

Trained in new night sticks

PSOs return to regular patrols

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Most of Westmount's public safety officers (PSOs) completed training in the use of new telescopic night sticks February 12 to reassume regular duties the following day, Public Security officials report.

The officers had been without any protection since last March when their previous type of night stick, the PR-24, had been removed from service (see story December 1, p. 1).

The PR-24 sticks, which PSOs carried for many years, are now used only by police for crowd control. The telescopic version is the same type carried by police patrollers. Smaller than the PR-24, it can be extended as required.

As a result of the PR-24's retirement, PSOs' directives had been to refrain from answering types of calls that might involve aggressive behaviour. This included patrol of parks at night.

Twelve of the city's 15 full-time officers received the week-long training in the new

stick February 8 to 12 at Quebec's police academy at Nicolet, said Captain Richard Bourdon. "The three other PSOs will be trained March 8 to 12 along with our auxiliary (part-time) officers."



Officer Mario Testa demonstrates defensive use of the new telescopic stick.

Crime in Westmount

Big decline in new year

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A big decline in crime was recorded in Westmount in January in almost all the categories tracked monthly by police as a barometer of criminal activity.

Figures released recently by local police commander Stéphane Plourde highlight only two burglaries, no robberies and a drop in thefts from cars to 10 from 16 in December. Graffiti also subsided since the months of October and November.

The general decrease in crime is attributed by Plourde to the onset of colder weather as well as the work of a special un-

Bourdon takes over Public Security

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Captain Richard Bourdon will be taking over as interim director of the city's Public Security Unit following the suspension February 10 of Director Richard Blondin, city director general Duncan Campbell said.

While Campbell declined to make further comment citing "sensitivities" and his "obligation to report to the city council," he confirmed that Blondin had left the same day.

Public Security commissioner Gary Ike-man said he respected Campbell's judgment as the city's director general and "I will support his actions at this point. I have no other information."

As the Public Security director, Blondin had taken on a high profile since assuming the position in June 2006 on a five-year contract after retiring from the Montreal

police force. He had been reorganizing the security unit, focusing on supplementing manpower with retired public safety officers as well as retired Montreal police officers.

Bourdon, who takes over the service for now, is also a retired Montreal officer hired on a three-year contract two years ago. (See January 30, 2008, p. 7).

He can be reached at 514.989.5367.






Captain Richard Bourdon

INSIDE

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dercover team called MAP (*Module d'action par projet*). "This team has been together for more than a year and knows the people who are active in criminal activity in the area," Plourde said. One person was arrested recently for stealing items from cars.

While the MAP team covers both Westmount and Ville Marie sectors of station 12, the sectors "are like two different worlds," Plourde pointed out. Some of the same criminals operate in both, however.

MAP has been so successful, Plourde said, that he plans to replace the usual two regular

.....
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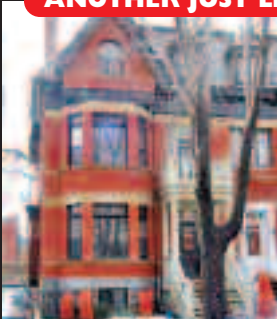
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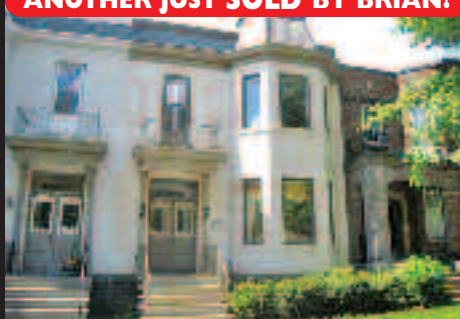
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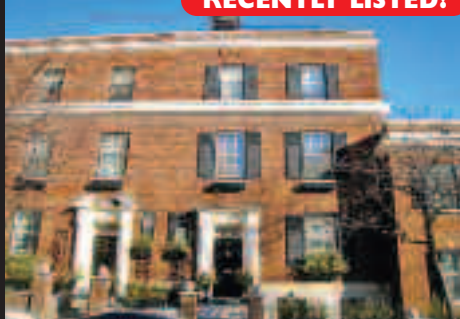
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Making it easier to sue ‘graffiti parents’

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A draft agreement between local police and Westmount for the communication of personal information is now under study to make it easier for the city to sue the parents of juveniles found defacing public property, local police commander Stéphane Plourde said February 10.

A secondary agreement would cover the issuing of personal information related to missing persons such as Alzheimer patients who might have wandered away, explained city clerk Mario Gerbeau.

While the city adopted a policy of zero tolerance of graffiti a few years ago, pursuing those responsible, especially young offenders, to recover damages has proven challenging and complicated at times.

“With this legal agreement, we will be able to give the city the names and ad-

resses they need to sue the parents for the cost of removing the graffiti,” Plourde said. “It will also be a deterrent. Money talks.”

Emphasizing that this would be a local agreement with station 12 police, Gerbeau said it would simply facilitate the communication of information. He expected it would be ready in time for spring and the seasonal proliferation of graffiti.

Crossing guards needed

Police are looking for school crossing guards to work out of Westmount’s station 12. The on-call position pays \$11.79 an hour. Anyone interested may apply at the station at 21 Stanton St. Further information is available by calling 514.280.3210.

Crime: Bike patrollers all year

continued from p. 1

officers on summer bicycle patrol with three MAP members. At the end of the summer, “We’ll keep them on their bicycles, even in the winter if we need to.

We’ve been hearing a lot at every city council meeting about keeping the bike path open during the winter. We’ll be ahead of that.”

