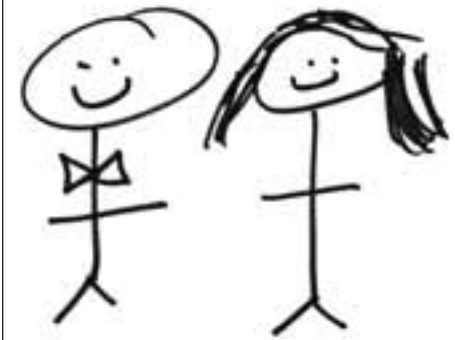
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