

Goodbye to Sports and Rec. line-ups Westmount ‘guarantees’ residents a place

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Westmount parents who’ve become used to standing in long line-ups at the arena in the spring and fall to register their children for sports and recreation programs can take heart: action is being taken and virtually everyone is being guaranteed a spot, according to the Sports and Recreation department.

Until now, registration for the programs took place in what department director Mike Deegan describes as a two-evening registration “blitz.”

“We typically have room for 98 percent of the people who sign up for our pro-

grams,” he said. “But two percent have ended up getting put on a waiting list, which creates a situation where everybody is concerned whether they can get in or not, so they all come on the first day.”

What started out years ago as a one-week registration period gradually changed to four, three and finally two nights. However, no matter what, everybody ended up coming early, while far fewer people came as the period wore on.

“We’re hoping this will mitigate some of the three-hour lineups that we’ve experienced in the past,” Deegan said. “Doing it over a two-week period, it will be a staggered ap-

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New fencing in place at one dog run

Nick Krajewski with Logan, an 11-month-old mixed breed, at the (unchanged) Murray Park dog run on January 14. The packed snow makes the current fence easier for dogs to jump. See p. 7 for innovations at the Lansdowne dog run.

Photo: Martin C. Barry

Year in review: Less snow in '09 vs. '08, see p. 7.

Westmount Scouts donate to Haiti p. 21.
Social Notes
By VERONICA REDGRAVE p. 12
Comin’ Up p. 14



Cedar Ave. house controversy continues to boil Public can make input into building permit – a first

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

An unusual public hearing on plans for the controversial building of a large house at 3283 Cedar Ave. has been set to take place at the start of the regular council meeting February 1.

It is believed to be the first time a request to council in the permit-granting process has been open to the public.

The decision came in a last minute move just before the January 11 council meeting to strike an item from the agenda that called for council to refuse a building permit for the new house.

The change in plan came in response to a request December 9 from architect

Bruce Anderson to present his design for the house to council. It had received an unfavourable recommendation from the city’s Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) on the grounds of elevations and impact on adjacent homes.

“Council wants to hear both sides,” explained Councillor Cynthia Lulham, commissioner of Urban Planning.

Anderson told the *Independent* the plans call for a house “whose elevations are below the by-law limits.” He also said that the new house would be smaller than the one originally approved by the city in 2001.

The latest design would replace a Category I her-

continued on p. 20

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Council meeting reports

FROM JANUARY 11 COUNCIL MEETING

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

New date for budget: Jan. 25

Westmount taxpayers will have to wait another week to discover their new tax rate. This follows the second postponement of the budget meeting this month, now slated for January 25 at 8 pm at city hall.

The city’s operating budget and capital expenditures program have been delayed pending tabling of the agglomeration council’s budget for island-wide services, for which Westmount collects and remits the taxes as part of its own budget.

In last week’s *Independent* (p. 5), Trent estimated that the net effect of a possible 12-percent rise in Westmount’s aggro portion would be a 7.5 percent increase in Westmounters’ municipal tax bills (i.e. the combined Westmount/aggro amount).

Costs plunge 27 percent

Not everything costs more, it seems. The price of container rental and servicing will drop 27 percent this year for some 462 loads of debris, organic material, recycling and scrap metal collected at the Public Works yard and disposed of at various treatment sites.

The lower amounts were announced by Councillor Patrick Martin when city council approved the tender bid of RCI Environnement at a total cost of \$58,518.

The containers provide for material brought to the yard by city crews, gardening services and other contractors. When full, the 30-cubic-metre containers are taken to various sites for composting or recycling. Smaller 15-cubic-metre containers for scrap metal are taken to a metal recycler.

Last year, some 150 containers of dry debris were transported and emptied as well as 250 containers of organics (leaves and garden debris), 52 containers of recycling and 10 containers of scrap metal.

New appointments made to PAC

Westmount’s Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) welcomed three new members while renewing the two-year term of chair Carole Scheffer.

Award-winning architect Andrea Wolff, a founding partner of Architem, was

New demolition policy adopted

City council has adopted a change in its policy involving demolition requests.

From now on, council will have to approve a proposed replacement program before the Demolition Committee hears a case for demolition.

Previously, the committee heard the rationale for demolition along with a recommendation from the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) concerning the replacement program. It was only after a demolition permit was approved that the council was asked to approve the replacement program.

“It doesn’t represent a major change,” said Councillor Patrick Martin, who chairs the Demolition Committee.

“We just want to make it clear that any replacement program will have to go to the council. So let’s go up front. When the Demolition Committee meets it will know the program has already been approved.”

Asked later how the change might affect the demolition appeal process to the council, city clerk Mario Gerbeau said the existing 30-day appeal period remains unchanged.

Circular reasoning?

What goes around, comes around

The current blocking of Summit Circle near Oakland for construction of a pumping station prompted one council questioner to ask if the Circle could be kept closed.

Mayor Peter Trent could scarcely contain his reply: That was exactly what he had advocated some 25 years ago as a neophyte councillor in order to slow traffic and reclaim parkland.

“I have to laugh,” Trent told Lansdowne resident John Fretz. “That was my idea ...

named to replace the retiring Jerry Miller.

Two substitute members were also appointed. They are architect John Surridge as well as Christopher Dunkley, of the firm Fournier Gersovitz Moss. Substitutes replace regular members on vacation or

Darker night skies a possibility

The city is expecting a follow-up from Hydro Westmount on requests to reduce street-light wastage and other measures to darken the night skies based on a report from Tony Moffat, a member of the Healthy City Project.

Mayor Peter Trent made the announcement as Moffat asked what had happened to the environmental report he had left with the council in November.

“I’ve asked the director general to come back with their take on it,” Trent said, waving the report.

Moffat, an environmentalist and internationally known astrophysicist, cited statistics showing that the growth of artificial lighting was six times the increase in population.

He later told the *Independent*: “I’d like to think I’m living in a dynamic city that will be the first to do something really innovative that will lead others to say, ‘Look what they’re doing!’” It takes people who are “passionate about things” to achieve this, he added.

to free up two acres of asphalt and stop all those people buzzing around the Circle.” He recalled holding a public meeting but the idea was shot down for a number of reasons including the fear of “robbers climbing up the back of the mountain.”

Councillor Patrick Martin claimed newer ownership of the idea – just last year – as a way of saving costly repairs to the roadway.

See related story, p. 10.

when dossiers involving possible conflict are reviewed, explained Councillor Cynthia Lulham, Urban Planning commissioner. Paul Grenier remains on the board as a regular member in the second year of his mandate. All terms are for two years.

4-season bike path debated

Ongoing requests for winter bike path use prompted Mayor Peter Trent to tell the council meeting: “We’d like to see something done, but not without prior study and not at any cost.”

Residents asked council to keep open the route along de Maisonneuve and to consider a resolution by the Westmount Municipal Association (WMA) to abolish parking on the south side of the street to the east of Greene. This would allow the path to link up with the Montreal portion near Atwater.

Westmount, Trent said, would be consulting with Vélo-Québec concerning various difficulties presented by maintaining the city’s 1992 bike path year round.

It also would find out from the city of Montreal how many people actually use the downtown path in winter, which is separated from street traffic by a concrete divider.

Trent was replying to requests from WMA representative Patricia Dumais and Lansdowne resident Dan Lambert, president of the newly-founded Westmount Cycling Association (see story p. 21, and letter p. 4).

Lambert cited results of a risk evaluation [by his group] showing de Maisonneuve to be a safer east-west cycling route than St. Catherine or Sherbrooke streets. All three streets had been ridden and analysed in terms of risk factors to cyclists including traffic speed and density, opening car doors, double parking and complex intersections.