August ’09 – January ’10, Westmount

Type of criminal infraction	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.
Break and enter	12	17	15	5	6	2
Robbery (theft with violence)	3	2	2	1	3	0
Theft from vehicles	19	15	10	15	16	10
Theft of vehicles	0	4	2	2	0	5
Graffiti	5	9	17	20	6	7

NB: Statistics released by local station 12 no longer include sexual assault, a broad category that may often be mistaken only for rape cases.

Westmount for Haiti, part III

Police, PSU to play hockey for Haiti

Local police station 12 will face off against the Public Security Unit at a hockey game to raise funds for Haiti. The event takes place Thursday, February 18 from 4:30 to 6 pm at the Lower Canada College arena, 4099 Royal Ave. in NDG.

Players are contributing \$20 each and funds are to be donated to Haiti through the police foundation. LCC has offered the arena free of charge to organizers. Donations may be made at station 12 (21 Stanton St.). Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$10 or more.

Other city departures

The Public Security departures (see p. 1) follow the suspension of a Hydro Westmount manager, William Ta, at the city council meeting February 1.

Andrew Ross, who has worked for the city for more than 10 years in communications, left the city February 5 to pursue other opportunities. He had announced his intention to leave some time ago.

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Arena studies progressing as part of total package

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

With a month until the expected unveiling of the new city council’s proposal for the arena/pool project, a needs assessment study is determining if the city is on the right track with two rinks and an outdoor pool and what recreational facilities might be required for the future.

This study, as well as one on traffic and another on internal operational costs, are the type that some citizens had requested of the previous city council.

In combination, they will form a key part of the due diligence on which the council will base the project for which the city is receiving a \$20-million infrastructure grant from the provincial and federal governments.

“One of the problems is that the needs assessment should have been done a couple of years ago,” Mayor Peter Trent said.

“There’s not much time now because of the grant so it will serve as an audit of the plan for the ice rinks and outdoor pool.” However, he added, if the study “really does bring up some flaws, we’ll have to pull back and reconsider.”

The needs assessment is being undertaken at a cost of just under \$15,000 by the consulting arm of Soderm, a firm that specializes in recreation facilities, said city director general Duncan Campbell.

Size and demographics

The “small mandate,” he said, is “to confirm that the decision we’re taking for two rinks and an outdoor pool is consistent with a community of our size and demographics in our province. On a larger scale, we need to know where the trends in recreation are going in a municipality of our size.

“If it’s found, for instance, that we need an indoor pool, it will mean we should start thinking about that. The council will then be able to weigh the recommendations within an economic capacity.”

Meanwhile, a traffic study is being undertaken at a similar cost by the engineering firm of CIMA to determine the flow of traffic that a new arena at the existing site might generate and the best way to treat it.

A similar study on parking by CIMA was conducted last year, he said.

Asked if a comparative study had been undertaken to cost out renovation of the existing facilities as opposed to building anew, Mayor Trent said the former council had calculated a renovation figure of \$14 million.

“If it weren’t for the government grant, it might have been a financial option,” he explained. Now, however, the \$20-million grant toward a new facility has changed that.

Looking ahead

Looking forward to the needs assessment findings, he said, “If other facilities are needed that are not within the scope of this grant, then we will be able to plan ahead when we get our finances in shape.”

He pointed out that back in the 1990s, when an original plan was drawn up for renewing the library, Victoria Hall and the arena, “we had a debt of barely \$10 million. Now it’s \$38 million.

“With interest rates rising, I’m the first one to say our reach cannot be greater than our financial grasp. One would hope that by the time the arena is built, we would find ourselves in better financial shape.”

Noting that the needs assessment would not go back to square one because of the time element, he said, “To be fair, I think considering the complexity of the project that the new council has to present and own, a turnaround time of four to five months to prepare a proposal to the public is extremely rapid.”

The grant contract has various timelines that must be met, including completion of construction by 2015.

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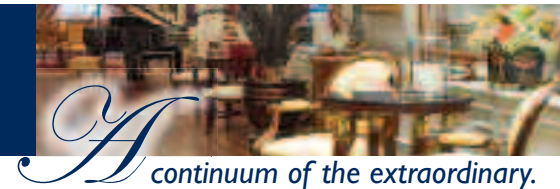


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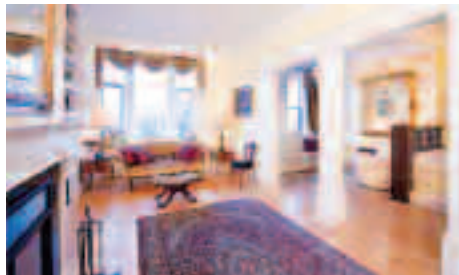
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GOOD FOR THE BOULEVARD, GOOD FOR MELVILLE

Mayor Peter Trent said the February 1 city council was an “historic meeting,” according to *Independent*.

When a building permit for Cedar Ave. was rejected, councillors publicly explained their values: “I am very concerned about neighbourhoods and community” (Martin); “sensitivity to neighbours” (Price); “massing is an issue for me” (Samiotis); projects should be “harmonized” with surroundings (Drury); by-laws should be adhered to (Ikeman).

Council’s actions indicated that these values are important on The Boulevard and Cedar. Consistency means these same principles should also apply in lower Westmount where the arena/pool project will be built – but with the city as the promoter, using taxpayers’ money.

From the beginning, the “two big rink” imperative has gravely distorted arena planning, with a massive complex first suggested for the Westmount Park area, and when that did not “fit,” it was proposed for the Westmount Athletic Grounds (WAG).

Soon, council will reveal the third arena plan, but without a public consultation or any advance indication of precise details. How many people realize the stakes involved? If council becomes mesmerized by the bauble of \$20 million in govern-

ment funds, then Westmount may add \$10 to \$15 million to its debt (an increase of more than 25 percent) because the city must contribute one third in matching funds. Also, a commercialized “ice palace” will bring both higher operating costs and much bigger user fees.

David Schachter’s letter to the *Independent* last week hit the mark (“1.5 is enough”): “We do not need, nor can we afford, a second full-sized rink.”

PATRICK BARNARD, MELVILLE AVE.

NOT AT ALL EXCELLENT

Why do those few opposed to the new two full ice surface arena call it “excellent news” that many current Westmount residents’ needs are not being satisfied?

Being told “There’s no more room, try again next year” is not something to celebrate.

ADAM CUTLER, WESTMOUNT AVE.

THE OTHER TRAIN WRECK

In the *Westmount Examiner* of January 28, Mayor Trent is quoted as saying “Montreal is guilty of runaway spending”; “That train wreck has no brakes and its going downhill.”

But why has Mayor Trent been so silent on the other train wreck, the one that took place in his own backyard? Everyone now knows that the previous council spent a lot of money on cancelled projects, ill-fated

and citizen-dividing projects, along with several sets of costly architectural plans for a new mega sports hockey arena.

Won’t the citizens and their children be paying for this Westmount financial train wreck in addition to what the mayor calls the Montreal train wreck for many years to come?

LARRY KLEPPER, ST. CATHERINE ST.

60-PLUS SET WANTS ICE TIME

I must respond to David Schachter’s letter “1.5 is enough” (February 9, p. 4). I don’t know if he is a hockey player or perhaps a statistician but as I am part of the so-called “60-plus set” that plays hockey regularly, I feel that I am able to speak for my peers.

The Executive League is established for mature hockey players and schedules games once a week. Many of the players in this league must find alternate arrangements for a second game. This often requires them to travel to other municipalities to play on private rinks. I’m sure that this phenomenon does not show up in the Recreation department’s statistics.

The arena schedule does not allow any periods for adult team training or practices, something that my team, in particular, could use.

Those of us trying to exercise on the large rink or skate with our families are constrained to four hours per week. I’m not sure how the statistics reflect this issue.

Finally I think Mr. Schachter should look at other municipal hockey programs. Most towns have leagues for over 50, 60 and older. If our city is aging, we should plan for more leagues for those of us still interested and able to play hockey.

PETER NAYLOR, ABBOTT AVE.

BIRD FEEDER HAUNTED

I was doing so well with my feeder this winter. I prefer the “watering hole” method – not the cylinder with pegs on it for birds to perch on, one or two at a time. I like to see all the birds congregating.

So I rigged up an open tray on a piano wire between two trees. Several times leaping squirrels did upset my little apple cart, but I finally had it right.

A family of three cardinals, swarms of sparrows, diffident chickadees darting in

and out, a Bohemian waxwing and red-breasted grosbeaks – all appear around 9 am, the highlight of my morning.

Interestingly, the same cardinal family has been here for years. When they had junior, he began flying in straight lines, dropping down from heights.

Now he seems even bigger than Dad. Here’s how it goes: Dad checks everything out, flying past, alighting in the bushes. Then, on the flat tray, he would cock his head like a robin – lending some credence to the idea that robins cock their heads on the ground when hunting for worms, not just to hear them, but because of their eye parallax and depth of field; they see better close up with only one eye trained on the item in proximity.

And it was fun to see how uncooperative the cardinal family was. Baby Huey kicking Dad off the tray, and then if Mom would be feeding alone, either of the other two would infringe on her rights. Sometimes they did manage it together, spaced apart on the tray.

My mornings revolved around this delightful display. Then, trouble in the form of a sharp-shinned hawk flew in to the spruce at the foot of our yard. It was pecking hard on a branch, its recent bloody prey. Since then, no bird has come feeding, in spite of my best endeavors.

My guidebook says the sharp-shinned hawk often preys “during fast, stealthy flights through the woods.” So it was last spring, when this hawk flew in low from Oakland Ave. and zoomed through the Summit woods. At the time, an experienced birder next to me quipped that we may as well all go home, as all the warblers and little birds would be in hiding.

This sharp-shinned hawk is magnificent with its brown-barred chest. I’ve been told they are known to haunt bird feeders. I haven’t seen the hawk since, but my feeders are as good as haunted. Any avian ghost-busters out there?

JOHN FRETZ, LANSDOWNE AVE.



Sharp-shinned hawk
Photo: John Fretz

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Whatever happened to transparency...apartment composting... new treasurer...energy audit...documenting council questions...Turcot rebuild...arena- pool renewal?



Civic Alert

DON WEDGE

Whatever happened to transparency? Or apartment composting? Or a new city treasurer? Or the city's energy audit? Or the record of questions (and answers) at council? Or the Turcot rebuild? Hardly anyone mentions the arena/pool project?

They are items left over from the last council's agenda that can't stay unresolved forever. The explanation that "we are new in office" is good for only so long. Besides, half of the councillors were part of the previous administration and the "new" mayor is hardly a rookie.

Then there was the budget. Unlike the last few years, there was no attempt at public consultation or much explanation of how the tax figures were reached. Instead, there was a reversion to the old way: a parliamentary budget speech by the finance commissioner, Tim Price, but without a follow-up debate.

Mayor Peter Trent was surprised to be questioned over the presentation. There was even talk of "the pot calling the kettle black" given his condemnation of the lack of aggro budget information from Montreal.

"Our backs were against the wall," he pointed out. "The new council was inheriting a budget started by our predecessors. Then we had to wait until Montreal could decide on the aggro costs.

"Next year we will be different. We will have a more elaborate presentation, if that is what people want. But I don't call it lack of transparency. I make everything available to those who ask for it. The problem with Montreal is that no one can give the answers."

Absent audience

Not that the previous budget presentations have attracted big attendances. This year was even worse, with only four citizens present to keep the four journalists and city officials company. Council members privately noted the absence of those who normally attend meetings to lobby their personal issues – like dog fences and winter bike paths – and the usual presence of the Westmount Municipal Association (WMA) directors.