He then asked Council-
lor Patrick Martin, com- continued on p. 21

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BIBEAU TRIBUTE

We would like to thank the *Westmount Independent* and Laureen Sweeney for the tribute to our friend Mark Bibeau in the issue of January 13, p. 3.

Mark sang with the choir of The Ascension of Our Lord in Westmount for many years, which is where we met him, and he became a good friend to all. He was also a personal friend, having coffee or dinner with us on many occasions over the years, since we first met 25 years ago.

He will be greatly missed by the city of Westmount and by all those whom he touched personally, as a dear and loving friend.

LYNN AND JOHN PECKNOLD,
GROSVENOR AVE.

WESTERN 514 TAKEN FOR GRANTED

There is the feeling in the western part of Montreal island that the 450-code suburbs don't pay their fair share for public transit and other services in the metropolitan region.

It has been suggested that the presence of swing ridings in those suburbs might account for this inequity. Laval, where there are swing ridings, got three Metro stations, for instance – for free, practically. And it will get one more bridge. There is talk of Metro extensions to the east, again

where there are swing ridings.

Also, politicians are notoriously reluctant to make the electors in swing ridings unhappy by raising their taxes.

Now, for the loyal, devoted, reliable, non swing-riding residents of the western part of the island, it's obviously a different story. Just sheep waiting to be fleeced, in fact.

J. TURGEON, MOUNT STEPHEN AVE.

CALLING ALL DOG OWNERS

It was good to read Merylyn Wilk's letter of thanks ("Dog days of winter", January 13, p. 4) for the new temporary fencing at the Lansdowne and Murray Park dog runs.

This fencing was put up after nearly a year of consultations with interested dog owners and users of both runs. As the unofficial spokesman of this group, I have followed up with presentations to council at the past seven meetings, as well as numerous emails to, and personal meetings with, the councillors themselves, and members of the Planning Advisory Committee.

As a result of this work, council agreed to install the temporary fencing, referred to by Ms. Wilk, pending agreement on what the new permanent fencing – which is to be installed this coming summer – should look like. To this end, Councillor Patrick Martin has asked that those inter-

ested should draw up their ideas on this fencing for discussion at a meeting to be arranged with him.

I would therefore like to hear from Ms. Wilks, and everyone else interested in using the Lansdowne and Murray Park dog runs, to contact me. We can then work out a suitable time for a meeting and discussion with Councillor Martin, so that the permanent improvements required for both runs can proceed.

I can be reached at eri@istar.ca, or 514.935.3695.

PAUL CREIGHTON, ARGYLE AVE.

CYCLING SHOULD BE WESTMOUNT'S FUTURE

In reference to Stan Grossman's letter in the January 12 issue "This biker says no to winter path", the writer asserts five points: there are few winter cyclists, de Maisonneuve is narrow, bike path snow clearance is expensive, cars owners subsidize cyclists and cyclists should use public transport in the winter.

First, it has been repeatedly shown in other cities (including Montreal) that "if you build it, they will come." Montreal has 35 kilometres of winter bike paths and Vélo-Québec now estimates winter cyclists at 20,000. If Westmount keeps its bike path open in winter, it will be used.

Part of the solution is in place: Westmount already clears the bike path but has reinstated parking on the part between Greene and Atwater, since the path is officially closed. The Westmount Municipal Association (WMA) has asked the city to remove that parking for safety reasons.

Second, the car lane on de Maisonneuve is 3.3 metres wide compared with 2.9 metres on both Sherbrooke St. and St. Catherine St.

Third, Westmount maintains over a hundred kilometres of car lanes and sidewalks in the winter; the cost of clearing the 2-km-long bike path is comparatively very small. Fourth, road construction and maintenance are financed principally through property taxes, which cyclists pay. However, the cost of infrastructure for cars is significantly higher than for bicycles, so cyclists subsidize car infrastructure, not the other way around.

Fifth, Montreal must purchase and operate public transport based on peak demand. If all summer cyclists switch to public transport in winter, that would increase the peak demand and therefore the cost. Winter cyclists help reduce the peak demand and therefore reduce the cost of public transport.

The important point the writer omitted

was pollution. Westmount suffers from exceptionally high levels of air pollution due partially to its proximity to heavy vehicular traffic, including public transport. Pollution is much worse in winter due to the high incidence of wood and oil burning in Westmount. Cycling helps reduce vehicular air pollution, thereby locally improving the liveability of Westmount and globally limiting climate change.

There are a number of important issues, most related to sharing space and safety, which need to be addressed in the short-term for cycling to become more established in Westmount. However, the successful promotion of cycling requires leaders who look beyond those short-term issues, to a long-term vision of the quality of life Westmount can offer 10 to 20 years from now. We are confident that the mayor and council will be able to move Westmount towards a sustainable future wherein cycling will make a contribution.

DANIEL LAMBERT, PRESIDENT,
WESTMOUNT CYCLING ASSOCIATION

THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

You may recall my dispute with the city of Westmount over the so-called "orphan trees." These are trees that are wholly on city territory but for which the city disclaims responsibility.

In a court case next month, I am asking the court of Quebec to allow exemplary damages so as to discourage the city from continuing its current policy of calling trees that are on city territory "private trees" for the simple reason that "we did not plant them," thus making it practically impossible for citizens to exercise their rights in relation to any claims for damage or injury.

The (public) hearing of this case at the Cour du Québec is scheduled for 9 am on Monday, February 15 in room 13.12 at the address St. Antoine 10 St. E.

I would ask anyone who has ever paid for damages caused by a tree on city territory because the city denied responsibility to contact me for more details.

NANETTE NEUWAHL, PRINCE ALBERT AVE.

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Savage cuts in 1991 impact today's record taxes

The soaring increase in the 2010 agglomeration budget is partly due to the savage cuts to public transport subsidies implemented by Quebec's Claude Ryan in 1991, according to Mayor Peter Trent. In today's money, they represent \$270 million in reduced income. The resulting cost to property taxpayers is enormous.

Trent blames the Quebec government for the serious state of Big Montreal's transit finances, a burden Westmounters share through the agglomeration tax.

Operating subsidies were eliminated 19 years ago when Ryan was Municipal Affairs minister in Robert Bourassa's government.

"Quebec is the only jurisdiction in North America that does not provide some of the operating costs for public transportation," Trent maintains. "At the time of the Ryan cuts, the subsidy was \$190 million a year, which, translated into current dollars, would be about \$270 million."

"Montreal plans this year to subsidize transit – the STM and the AMT suburban trains – by about \$434 million. Just imagine what \$270 million would do for the city's overall budget."

Transit costs

While the transit costs are a particular Trent interest, he is also very critical of huge increases in the island's policing and fire service costs.

When he returned to the Westmount mayoralty last autumn, he was not looking forward to having to deal with Montreal problems. Now, having seen them closeup while studying the \$4.3-billion 2010 budget, he likes "the belly of the beast" even less!

As the *Independent* reported last week, the fire budget has increased 15 percent since the agglomeration was formed with Montreal as the sole decision-maker.

"That is more than three times the inflation rate," Trent said. "No one can convince me that services have increased to anything like that amount."

With the police, there is an even larger increase of 19 percent.



Civic Alert

DON WEDGE

For public transit, Montreal is budgeting an increased subsidy of \$113 million for this year compared with the 2006 audited payment.

He believes that the provincial government should come to help Montreal, although, with both the Liberals and the PQ beholden to the regions, he doesn't underestimate the political problems.

Indeed, getting the sympathetic attention of Quebec City for anything to do with Montreal island seems a daunting task.