Could it be that residents are no longer concerned with their tax rates, which are

determined by the projected spending? Does it matter which part of the \$1.1 million reconstruction of Elm Ave. is done this year and which next? Or that major renovations to the greenhouses, expected to cost a total of nearly \$600,000, are envisaged in 2011 and 2012?

The budget sets the pattern of the year's activity, but all is not written in stone. Work has to be approved on an individual basis as designs are completed and tenders opened during the year.

One item due for change in my book is the closing of part of Summit Circle, for which \$500,000 is allocated for 2011. Given the level of support in emails I am being sent – and a temporary closure currently in place – it should be moved into this year's already heavy program.

"We are thinking of capital works costing about \$2 million more than in the past," director general Duncan Campbell told me. "My challenge to the engineering departments is to take advantage of the infrastructure funding support available from both provincial and federal governments."

The speech and many details of the budget's components are posted on the city's web site. In fact, it is the lead item. But bold numbers do not replace the discussion that took place at the final presentation of the previous council's arena/pool project plan.

Open for comment

Beaconsfield and the Plateau borough have sessions (both usually have at least two) for citizens to comment on the preparation of their next fiscal year.

Transparency is a wide topic. In the run-up to November's election and in the campaign, there was talk of open decision-making. That is unlikely now. The standing committees have been scrapped. Though incomplete and delayed, the minutes of those meetings gave some clues of council's work.

There is little indication so far that the business of the committees has been replaced in the public or closed-door meetings. Yet it can't be true that the new council has nothing to show.

The formal mid-month public meeting has also been eliminated. Instead, council will meet in committee twice a month, and extra public sessions will be held only if there are permits to be approved.

As there are almost always applicants waiting, why not schedule public meetings formally and let the public know in advance? Besides, the permits, and perhaps

the applications which lead to them, should be posted on the web.

That Westmounters can participate in the direction of their affairs was demonstrated superbly in the February 1 public hearing on the new building of a "house of plenty" at 3283 Cedar Ave. Transparency was its intent, and it was achieved.

Mayor, council, officials, interveners and the citizens who attended just to be informed made it a memorable – perhaps unrepeatable – occasion. Forgive me for

...and what is happening

Apartment composting: Public Works hopes for at least pilot collection scheme(s) during the year, but one problem is lack of plants to process it. Meantime, keen residents are hiring collection agents or taking it themselves to the yards.

City treasurer: Annette Dupré has been acting as interim finance director. There were some 50 applicants when the post was advertised and seven were chosen for a first round of interviews, which has just been concluded. A short list will be created for further rounds of interviews.

Energy audit: A key part of measuring the city's footprint and effectiveness of the sustainability effort, the audit has been scheduled in this year's capital budget.

Council questions (and answers): Westmount used to provide a summary of citizens' questions and the responses to them as an appendix to the official minutes. They were dropped in the summer when question period was included on the recordings of meetings posted on the website. Three of the councillors who were subsequently re-elected promised that the summaries would be resumed, but they have not been.

Turcot rebuild: The Transport ministry officials maintained their pro-car approach despite general criticism and the BAPE report. But recently there has been a softening of the position. The project chief, Alain-Marc Dubé, was due to brief council in a closed-door session this week.

Arena/pool project: Full disclosure of this council's proposals is promised in March, which starts in two weeks. We are down to the wire, with that \$20-million subsidy at stake. Will the studies address possible alternative investments? Will there be time to debate the proposals?

linking the meeting's historic nature to the subsequent reports by Lauren Sweeney in the *Indie* (February 9). "They made me feel I was there," a friend told me.

To be fully transparent, taxpayers must be aware of the decisions made for them. It requires the skills of a Sweeney and the platform we are provided each week by David Price and the *Indie*. Such serious concern for an informed citizenry is part of democracy and completes the transparency cycle.

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

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Moore resigns from Healthy City

Erstwhile volunteer Barbara Moore has resigned from the Community Life Committee of the Healthy City Project (HCP), which she had guided since its inception in 1991 as the Mutual Support Committee. A successor has not yet been named.



Barbara Moore

Moore, who tendered her resignation "for personal reasons" January 20, said "I just felt it was time to get someone else with new ideas" into the position as chair. She turned over its selection to city councillors Theodora Samiotis, Nicole Forbes and Victor Drury, who are responsible for HCP.

Right from the start of the Healthy City organization, Moore has forged the role of the Community Life Committee starting with the preparation of a comprehensive report on the accessibility of public buildings in Westmount that is now updated by the city.

Among her many other initiatives were the Smart Living Day events, the Safe Walk Audit and the expansion of the committee to include community representatives as a resource network.

– LS

Garneau: More funding needed for homeless



Westmount Ville-Marie MP Marc Garneau (right) and MP Gerard Kennedy (centre) visited Le Sac à Dos on St. Catherine St. E. February 13. It provides a range of services to the homeless. They were calling for the Conservative government to increase and sustain funding to the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), which currently stands to expire after the next fiscal year. “Sustainable funding is crucial to the continued operation of organizations in Montreal like Le Sac à Dos (Action-Réinsertion) and the demand is consistently increasing,” said Garneau. According to the MPs’ press release, one winter snapshot taken between December 16 and January 21 shows that the average number of occupied shelter beds in Montreal rose by 9 percent from 2007 (to 563 per night).

Designer stops in Westmount shop after working LA award shows



MICALLA creator Camilla Jørgensen, right, with David Archer, left, and Joshua Fagan at the label's Trunk Show February 10 at JoshuaDAVID, 4926 Sherbrooke St. The spring line will be unveiled at Montreal Fashion Week in March, and will be available at the store.