Off-island suburbs

The other area Trent looks to for relief is more contributions from the off-island suburbs. "They do not pay their share of Montreal costs," Trent maintains.

Opposition leader Louise Harel of Vision Montreal has been demanding that Big Mayor Gérald Tremblay introduce charges for off-island residents who bring their cars across the rivers.

The Association of Suburban Municipalities, which Trent chairs, has yet to take a position but he tends to favour the idea. "There should not be poll stations, though. We should use some modern method that is less disruptive," he emphasized.

Trent was also concerned that the charge should not be so prohibitive that businesses would want to move off the island and thus worsen urban sprawl. He is supporting Tremblay's introduction of a downtown parking tax, however.

With his budget studies, Trent has now been able to compare the Tremblay administration with his earlier experience of island affairs as a member of the executive committee of the Montreal Urban Community. That had an equivalent budget of nearly \$2 billion for shared services.

"It was bureaucratic and big, but not so

huge you couldn't just about get your arms around it," he recalled.

"Montreal is much too big. I believe that the mega-city would not work, and these escalating expenses prove it. I expected that costs would run out of control, and that is what has happened."

This week, Trent is participating in daily public committee meetings downtown. They will study different parts of the budget, usually presented by the city's bureaucrats. It is the Big Montreal custom to let its councillors examine the budget only after it has been delivered.

However, it will be surprising if anything changes by the weekend. Big Montreal is not ready to consult on such things.

Westmount's share of the \$4.3 billion agglomeration costs will be approximately \$46.3 million, about 2.36 percent of the total costs, based on property values. Council has to decide how to apportion it among residential and commercial property owners. A special budget meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 25 at 8 pm when its decisions will be announced and the budget adopted.

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

Big Montreal's big budget facts, 2010

Montreal operating budget: \$4.3 billion

Agglomeration portion: \$2.0 billion

Westmount share: \$46.3 million

Of which:

Police: 29.3%

Transit: 22.9%

Fire: 17.1%

Solid waste: 4.7%

Culture: 2.4%

Property valuation:

Montreal: \$260.8 billion

Westmount: \$6.4 billion

Share: 2.419%

Westmount's share is fourth largest after Montreal, Dorval and Pointe Claire.

The cost of the first responder service: \$4.6 million, of which \$113,000 is Westmount's share.

Source: City of Montreal



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Medical secretary no small task

By ERIN STROPEs

Many people spend their lives avoiding visits to the hospital. Westmounter Diana Motherwell has spent hers finding ways to get in them. As a teen she was a candy-striper assisting at the Montreal General Hospital (MGH) and, after more than thirty years as a medical secretary, she has returned to the MGH as a volunteer.

In a discussion with the *Independent* about the McGill University Health Centre’s (MUHC) upcoming career fair, Motherwell acknowledges the benefits of a career in medical administration (job security, benefits, and the reward of seeing patients recover), but stresses that the work requires patience, compassion and an ability to make logistical decisions and solve problems under pressure.

The MUHC Career Fair takes place in three locations (Montreal General Hospital, Lachine Campus, and Montreal Children’s Hospital) Saturday January, 23 January from 11 am to 4 pm. For more in-

formation or to pre-register, visit <http://muhc.ca/homepage/careerday>.

As a young medical secretary just back from a year-long working visit to London, England in 1969, Motherwell found a position with Dr. C.E. Brooks, who at that time was just beginning his career as an orthopedic surgeon at the MGH. They would work together for the next 27 years. “We grew and learned together,” says Motherwell of her time working with Brooks.

One of her first memories of hospital work involves a wrong turn into the autopsy room, an accidental visit that still makes her shudder. Most of her experiences were fortunately less morbid. As the “front line” person dealing with patients and hospital staff, she would go from fielding a hundred phone calls in a single day, organizing banquets or conferences to spending an evening at a Canadiens or Alouettes game during the years when Brooks served as orthopedic surgeon to those Montreal sports teams.



Diana Motherwell

continued on p. 22

When the Bell Rings: Westmount Students Speak Up

PRESENTED BY PHILIP CUTLER AND MICHELLE WARNER

In this new feature, we are interested in hearing from students who live or go to school in Westmount. Send your answer to this week’s question, along with your name, grade and school to whenthebellrings@ymail.com.

The deadline is Friday, January 22 at 5 pm. If your answer is selected, it will appear in next week’s *Independent*.

This week’s question: **What do you look forward to most in winter?**

How to contact members of Westmount’s city council

Mayor	Peter Trent	514.989.5240	pfrent@westmount.org
District	Commissioner of:		
1 Patrick Martin	Public Works & Utilities	514.989.5081	pmartin@westmount.org
2 Tim Price	Finance	514.989.5082	tprice@westmount.org
3 Victor Drury	Administration	514.989.5083	vmdrury@westmount.org
4 Kathleen Duncan*	Sports & Recreation	514.989.5080	kduncan@westmount.org
5 Gary Ikeman	Public Security	514.989.5079	gikeman@westmount.org
6 Nicole Forbes	Cultural & Comm.Services	514.989.5076	nforbes@westmount.org
7 Cynthia Lulham*	Urban Planning	514.989.5077	clulham@westmount.org
8 Theodora Samiotis	Environment	514.989.5078	tsamiotis@westmount.org

* Councillors Lulham and Duncan are also open to being “stopped in the street.”

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Lighter snow year 2009 ‘lucky’ for taxpayers

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

If you had the impression you shovelled less snow in December than a year earlier, you’re right on the mark.

Only half as much fell during the month to keep the year’s total snowfall below average and translate into a projected \$300,000 surplus for Westmount’s \$3-million snow clearing budget.

“We were very, very lucky,” said Public Works director Marianne Zalzal in providing preliminary cost estimates. “We had only one significant snowstorm in December.”

And considering that Westmount’s total cost of snow removal and disposal in 2008 hit almost \$5 million – an exceptional year – the modest surplus is good news for taxpayers facing certain tax hikes in the 2010 budget being tabled January 25.

Snowstorm price tag

Given a typical clean-up price tag of \$250,000 per snowstorm in Westmount, December can bring unwanted surprises to the city with early or back-to-back

storms. “It’s an uncontrollable and critical factor in the budget right up until the last day,” Zalzal noted.

With only 56 cm of snow recorded in December 2009 compared with 97 cm in December 2008, the entire year’s total of 173 cm was below the 30-year annual average of 214.2 cm. It was also half of what fell in 2008, she said. That was 342.2 cm.

Snow removal and salting costs are high-ticket items in Westmount given the hills, bus routes, arterial roads, commercial areas, number of schools and high demand for on-street parking.

In December 2009, Zalzal said, the cost of salt used amounted to \$165,000. “Although we had only the one snowstorm, we had a lot of slippery streets and used a fair amount of salt.

“Our goal is to reduce the use of salt wherever possible but we have no choice on the hills. We have electronic salt spreaders that pre-wet the salt with calcium to hasten its effectiveness and are more precise in spreading the amounts required.”

Westmount canine owners approve of higher dog run fence

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Higher fencing that the city of Westmount has decided to install for the winter at its two dog runs will hopefully keep Chaucer from making enthusiastic leaps to freedom as he once did.

Over the past year, the large and cuddly canine turned up twice at Westmount city council with his master, Paul Creighton, an Argyle Ave. resident. Creighton maintained that the fences at the dog runs on Lansdowne Ave. and in Murray Park were so low that Chaucer and other dogs were easily able to leap out, especially when there was snow on the ground.