Photos: Erin Stropes



Westmounter Xina Cowan and Katherine Beaulieu at the MICALLA Trunk Show, February 10.



JoshuaDAVID personal shopper Debby Newpol and Westmounter Eliane Price with a pearl MICALLA top featured at Montreal Fashion Week.

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When you come to a bicycle fork in the road, take it



Ruminations

GEORGE BOWSER

There were no bicycles in London 450 years ago, but the traffic problems were much the same as they are today. Here's an extract from the city of London rules governing "street nuisances" from the year 1562:

"No man shall ride or drive his car or cart atrot in the street, but patiently, under pain of two shillings."

I don't know if the fine was a serious deterrent. Two shillings in 1562 was about the equivalent of a week's pay for a 2010 Westmount city councillor.

People are asking the city of Westmount to keep the de Maisonneuve cycle path cleared and open year-round, which would permanently eliminate the parking meters on the south side of de Maisonneuve between Greene and Atwater, and cost the city approximately \$60,000 in seasonal revenue. This is only a tiny fraction of the city's annual budget. Cyclists now have to detour via other streets.

The Greene Ave./Dawson College/Westmount Square area is an important one for Westmount. Planning for that quarter has to take into account every possible kind of vehicular traffic, and all of it, sooner or later, results in more pedestrians.

Old-fashioned street-sharing

Perhaps an old-fashioned street-sharing philosophy is called for, with appropriate surfaces and visual cues. Bisecting the street permanently with a low concrete

wall, as Montreal has done further to the east, is not a good idea.

I don't believe that physical barriers should be used to segregate bicycles from other traffic. Concrete barriers restrict mobility, which is the bicycle's principal asset. Worse, they present an unforgiving hazard when struck.

They also impede snow-clearing, deliveries, repairs and other everyday activities, and make it difficult for cars to turn safely. They also discourage defensive driving and good road sense by fostering a false sense of security.

Dedicated bike paths?

We all seem to have come to accept that dedicated bicycle paths are a good thing, and that this is a self-evident truth. I'm not sure about that. Cyclists have as much right to use the city's network of streets as anyone else, and they should be prepared for it. They should perhaps also be trained, licensed and properly equipped. Lights, flags, reflectors, mudguards, chain guards, baskets, locks, helmet, gloves etc. take a lot of the spontaneity out of cycling – but so does a body cast. Cyclists often fall and injure themselves, even without the help of rude or careless drivers.

There was a sign beside the main road on the outskirts of my old hometown that said "Southborough Welcomes Careful Motorists."

Later, when I had my own car (a 1958 Morris Minor with semaphore turn signals) my father often said to me as I drove off, "Look out for the other fool on the road." Despite the un-complimentary implication, it was good advice. In a world of shared streets and spaces, that's what you have to do.

From fruit juice to fuel, The Study's science fair explores it all

MARTIN C. BARRY

Does fruit juice reduce "oxidative stress" when tested? The short answer is yes. Or as Sabrina Roy, a grade 9 student at The Study, noted more elaborately in the abstract for her entry in the school's 2010 science fair, "the hypothesis is therefore accepted."

Roy's presentation was one of more than 45 entries submitted by 70 students for the science fair, which took place on February 11 at the girls' school on The Boulevard. The topics of investigation ranged from the effectiveness of various brands of popcorn, to a comparative study of plastic and stainless steel thermoses, to an exploration of how caffeine affects the growth of plants.

Among the 50 judges was the associate director of the Montreal Children's Hospital, Stephane Timothee, and several accomplished researchers from McGill University and the University of Ottawa. A number of parents and faculty members also helped judge.

"This year we have many more judges than usual because we have so many projects," said Terry Lin, head of The Study's science department. Each judge had to assess four projects.

The Study students did well last year in the highly-competitive regional and provincial finals. A total of 16 students from the school made it to the regionals and one emerged as a winner in the provincials. Roy, whose project on "juicy health benefits" ended up winning a gold medal this year in the school's science fair, was also a winner in last year's competition.

She conducted the latest project in a laboratory at the INRS-Institut Armand Frappier to better understand the effect of antioxidants on the brain with regard to neurodegenerative diseases. She knew be-



Westmounter Chloe Espiard, right, tells a judge about her project, Food for Fuel, which investigated the quality of oil used to make biodiesel.

forehand that "oxidative stress" is present in neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's. Her conclusion was that "when fruit juice is present, oxidative stress is reduced." Roy won a gold medal with her project.

With their project, Food for Fuel, Westmounter Chloe Espiard and Jordana Serero, also grade 9 students, examined which oil would be the best for producing biodiesel fuel of the best quality. Their conclusion: waste oil from a high-end restaurant produces the best quality bio-diesel. They won a silver with their project.

Other students from Westmount who won gold medals were Chloé Anassis (Global Unwarming), Sarah Battat (Polarization), Carley Sambrook and Caroline Najjar (the Ultimate Filter), and Ashley Stendel and Margot Hadaya (iCar).



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St. George's hosts 21st science fair

Students took part in St. George's annual science fair on February 4. Visiting grade 5 students had a chance to peruse the nearly 60 wide-ranging projects presented by grades 7 through 11. The younger pupils reportedly enjoyed seeing the many facets of science presented in a format unlike the envisioned stereotype of "doctors in white coats."



ON THE SHELVES

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

Adult reading – Crime and punishment

The Best American Crime Reporting 2009 edited by Jeffrey Toobin – The topics in this annual collection may be grizzly but the writing isn't. With articles drawn from a variety of major publications (*New Yorker*, *Rolling Stone*, *GQ*, *The Atlantic*) these stories cover everything from murder, fraud and theft, to the memories of an emergency room doctor who, remarkably, was present at the deaths of both John F. Kennedy and Lee Harvey Oswald.