During the winter, snow builds up in the run and raises the ground level, making the fence effectively less tall. At the Lansdowne run, the city has installed snow fencing atop a three-foot-high chain link fence, raising it to nearly five feet. The Planning Advisory Committee counselled against the installation of a higher permanent fence, since chain link fences are not considered compatible with Westmount streetscapes.

Commenting on the new dog run arrangement during council’s monthly

meeting on January 11, Creighton said it was done “to perfection.” At the Murray-Park dog run last week, two dog owners said they were pleased there will be a higher fence, although one insisted his dog never tries to jump anyway.

“He put his paws on the fence once, but never tried to go over,” said Nick Krajewski, acknowledging he had seen other dogs do it. “I’d heard a few stories about people’s dogs that jump over and become a nuisance. It’s usually the same dogs.

Honestly, I’ve found the fence pretty low, because a lot of dogs are almost three feet tall on four legs.”

Analyn, a professional dog walker taking a client’s English setter for some exercise, agreed that some canines are more prone than others to jumping a low dog run fence. “When there was a dog outside the fence playing, Oakley felt like going to join him, but now he’s okay,” she said.

Councillor Patrick Martin is planning a meeting with dog owners on a more permanent fencing solution. See p. 6 on how to contact him.

Winter roads: Comparing 2009 to 2008

	2009	2008
Salt use in Dec. (in tonnes)	2,107	2,963
Salt use for year (in tonnes)	7,018	8,305
Snowfall in Dec. (in cm)	56.4	97.0
Snowfall for yr. (in cm)	173.1	342.2
Costs for Dec. (in \$ millions)	0.4*	0.7*
Total costs for yr. (in \$ millions)	2.7**	4.9

*external costs only **preliminary estimate

December’s costs do not include those related to internal costs such as labour, overtime and budget allocation of city vehicles, though an approximation of these amounts has been added to the year’s total projection.



New fencing arrangement at Lansdowne Ave. dog run, January 14.



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Bruce Roberts' vernissage at The Gallery at Victoria Hall, January 13

PHOTOS BY ROBERT J. GALBRAITH



Front row, from left, Patricia Walton (artist and friend from the Plateau), Allan Gedalof (brother-in-law visiting from Paris), Anna Gedalof (wife of the artist), John Hill (artist, photographer and friend). Back row, The Gallery curator, Victoria LeBlanc and artist Bruce Roberts.



Ilana Shamir of St. Henri, from left, with Shahrzad Ghaffari of Westmount at the vernissage.



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AELAQ welcomes new executive director

BY ISAAC OLSON

French may be the official language of Quebec, but there are plenty of English-language books from around the province that, with a little help from a local association, shine across the country.

Now that association, which is based out of the Atwater Library, has a new executive director.

Aparna Sanyal has taken the helm at the Association of English-language Publishers of Quebec (AELAQ) – an association that promotes Quebec-produced, English-language books by acting as a liaison with readers, government and publishing organizations.

“What I find really appealing is the quality of the books produced by these small presses,” said Sanyal. “Our clients have fought a good fight for a long time for English-language writing in Quebec and have done a superb job promoting English-language writers of extraordinary calibre.”

Sanyal, who has a background in freelance writing for publications that include

AELAQ’s *Montreal Review of Books* (*mRb*), said she appreciates what AELAQ has done for Quebec’s English-language writers and publishers, be it advocacy, professional development seminars or the publication of the nationally-distributed *mRb*.

“I believe in English-language writing in Quebec, and I think that these small presses do an amazing job,” said Sanyal. “And the *mRb* contains a very rare and dying breed of book reviews within this country.”

As she looks to the near future, Sanyal said she aims to attract advertisers to the upcoming late-April edition of the *mRb* which has an estimated 250,000 readers. In the long term, she will be looking for new ways to promote English-language books produced in Quebec.

“I think there’s immense potential for promoting these books and making connections in the community and schools,” said Sanyal. “I think there’s a tremendous amount of value for the community in the books that are being produced by these publishers.”



From left, Judy Isherwood of Shoreline Press, Susan McIntosh of McGill-Queen’s University Press, Aparna Sanyal, new executive director of AELAQ, and Simon Dardick of Véhicule Press.

Grosvenor Ave. resident still wants refund for merger-era tax bill ‘overpayment’

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

After failing in a protracted legal bid to recover \$1,300 he claims to have been overcharged by the city of Montreal for 2004-2005 property taxes, John Breslaw continues to hope that a political intervention can turn around the situation.

In 2006, after Westmount had emerged from four years of forced fusion with the centre city, Breslaw decided to launch a case in Quebec’s small claims court. However, that action, as well as a class action he later launched in Quebec Superior Court, was rejected.

In the former case, it was ruled that class actions can’t be used against municipalities. Although Breslaw appealed the decision, it was upheld. He then took it to the Supreme Court of Canada, which confirmed last October in a split 4-5 decision that class actions cannot be used to overturn municipal by-laws.

“When it came back from Supreme Court, I said ‘What options do I have left?’ I didn’t really want to take it to Superior Court because it’s a lose-lose situation. For \$1,300 you just don’t get your legal fees back.”

So he pursued an appeal in small claims court, where again the judge was

not impressed. He, too, told Breslaw he didn’t have the power to overturn a by-law. So Breslaw is now thinking of asking the city of Westmount whether it is interested in joining him in another bid in Superior Court, “although I doubt that they will,” he said.

The \$1,300 represents overpayment Breslaw maintains he was forced to make on a tax bill from the city of Montreal for more than \$6,000. According to Breslaw, Montreal had mandated an increase of 15.8 percent in the first year it took over in Westmount, with an even higher rate the year after.

“That represents the difference between how much I would have been charged when the city charged what it did and how much I would have been charged had the city stayed within its constitution and only increased it by a maximum five percent,” he said.

In a last ditch effort, Breslaw contacted the office of Quebec’s minister of Municipal Affairs. His appeal to a ministerial aide was plain and simple. “Where do I have access to justice and could you get my \$1,300 back please,” he recalled saying. “The chances of my getting anything politically, of course, are ...” He didn’t finish the sentence.

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Councillor floats idea of closing roadway to expand Summit Park

By Martin C. Barry

A water pump station construction project taking place on the mountain, necessitating the temporary closing of the northern side of Summit Circle, is raising the possibility that the roadway could be shut permanently to expand Summit Park's area.

The new pump station, which is being paid for by the Montreal agglomeration, is being put in to provide emergency water service to homes north of Sunnyside Ave. in case a main water pump station on Côte des Neiges Rd. should ever fail.

The project is being completed under the supervision of the city of Montreal. Work started in November and is scheduled to be completed by mid-February. During that time, the roadway between Oakland Ave. and 15 Summit Circle will be closed to traffic.

"I look upon this temporary closing as an interesting experiment, because it'll be at least three or four months as they take us through the work," said Councillor Patrick Martin, who represents District 1. "Let's see how people adjust to that, whether they like the idea or not. It's an

experiment that won't cost anything."

The stretch of Summit Circle in question is renowned for giving motorists an especially bumpy ride. Several years ago, it appeared on a list of Westmount streets compiled by the city's former Public Works director, Fred Caluori, which were slated for repaving or reconstruction.

He gave it the lowest priority because there are no homes on that stretch and much of its traffic is from outside the area. "That road is in very poor condition, and fixing it, I think, I recall the estimate is something like \$2 million," said Martin. "So do you spend \$2 million or do you do something else with that money?"

Martin suggests that perhaps the only people who have been using the street, "apart from maybe a sightseer looking at the view down the backside of the mountain, would be people who live over on Surrey Garden who want to go to the Côte des Neiges area. So let's see how they adjust in the next few months in finding alternate routes and then we'll see."

Martin has received no complaints to date.



Roadway seen from Oakland Ave.



Roadway seen from Summit Rd., where the pump station is being built.

Scouts Canada Foundation to host a World Scout Foundation Event – Four-day gala in Ottawa this October

Invitations to join the World Scout Foundation (WSF) are being sent out to individuals who support Scouting and who are concerned about youth – in Canada and in the 155 countries around the world that belong to the World Organization of the Scout Movement. The WSF provides 25% of their budgets.

Members of the WSF are called Baden-Powell Fellows and they number over 2,000 from 75 countries, including Canada.

This event is not only to welcome new Canadian Fellows, but to invite visiting Fellows from around the world to see Canadian Scouting, to meet Canadians, to experience Canadian hospitality, to see Canada's capital city and to be amazed by our glorious autumn colours.

The honorary chairman of the World Scout Foundation, Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden, will attend and will personally welcome each new Fellow and present them with their membership insignia.

The King and the Scoutmaster.



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Paterson v. GST

Westmount litigator Alex Paterson of Borden Ladner Gervais has taken on a new case: hospitals' requirement to pay GST.

In a letter to the federal minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty, Paterson, who was the first chairman and was recently a board member of the McGill University Health Centre (MUHC), wrote that he supports "the proposal presently before the government of Canada that all of Canada's public health care system be accorded a 100-percent GST rebate."

Paterson notes that "While our health professionals serve the public way beyond the call of duty, there is often a shortage of equipment, support staff and operating funds that makes their work extremely difficult."

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Westmount's ECS centennial gathers glam gals



*Social Notes
from Westmount
and Beyond*

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Alumnae from around the corner and around the globe joined 100th anniversary celebration of Miss Edgar's and Miss Cramp's School (ECS).

A variety of events were held, including a dinner-dance late fall at the Atwater Club. The birthday blast-from-the-past, "Cheers to 100 Years", displayed archival photos and memorabilia. The characters of Miss Mary Cramp and Miss Maud Edgar (played by former teachers **Wendy Cude** and **Sue Robert**, dressed "perfectly properly" of course) rang the school bell to announce dinner was served.

Dining and dancing were held on the club's badminton court, transformed for the evening. Yards of fabric and well-placed lighting created a sparkling blue and silver oasis. The 300 cocktail-clad guests bid their way through an exciting live auction, presided over by Selwyn House headmaster Hal Hannaford.

Westmounters present included **Peter and Gail Johnson** ('58), **Andrea (Usher Jones) Beattie** ('83) with hubby **Paul**, ECS vice chair **Ward Sellers** and his wife **Deb MacLeod**, ECS board chair **Peter Cooke** and his wife **Karen**, **Lissy Kates** ('88), **Jill Harrington** ('67), the **Klinkhoff** family, **Helen and Allen**, with children **Ginny, Carly and Craig**, Old Girls Association president **Tiffany Turner** ('92), and former ECS board chairs **Sue Khan** and **Diane Deruchie** ('70).

Monies raised came to \$300,000, which goes to the ECS Centennial Endowment Fund. This supports a new junior school scholarship/bursary to allow young girls to begin their adventure at ECS, and the creation of the Faculty Professional Development Fund, to provide special opportunities for ECS teachers to expand their instructional skills.

Co-chairs were Westmounters **Helen Klinkhoff** and **Gail Johnson** and **Ann Birks**. Committee members who made the night more than memorable were **Sue Khan**, **Gail Johnson**, **Molly Fripp**, **Lisa Teolis**, along with **Cristina Supino**, **Stephanie Kerner**, **Catherine Turner**, **Sue Robert** and **Wendy Cude**.



Sue Robert, Katherine Nikidis (head of School), Catherine Melling Turner, Westmounters Molly Fripp (Former headmistress) and Helen Klinkhoff, Stephanie Kerner and Wendy Cude.



Susyn Borer and Westmounter Ann Birks



A trio of Westmounters. Stuart and Claire Webster, Peter Johnson.



Westmounters Molly Fripp (former ECS head) and Gail Johnson.



Janet Dussault and Westmounter Alan Klinkhoff.



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SOLD heather, danny, suny & henry leave the burbs to buy the naudie's big abode on belmont **SOLD** the martz's make major plans to make over merton **SOLD** lucy, kim callum & lizzie pack up pronto & wonder "have we been punk'd?" **SOLD** david, carole & the kids see their way out of cedar into something super snazzy **SOLD** kate peter & the kids camp out before completing claremont **SOLD** gloria & jean bash big walls making marlowe magnificent **SOLD** the rolphs bail out of upper belmont & roll into rockin' residence on redfern **SOLD** the ayoub's bid adieu to argyle for awesome adventure on atwater **SOLD** the rosenheks ditch draper (taking along diapers) to residence on upper roslyn **SOLD** joanne, geoff & the juniors prepare to bust out of belfrage **SOLD** cathy & the kids remove themselves from roslyn to make memories on murray hill **SOLD** the woolgars wave bye bye to westmount & blast off to BC **SOLD** mark, helen & their merry young men manage their next move **SOLD** bibo manages mambo move to montreal for 3 musketeers from distant dubai. **SOLD** the hengen/davies wander into wood with twins in mommy's womb **SOLD** after 30 years the nayars leave lovely lansdowne to live near their lovelies **SOLD** the coté/fortins forge into the future without going far **SOLD** the hagartys hang tight down under **SOLD** karina & paul fly away to france footloose & fancy free **SOLD** the wonderful walsh's waltz outta' campbell moving the family to fenwick **SOLD** jay & sandra head out of highland & into ontario leaving the gallery behind **SOLD** the bahs are very victorious on victoria **SOLD** catherine & josephine wind things up on winchester **SOLD** allowing jeanie, barry & gypsie to take over the torch **SOLD** the maroufs lovingly leave lewis legacy behind **SOLD** luca & his mom move into manageable maison **SOLD** bernard & eve cut the cord on their beloved crescent **SOLD** christiane picks up the pieces & packs up on pine **SOLD** the basu/jacobs move out of marlowe & take off for texas **SOLD** the lewis' are called to quebec by concordia & create cocoon on argyle **SOLD** heather & bob leave behind their belmont beauty **SOLD** the elkins & their teens transfer from toronto & make their move to demaisonneuve **SOLD** the seiffedines settle into sunset with spectacular success **SOLD** hal & monika move the munchkins to montreal west **SOLD** rachel & daniel buy a bargain on the boulevard **SOLD** bill & melanie retreat from their rental to relocate on roslyn **SOLD** the carrolls cut their ties to canada & stick with the UK **SOLD** lys & dajan make a miracle out of melbourne **SOLD** the miller/leaheys pack up on prince-albert **SOLD** trevor purchases perfect pad close to the park **SOLD** cynthia & susan simultaneously say see 'ya to their home sweet home **SOLD** jennifer lands a large unit with lovely layout on lansdowne **SOLD** the porritts pour into mount pleasant with plenty of prams **SOLD** nicky & john cash out of clark & do a number on their new nest **SOLD** the goyettes of grosvenor move to their lovely lodging on Lansdowne **SOLD** the harmans return home to roost & deal with drastic downsize **SOLD** david susan & sarah pack up for pennsylvania **SOLD** charming churchill gets passed on by the schaffers **SOLD** the ross sisters mark the bittersweet sale of their beloved burton **SOLD** laura & jonah prepare to pack up for their new pad **ALSO THIS YEAR** carl & louise call on christie's great estates & put forth **PROFUSION** christina hits the books & becomes a broker **SPECIAL THANKS** to my buyers whose perfect pad has yet to be picked, to my sellers whose homes are still to be sold, to my classy colleagues who offer consistent capable collaboration **AND** finally to elizabeth, macy & ginny for being the team that tames every tangle.