The Lineup: The World's Greatest Crime Writers Tell the Inside Story of their Greatest Detectives edited by Otto Penzler – Have you ever wondered where Inspector Morse or Precious Ramotswe sprang from? This behind-the-scenes look at the origins of many well-known fictional detectives offers insights into what inspired their creators and what makes them tick.

Adult French – All in the family

Tout pour réussir en famille mono-parentale by Yannick Therrien – This book focuses on the challenges of bringing up children in the context of a single-parent family. Drawing on his own experiences, the author explains how to deal with crises and find equilibrium between family and work.

Vivre une garde partagée: une histoire d'engagement parental by Claudette Guilmaine – The many aspects of joint custody, questions about legal implications, the impact on children, conflicts between spouses and same-sex parents are explored in this book. The points of view of mediators from different countries are also presented.

Picture books for children – Winter for younger readers

The Rocket by Mike Leonetti – André loves to play hockey but he is tired of being compared to his older brother. When his father gets tickets to a Montreal Canadiens game starring Maurice "Rocket" Richard,

André discovers something that changes the way he looks at hockey and his family.

Melville et Maricha: la magie de la neige written by James Howe and illustrated by Marie-Louise Gay – Melville shows Maricha how to appreciate the magic of snow.

DVDs

Coco Chanel – This film charts the rise of one of the most influential designers of the 20th century, from her humble childhood and early days as a young dress-maker's assistant to her ultimate success as a pioneering fashion icon.

The Rape of Europa – An epic journey through seven countries, into the violent whirlwind of fanaticism, greed and warfare that threatened to wipe out the artistic heritage of Europe. For 12 years, the Nazis looted and destroyed art on a scale unprecedented in history. Heroic young art historians and curators from America and across Europe fought back with a miraculous campaign to rescue and return millions of lost, hidden and stolen treasures.

Magazines – The world at large...

"The new population bomb: The four megatrends that will change the world" by Jack A. Goldstone in *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb. 2010, p. 31.

"Too many people? The population panic" by Vanessa Baird in *The New Internationalist*, Jan/Feb 2010, p. 4.

"De la naissance à la mort: pourquoi le temps passe de plus en plus vite?" by François Lassagne and Gilles Marchand in *Science et vie*, Feb. 2010, p. 44.

Reference

The Canadian Writers Contest Calendar 2010 – Detailed information on Canadian writing contests, awards and prizes, organized month by month according to their deadline dates.

The Writers Handbook 2010.

Grand dictionnaire de la psychologie Larousse.

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Groundhog Day at brings out Marianopolis alumni



Whether the groundhog ever popped his head up from beneath the grounds at Marianopolis College remains unknown. In the meantime, alumni gathered at the college on Westmount Ave. on February 4 for the Groundhog Day Pizza Extravaganza, the only on-campus reunion for all Marianopolis classes. All kinds of merchandise were up for grabs. The college’s alumni association hosted the reunion, which included a silent auction. A highlight for graduates, the annual event gives them the opportunity to mingle with former professors and mentors. Among the Westmounters attending were, from left, Ryan Forster, Alan Desnoyers, Suzanne Doningburg and Lorraine Briscoe.

Photo: Martin C. Barry

Westmount Today, Yesterday and Before



Westmount Park, 1897.

Source: WHA archives.

BY DOREEN LINDSAY

Question: What famous landscaping firm examined Westmount Park in 1899?
For the answer, see p. 19.

DO YOU HAVE A HOME FOR ONE OF MY CLIENTS?

NEW YORKERS looking for a place to call home. 4 or more bedrooms, home office, garage. Two boys will be in local schools.

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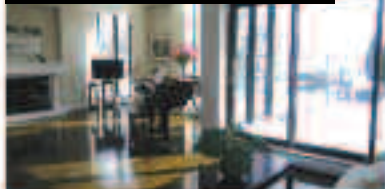


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Fabulous fundraiser for Juvenile Diabetes



Westmounters **Rhoda** and **Robert Vineberg**, with their son **Justin** and his wife **Samantha**, spearheaded the sold-out fundraiser for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's (JDRF) gala in mid-November.

The 35th anniversary, "A Cure is for Life," honoured the courage of children living with Type 1 diabetes.

Two charming youth ambassadors spoke about their disease. Arnaud Gagné (age 10) and Joelle Vineberg (age 7) spoke eloquently, bringing the room to silence.

Joelle, the Vineberg's granddaughter, was irrepressible as she jumped up and down in anticipation of her moment on the podium.

Then she climbed up onto the stacked telephone books, so she could reach the microphone – she succeeded and inspired us all.

Quebec celeb, author-composer-performer **Daniel Lavoie**, spokesperson for JDRF, spoke on behalf of the foundation, which provided \$8.5 million (the total money raised across Canada last year) to diabetes research.

Westmounters attending included **Sue and Norman Spencer**, **Penny Rudnikoff** and **Jeremy Reitman**, **Phyllis and Ted Brockhouse**, **Roseanne Koslov** and her husband **Lloyd Feldman**, **Terry and Sam Minzberg**, **Linda Smith**, **Alta Levenson**, **Penny and Gordon Echenberg**, and **Gail Victor**, formerly of Westmount, who flew in from New York for the event. Gail is the daughter of last year's honourees, **Herschel and Christine Victor**.

All proceeds from the event went to fund research led by JDRF, which is the leading charitable fundraiser and advocate of Type 1 diabetes research worldwide.

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Westmounters **Samantha and Justin Vineberg**, with daughter **Joelle**.



Westmounters **Penny Rudnikoff** and **Jeremy Reitman**.



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From left, Westmounters **Rhoda and Robert Vineberg**, and Rhoda's sister **Alta Levenson**.

Westmount Art Scene

Wolf Kahn and Mark Lang: Art as play

BY HEATHER BLACK

Noted psychologist Carl Jung once remarked: “The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable.” Indeed!

Imagination at play is evident in the vibrant colours of abstract landscape painter Wolf Kahn, and in the storytelling of figurative artist Mark Lang. Both artists are featured this month at Galerie de Bellefeuille on Greene Ave.

Wolf Kahn: The play of colour

Kahn, a popular American colourist, is well-known for his stunning rural scenes. Using luminous mauves, pinks and blues to delineate fields and foliage, Kahn creates atmospheric magic. In the oil painting “House Hidden Among Leaves,” a small cabin is seen behind the chartreuse of budding birch trees set against pink foliage.

The pastel “Black Border” is similarly enchanting. Bare tree trunks – Kahn’s trademark – are backed by lime, brown, pink and blue bands of grass, hedge, trees and sky. Elegant in simplicity, the scene recalls the impressionist’s timeless colours.

Another, an oil entitled “From the Clark Museum Parking Lot” is less graphic. Here, trees of varying size, shape and hue form borders amid fields. Painted in subdued yellows and mauves, the colours convey a gentle lyricism.

Kahn renders objects in flat, solid colours. Known as “colour field” painting, this style allows him to capture the simple yet elegant rhythm of colour and line. The exhibit of his work continues to February 24.

Mark Lang: Playful consciousness

In contrast, Montrealer Mark Lang playfully renders paintings within paintings. Often creating studio or museum settings, in this exhibit, subtle humour takes centre stage.

In “Cat and Mouse,” a giant cartoon cat dwarfs a seated figure – the artist himself. Rendered with painstaking detail, cheerful yellow, orange and red dominate the playful composition. Yet the artist’s posture conveys a tired resignation – or perhaps a dissatisfaction – with the commercialized product.

In “Patterns”, an artist copies an ab-

stract painting of colourful stripes on a small canvas posed high on an easel. While copying museum masterpieces is a time-honored tradition, in this instance, the viewer asks “Why?” This, together with the artist’s rendition – a miniature – provides humour.

Irony also prevails in “Performance,” a painting within a painting surrounded by gallery goers. Here, a painting of a modern clown – with painted tears and frown – replaces Pierrot in Antoine Watteau’s “Gilles” (c 1718–19). One of the viewers, perhaps an art critic, takes notes.

Always interesting, Lang playfully sets the stage for social commentary. The exhibit of this work runs from February 27 to March 10.

Imaginative play

Kahn’s intense colours and Lang’s complex and often witty scenarios are just two aspects of the “play of imagination.” While these artists offer different visions, both reflect a playful zest for life that is contagious.



Mark Lang, “Performance,” 2009, oil on canvas.

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Albert H. Robinson, RCA

Barracudas hungry and swift at recent swim meet



Off-Sidel
NOAH SIDEL

It’s tough enough to manage even just a kid or two at the pool on any given day – imagine having to juggle over 400. That’s just what Lisa Hayman and the people with the Westmount Barracudas swim team had on their hands the last weekend of January, when they hosted a major Fédération de natation du Québec swim meet at Collège Notre Dame. “We went there because of the lack of a suitable pool in Westmount. The morning session was for 9- and 10-year-olds, and the afternoon was for swimmers 8 and under, 11 and over and para-swimmers,” Hayman explained.

Train at Westmount Y

The Barracudas train at the Westmount YMCA and are made up of 80 kids aged seven to 17 who compete at various re-

gional and provincial levels within the federation. “At the entry level of competitive swimming, which is what this meet was, the region of Lac St. Louis runs four annual meets followed by semi-finals and finals. These meets generally have 400-plus youth swimmers, the majority of whom are under 12. “Normally, these meets are hosted by the large swim clubs in the region like Beaconsfield, Pointe Claire and DDO. This was the very first time that the Barracudas were asked to host this type of meet. The primary reason we were given this opportunity is because we have such a strong parent volunteer base within the club,” Hayman said. Their efforts were certainly worthwhile. “There were 421 swimmers in total, 47 of whom were from the Westmount team. Each of our kids swam two events, and most of them also swam as part of a relay team. Almost every one of them swam at least one personal best time, and many of them had two personal bests,” Hayman said.



Chase Sinclair, 10, cuts through the water at the January 31 Westmount Barracudas swim meet at Collège Notre Dame. He finished fifth in the 50m breaststroke, taking 2 1/2 seconds off his previous best time.

Photo: Eric Bindman

Real standouts

“We had several real standouts; in the 8-and-under category we have several exceptional swimmers including Flavie Merkly, Emilie Gendron and Eric Amyot, who all had exceptional days finishing in the top six of their events.” Westmount was very strong in the older categories as well. “In the 9/10 age group, Chase Sinclair and Lucie Lundenberg were our top performers, and in the 11/12 group, our team had several great swims including swims from Chloe Shahinian who was first in the 100m individual medley, followed immediately by Lea Poitout,” Hayman said. “Elsa Immer and Logan Stack also took first in the 50m backstroke for 11/12 girls and boys, respectively, and Hanna Sousa Fronenberg took a first, as well, in the 50m breaststroke.”

Of course, the event was all about the kids, but Hayman emphasized that pulling off a meet like this one takes a team effort. “Throughout the day we had more than 60 Westmount parents working at the event. We also had most of our senior provincial level swimmers and their parents volunteer for the day. We even had our former head coach and past swimmers come out for the day. This really is the strength of our Westmount team.”



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History quiz: Westmount Park

BY DOREEN LINDSAY

Question (from p. 12): What famous landscaping firm examined Westmount Park in 1899?

Answer: Olmsted Brothers.