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Comin' Up

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21

- The **Westmount Municipal Association** hosts a discussion on the latest developments around the Turcotte complex. Professor Pierre Gauthier and urban planner Jason Prince will address questions at the Westmount Library, 7 to 9 pm. Free, open to public. Info: Maureen Kiely, 514.933.2474 or maureenkiely@videotron.ca.

- **Course registration for seniors** at Contactivity Centre: Tai chi, philosophy discussion group, Stretch to Music, bridge instruction, line dancing, South Seas history and travelogue, fall prevention. 4695 de Maisonneuve, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. Info: 514.932.2326.

- **Robert Burns** celebrated at Atwater Lunchtime Series with **Peter McAuslan**, president of St. Andrew's Society of Montreal and George Barclay's "address to a haggis". Atwater Library (1200 Atwater Ave.) 12:30 pm. Free, donations welcome.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 24

VivaVoce chamber choir presents "Spotlight 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:

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MONDAY, JANUARY 25

Council meeting: **Westmount Budget**, 8 pm at city hall.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 26

- Audition for the **Harmonia Westmount** women's choir. Contact: choir director Fredericka Petit-Homme, 514.762.0216 or e-mail harmoniawestmount@gmail.com

- **The Philatelic Club of Montreal** presents Tom Burpee on "The Fifteen Finest Canadian Stamps Sold at Auction in 2009." Westmount Library, 7 pm, free admission. 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, open to the public. Info: 514.931.8792, ext. 204.

- January's topic in a series of discussions pertaining to perimenopause and menopause: "What works for you?" hosted by **Heidi Wiedemann**, 6:45 to 9 pm at Argyle Institute, 215 Redfern Ave. #120. Cost: \$20 per session, payable at the door. Register by January 25: 514.713.4357 or heidi.wiedemann@videotron.ca.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28

Contactivity Centre presents Thurza Dufresne on "**Elderabuse: detection and prevention**" at 4695 de Maisonneuve. Lunch at 1 pm for members. Non-members welcome for after-lunch talk at 1:30 pm. Reserve: 514.932.2326.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1

Council meeting, 8 pm at city hall.



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Off-Sidel

NOAH SIDEL

In the “what-have-you-done-for-me-lately” world of sports, it’s tough not only to be successful, but to remain at the top of your game for more than a few weeks, let alone a season.

So far, however, the Atom A Westmount Wings have not only been the cream of their league’s crop, but they have led the way, wire to wire, more than halfway through the 2009-10 campaign.

“Our team has been enjoying a successful year to date because our players have really been playing hard and have a strong desire to learn,” said Wings coach Bruce Garfield.

“Our biggest strength, which has contributed to us maintaining a perfect record to date, is that all three forward lines are well-balanced and strong, and all of our lines can contribute offensively, thus making it difficult for any team to focus on any one line.”

Stats say it all

A quick look at the league stats sheet and the numbers say it all: The first-place Wings lead the league with 59 goals for. The next best is 50 from the third overall Côte St. Luc Canucks; the Wings lead in goals against, as well, with just 13 in 12 games – next best are the Lac St. Louis Maroons and the Montreal West/Hampstead Knights with 21 apiece.

How about wins, losses and ties? Westmount not only leads with 12 wins and no losses, but has yet to be subjected to a tie.

The second-place Verdun Avalanche are six points back with four losses and a

pair of ties, and they’ve played two more games than the Wings.

“We have been getting big goals from numerous players, including timely ones from our first-year assistant captain Adam Starr,” Garfield said.

“Defensively, we are very strong, led by our second-year veteran Drew Anderson, and adding to our team’s success has been our goalie, Weslie Osterland, who has been very strong between the pipes.”

Anderson said he’s been having a good time so far this season.

“We’re awesome and have a strong team like always. We have good shooters, a good goalie and good coaches,” the defenceman said. “Winning and being with my friends is great and it’s fun to win games, but I’m also looking forward to challenge in the regionals.”

Wings dominate

So far, the Wings’ dominance has been apparent almost game in and game out.

Westmount opened the season with a 5-4 squeaker over the Canucks, but followed that up with a 7-0 drubbing of the St. Laurent Sonics. A 4-1 win over the St. Laurent Rockets led to a 3-1 victory over the Maroons before the Wings blew their season open with a 9-2 romp over the Lions and a 5-0 clobbering of the Verdun Ambassadeurs.

Over the next four games, the Wings outscored their competition by a total of 17-2 in wins over the Knights, Diables, Jaguars and Devils, with Osterland registering two shutouts along the way.

In fact, it wasn’t until their first game of the new year, after a break of nearly three weeks from competition, that the Wings had a tough game, but even that turned into a 3-2 win over the Avalanche.

Then just to put the icing on the cake, Westmount iced Côte St. Luc – the only team that had truly been a challenge in the

first half of the year – in a 7-1 win.

Keep kids focused and happy

“The coaches on this team want to keep the kids focused throughout the regular season to get ready for the playoffs,” Garfield said.

“Our practices are very well structured, designed to help the kids improve their skating and skills – at the same time making sure all the kids are having fun.”

*You can always reach me at
noahsidel@gmail.com.*



Drew Anderson, Atom A Westmount Wings.

Photo: Eric Bindman

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

Adult reading – Popular science

Complexity: A Guided Tour by Melanie Mitchell – Scientific questions don't always fall neatly in one discipline or another, and this look at the study of complexity covers a range of questions about systems as diverse as ant colonies and the internet. Mitchell, a computer scientist, shows how simple rules and structures can combine and transform into complex systems, where the whole is most definitely greater than the sum of the parts.

How to Teach Physics to Your Dog by Chad Orzel – Though humour and quantum theory aren't often mentioned in the same sentence, physicist Orzel manages to do just that as he leads his curious dog, Emmy, and the reader on a fantastic tour of quantum physics in everyday life. Find out how the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle can help track down a lost bone and also applies to chasing bunnies.

Adult French – Death pays all debts

Le mort du chemin des Arsène by Jean Lemieux – A famous folk musician is found dead, an apparent suicide. But why would he commit such an act just after inheriting a large sum of money? Set in the remote and picturesque region of Îles de la Madeleine, this detective story delves into the secrets of a rural community.

Presque mort by Ake Edwardson – Commissioner Winter and his team are wrestling with their personal demons as a series of crimes and disappearances unfold. Winter is convinced that these events are all linked to a woman who vanished mysteriously 30 years ago. This is the next-to-last installment in a series by the highly-regarded Swedish author.

Picture books for children

Fanny et les doudous by Lucie Papineau – When Fanny's drawings of little fairies called "les doudous" come to life, some of her toys seem to disappear.

Pierre le Poof! by Andrea Beck – Although Pierre the poodle loves his owner Miss Murphy, he doesn't always appreci-

ate her puffing and fluffing him for dog shows.

Books on CD

Half Broke Horses by Jeannette Walls – A true-story novel about Lily Casey Smith (the author's grandmother) who, at age six, helped her father break horses, left home at 15 to teach in a frontier town. Later, as a wife and mother, she runs a ranch in Arizona where she survives tornadoes, droughts, floods, the Great Depression, and the most heartbreaking personal tragedy. But despite a life of hard-scrabble drudgery, she still remains a woman of indomitable spirit.

Precious by Sapphire – In this harrowing tale, sixteen-year-old Precious Jones has endured a broken home under the most horrific circumstances. Impregnated by her rapist father, Precious prepares for the birth of her second child as she runs away from home and befriends a counter-culture teacher who whisks her away on a soul-searching journey.

Magazines

"Shopping for sweat: The human cost of a two-dollar t-shirt" by Ken Silverman in *Harper's Magazine*, Jan. 2010, p. 36.

"The truth about lions: What drives the world's fiercest, most dominant wild animal? American biologist Craig Packer has spent three decades in Africa finding out" by Abigail Tucher in *Smithsonian*, Jan. 2010, p. 28.

"Le singe descend de l'homme: la question de nos origines bouleversée" by Yves Coppens, Marc Groenen, et al. in *Philosophie*, Jan. 2010, p. 38.

Reference

Larousse Gastronomique: The World's Great Culinary Encyclopedia.

Encyclopedia of Aesthetics.

Dictionnaire illustré des termes de la médecine.

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Westmount Art Scene

Bruce Roberts and Ian Shatilla: Expressive form

BY HEATHER BLACK

Marshall McLuhan wrote that “the medium is the message”. Two current exhibits reflect that idea. Bruce Roberts’ drawings of stallions capture their dynamic grace, while Ian Shatilla’s realistic yet intense staged imagery challenges the viewer.

Bruce Roberts at The Gallery at Victoria Hall

This Westmounter’s stylized stallions trot, prance and gallop across the gallery walls. Seemingly spontaneous, the form evolves from a few well-placed lines or loose colour washes.

In “La Bohème”, a dark stallion – scarlet mane flaming – dominates the frame. Painted in ink with acrylic wash, the mix of colours accentuates the dramatic lines. Flamboyant and operatic, the image conveys an irrepressible freedom.

In “Un Ballo in Maschera”, two horses rest, their necks entwined. Rendered with

black heads and necks of striped blue or red, the effect is graphic yet fluid. Here, less is decidedly more.

“Cavaliers Rusticana” captures the grace of a racing herd. The heads or torsos are painted as washes, while rapid, calligraphic, black and rust strokes create an exuberant lyricism.

Roberts’ message is freedom and self expression. This exhibit – entitled “Equus” – continues until February 6 at The Gallery at Victoria Hall.

Ian Shatilla at the McClure Gallery

On the other hand, Shatilla’s realism relays contradictions. An instructor at the Visual Arts Centre, his figures, painted in oils on canvas, provoke reaction.

“Surprise” is a self-portrait by the artist. Here a shocked figure – mouth and eyes wide open – dominates a yellow and orange canvas. The pose is exaggerated, as if performed on cue. Resembling a single photographic frame, there is an expectation of more to come.

In contrast, “Smiling” is enigmatic. A hooded man conjures up images of Abu Ghraib torture. Drawn in coloured pencil, the naked torso is shaded with fine, multi-coloured strokes.

In “Changing Face of Terror”, three men stand in a garish green pool surrounded by festive streamers. The first, clean-shaven, appears shocked. The mustached second figure seems happy, while the bearded third man is euphoric.

This is art as theatre. Shatilla presents a stage on which to convey ideas that tantalize the viewer. Entitled “Defeating Victory”, the exhibit continues until January 30 at the Visual Arts Centre on Victoria Ave.

In “Equus”, Roberts’ fluid drawing style evokes horses and freedom. Here, the style is the message. But the same can be said of Shatilla’s exaggerated figures. Painted in a realistic style, the poses and intense colours – like staged theatre – demand attention.

The key is that both merge line and form, texture and mass to create unique, distinguishable and memorable art.



“Surprise” by Ian Shatilla



“La Bohème” by Bruce Roberts



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17 reasons why rescue people are better than you and I

By SUSAN NEWMAN



Underdog

Sure, there are good people in the world like you and I who recycle, try to set bugs free rather than squish them, read about the sled-dog puppy mill raid in St. Agathe and shake our heads sadly over our morning bran.

And then there are the way-better-than-us people who run rescue organizations like Reach for the Stars. Those good folks took on the responsibility of caring for 17 pups born from battered and starved sled dogs.

You heard right. That would be 17 puppies between six and seven weeks old, running around their house. Ouch. That's a lot of teething. But what's really painful right now is that the rapidly growing bundles of energy are gobbling up \$1,000 worth of food a week, and need \$2,000 worth of vaccines and de-worming. Seventeen huskies with worms under one roof. I told you these people are saints.

So now you're reading this thinking that if you adopted one of those husky pups you'd be the nicest person in the world, plus you'd have a puppy that's adorable enough to cause cuteness riots. Tempting thought. Hate to interrupt your *Marley and Me* moment, but the truth is, these pups will rapidly grow into big strong dogs that require oodles of exercise (Hello? Bred to pull sleds!).

Yes, if you walk them the three to five hours a day they require, it will be better than going to a gym and more fun too. But you can't get tired of these guys in three months like that treadmill under the Ab-master stored under the hoola hoop in your garage. These huskies are a 12- to 15-year commitment, not a pity whim.

A way more realistic "gee-you're-swell" thing to do would be to help pay for their weekly food or vet bills. Seventeen über cute pups will get the food their parents were denied, nicer-than-nice rescue people can continue to do nicer-than-nice things

for nicer-than-nicer critters, and you'll feel like a total hero. All this, over your breakfast cereal.

So be a mensch, and do the right thing. Picture those 17 husky pups, then pick up the phone right now and call Susan on behalf of the Underdog Club at 514.569.2228 or visit underdogclub.org.

Feel that halo forming above your bed head already?



Jadzia and Emony.

Update: Gallery hibernation

Okay, this may be coming a little late but here we have it: the Underdog Gallery has closed its doors and will be down until sometime in the spring. It makes us sad, makes the dogs sad, makes the scented candle-makers sad – but the fact is that it's really much harder to get dogs adopted when it's -3000 degrees outside. The bottom line here is that we never, *never* could we have imagined just how amazing this project would become.

The gallery was the first project of its kind. What Westmounters proved was just how much everyone wants to help and how fantastic this community is if you are a dog – even an old, ugly or unpopular one.

Underdog will continue to run online at www.underdogclub.org; school programs will be relaunched shortly and, of course, you will find us here with a new, pathetic case every week. All this said, we still feel the need to thank you all, in a huge, sloppy-kiss sort of way. You have helped a lot of dogs and should feel very good going to bed tonight,

The Underdog Club. *Fern Breslaw*

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‘Spin’ lawyers



From left: Westmounter Catherine McKenzie (2nd from right) with, from left, her Irving Mitchell Kalichman law colleagues Mathieu Bouchard, Peter Kalichman and Sophie Perron. The firm is located in Westmount. McKenzie was launching her novel, *Spin*, at Indigo on January 14. She is the wife of the Independent’s publisher.

Sports and Rec. registration change

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continued from p. 1

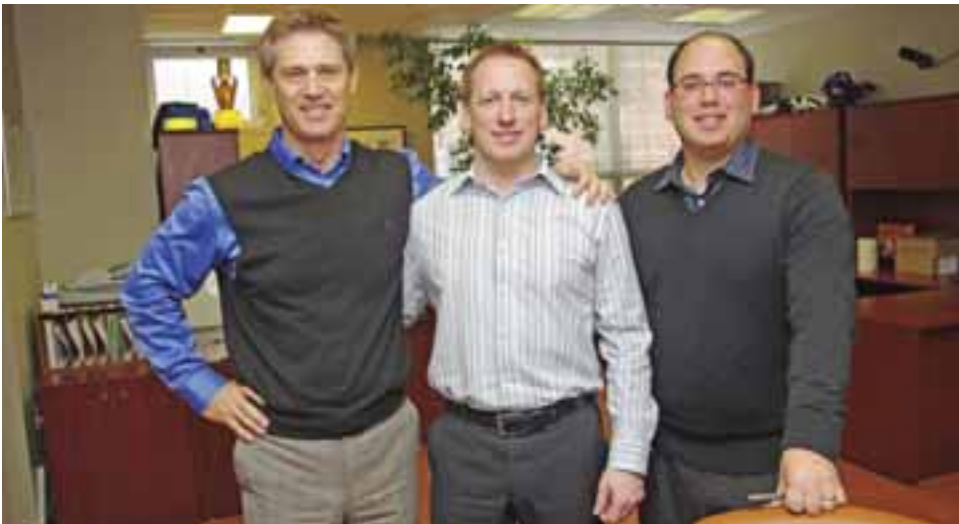
proach, seeing as there will be no rush to come in on the first day.”

For the upcoming spring/summer programs, registration will be held according to a set list of dates and times. But there will still be the two-evening registration option, held on Wednesday and Thursday of both weeks. Space is guaranteed for all, except for Introduction to Music.

While it is hoped that the new procedure will eventually lead to online registration, Deegan is wary that the problems

encountered with the manual system of registration could end up crashing the department’s computers if everybody chose to register on the first day.

In that case, registration would also be staggered over two weeks as a precaution. However, he is optimistic that by 2011, some form of Sports and Recreation department registration will be online. The residents’ guaranteed registration period (not including exceptions) runs from Monday, March 22 to Thursday, April 1 inclusive.



Sports and Recreation director Mike Deegan, administrator Dave Lapointe and sports coordinator, Andrew Maislin.

Bloom hosts Cells For Life for expecting parents

By ERIN STROPE

While embryonic stem cells are making all the headlines, research into a different type of stem cell has quietly been making great strides.

Only a tiny percentage of parents currently choose to preserve the stem cell-rich blood of their newborns’ umbilical cords, but that may be changing in the future as more parents discover the potentially life-saving benefits of preserving these cells, which are currently used to treat such serious illnesses as leukemia and lymphoma.

“There are no moral or ethical concerns with cord-blood banking,” says Melissa Gentile-Menard, a registered nurse and clinical educator for Cells for Life, a private cord-blood bank founded in 1997 by Toronto obstetrician Michael Virro, in a presentation to several expecting couples at Westmount maternity-wear shop Bloom Maternité.

According to Gentile-Menard, over 250 collection kits have been dispensed in Montreal to date, and interest throughout the city has been on the upswing over the



Marla Struzer (centre) of Bloom Maternité shows off one of the organization’s collection kits, with Cells for Life’s Melissa Gentile-Menard (left) and Christine Bentley.

past year as more parents become aware of the resource. The organization also visits Montreal hospitals to inform staff about the correct procedure for cord-blood collection.

Cords for Life offers information sessions at Bloom Maternité every second month. The next session will take place March 18 at 7 pm.

Cedar meeting to hear both sides of plan

.....
continued from p. 1

itage home that all but disappeared after renovations and the addition of wings, according to city Urban Planning director Joanne Poirier.

The work was stopped by the city, and the case was in and out of court until the entire construction was eventually demolished by court order in 2002. An \$8-million suit is still pending against the city.

Explaining the council decision to hold a public hearing on the appeal request, Mayor Peter Trent told questioner Howard Hoppenheim the February 1 meeting would enable citizens to make representation on the proposed building plan. Hoppenheim’s property on The Boulevard backs onto the Cedar property.

“We intend to get people in the area to comment,” Trent said. “It’s the first time we’ve done that.”

The decision of the council would then be final, according to city clerk Mario Gerbeau. Had council proceeded with the agenda item and refused the building pro-

gram based on the recommendation of PAC, the homeowner and architect would have had no appeal recourse to council, he said.

Gerbeau said it was not yet known whether or not a demolition permit hearing would take place, given the unusual circumstances of the court-based demolition and the proposed February 1 council hearing.

The city had already received several letters from people asking to intervene in a demolition hearing, which had been advertised earlier.

“While it does seem unusual to hold a hearing for a house already demolished, it has been explained to me that there is a legal requirement in this regard,” said Councillor Patrick Martin, who chairs the Demolition Committee.

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New advocacy group promotes cycling in Westmount

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Westmount has a new community advocacy group. The Westmount Cycling Association (WCA) was founded December 16 to promote cycling and lobby for greater city investment in bicycle use.

The fledgling group already has some 10 members, according to its president Dan Lambert, a consultant to the mining industry who lives on Lansdowne Ave.

“Cycling is part of the long-term solution” to reducing Westmount’s ecological footprint as well as pollution resulting from vehicular traffic and the burning of oil and wood, he explained to city council January 11.

Announcing the birth of the new group, Lambert stated its mission is “to promote cycling to locally improve the livability of Westmount, and globally to limit climate change by helping reduce the neg-

ative effects of vehicular air pollution.”

He called on the city to invest in a cycling infrastructure by focusing primarily on cycling for commuting but also for errands and recreation.

The WCA’s priorities, he said, include calling on the city to prepare a cycling master plan compatible with adjacent boroughs, create Bixi stands and maintain the bike path on de Maisonneuve while creating others – all year round. The group also wants additional bicycle parking.

The WCA is also asking the city to provide cycling safety education and to include experienced Westmount cyclists in local cycling initiatives.

The group can be contacted through its website at www.acw-wca.org.

Scouts donate dues to Haiti relief

Westmount’s nine Scouting units across all youth sections will be donating weekly dues to help Haiti earthquake relief through the Canadian Red Cross.

Area commissioner Virginia Elliott said

the effort will start immediately so that money collected will be eligible for matching by the Canadian government deadline of February 12.

The initiative is part of an international

Haiti Relief effort by Scouting, which has groups in the devastated country.

A similar campaign raised \$36,000 over the tsunami disaster in South Asia at the end of 2004.

Evaluating bike safety

continued from p. 3

missioner of Public Works, Parks and Utilities, if he would ride the streets on a bicycle to determine the risks himself.

“No. I’m not going to ride on a bike in the winter!” Martin replied to general laughter. He then added that the safety of pedestrians, who far outnumber winter cyclists, should be the priority.

de Maisonneuve resident and avid cy-

clist Stan Grossman opposed the winter use of the street’s bike path. “I don’t want to rain on the parade,” he said. “But where I live, de Maisonneuve is very, very narrow and the [bike path] posts are continually knocked down [in the summer].”

Pointing out its recreational use, he said the path is used by motorized wheelchairs as well as young children. The many driveways also make it unsuitable to be opened in winter.

“We understand that,” Trent said. “If it weren’t for those considerations, it would have been done long ago.” It was also a matter of looking at other possible streets, he said.

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9 Lives

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So, he was saved and has been given a chance to be adopted by a family who cares! I am certain that you will agree that he is quite handsome! He will be even more elegant once he has gone to the groomer, where he will be getting the best of care. Kiki is a stunning white and caramel domestic longhair, with yellow eyes filled with trust. He is about 4 to 5 years old, has been checked by a vet, inoculated and neutered. He is laid-back on the outside but a loving cream puff on the inside... a perfect family companion.

If you would like to know more about Kiki, please contact Gerdy on her cell

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Your neighbour,
Lyzanne

Artwork by Laura S. Cohendet



Kiki

Motherwell

continued from p. 6

A lifetime Westmounter who has been an involved member of the Atwater Club for 50 years and the Mount Royal Tennis Club since the early ’70s, Motherwell has used her retirement years to pursue her love of skiing, tennis and golf – when she isn’t volunteering at the MGH hospitality corner.



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