Imagine my surprise when a Westmount resident forwarded me a report made by the renowned Olmsted brothers to the chairman of the Park Committee, town of Westmount, dated August 1, 1899.

I had always read that Westmount city council had decided NOT to hire the services of the Olmsted firm because it was too expensive. What I did not know was that Westmount had requested an examination of Westmount Park and had received a report from Olmsted Brothers, the firm created by Frederick Law Olmsted's sons, John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., to continue their father's work. Their report is now in the manuscript collection of the Library of Congress.

In reading this report, I find that our park today retains many of the recommendations made back in 1899. The Olmsted brothers explain that Westmount Park "belongs to the class of small parks or neighbourhood pleasure grounds in which it is customary and reasonable to provide for children's games, athletic sports and other amusements, even at some sacrifice of landscape effect, because these things must be provided some-

where, and because it is close to the population needing them..."

Remaining features of original park

This Olmsted report refers to the chief natural features of the park being "the little dingles filled with trees and flat land on either side forming two small plains partly surrounded by good trees." A dingle is a small, deep wooded valley or, as we are used to calling it, a ravine. We can take pride in the Olmsted brothers' writing, "the work already done seems to be most excellent." They mention that "The paths are well located, carefully adjusted to the topography and the trees ...The ponds are well planned as to size, number and location...The sides of the dingles are generally so steep that to sod them was the only way of preventing wash." All these features can be seen in the photograph on p. 12. A local Westmount resident and talented amateur photographer Robert Harvie made the photograph in 1897 just two years before this report was written.

Reference is also made in the report to "the wildwood character of the place" and recommendations (which I would like to see implemented today) for planting interesting "woody and herbaceous plants such as grow naturally in such places or harmonize with native wood plants such as partridge-berry, wintergreen, periwinkle, native and Japanese anemone, ferns

and the like would look far more appropriate and interesting than grass."

Changes to park

In 1912, the city hired Howard Manning to design the park in the spirit of Olmsted. During the 1920s and 30s the park took on a more formal style.

In 1963 the city hired the Chicago firm of McFadzean and Everly to give the park a major facelift. It used cement for paved pathways and as raised borders around flowerbeds and trees. That was when the waterways were redesigned to include a waterfall and an island for ducks.

After de Maisonneuve Blvd. was closed to traffic, Montreal landscape architect Ron Williams was hired to design bicycle and walking paths to replace the roadway. Work began in 1986.

There are references to a basin for model boating, in a space northeast of the library and open to the prevailing winds "in connection with a main entrance from Sherbrooke St. and with the drinking fountain. References to landscaping also exist in order to enhance the library and "community centre" (Victoria Hall), which both opened in 1899.

I recommend that everyone who loves our park read this report. We have a copy of it in our archives.

Phone 514.989.5510 or email info@westmounthistorical.org.



'The Olmsted Legacy' includes Westmount But is Westmount part of Olmsted's legacy?

A new documentary film, *The Olmsted Legacy*, about Frederick Law Olmsted, is being made by New York filmmaker Rebecca Messner and will include a historic photograph of Westmount Park taken in 1897 by Robert Harvie, who was then a resident of Metcalfe Ave. The photo is now in the WHA archives (see p. 12).

The film may renew debate over whether or not famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted had a hand in the design of Westmount Park during the late 19th century.

While it has long been held by some that Olmsted didn't contribute to the park's design, in 2008 Melville Ave. resident Patrick Barnard brought documents to light that establish some involvement by Olmsted Brothers, which continued Frederick Law Olmsted's business. See his opinion piece in the *Independent*, "The hidden history of Westmount Park", July 15, 2008, p. 7.

The Olmsted Research Guide Online confirms that the company issued a "job number" in 1899 for "parks pathways & recreation" type work for Westmount Park. A piece of correspondence from that year, located by Barnard at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, confirms that the Olmsted Brothers submitted a report on Westmount Park in 1899 to the chairman of the town of Westmount's Park Committee.

Another letter from the firm addressed to the chairman states: "We are returning to you today two plans of Westmount Park which you lent to Mr. Olmsted."

Does a job number create a legacy? Did work to the park in the 1960s break any link to the past?

For a longer historical perspective, see Doreen Lindsay's Westmount Today, Yesterday and Before in this issue (p. 12 and 17).

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Homeless dogs get a leg up from Indie readers



Westmounters Caroline Breslaw, left, and far right, Gael Fraser-Tyler, representing The Underdog Club, and, middle, Gerdy Gouron of Gerdy's Rescue and Adoptions, accepted cheques February 12 for their organizations from money raised by the Westmount Independent in the special pet tribute section, February 9. The amount of \$250 was raised for each.



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Callie, abandoned in apartment



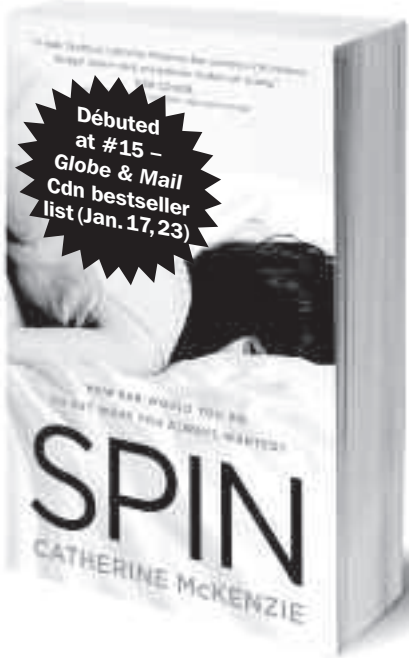
Callie is a striking female tortoiseshell who is now in foster care. When her owner became ill and was taken away by ambulance, Callie remained locked up in their home for a week before she was found by someone who had come by with fresh clothes for the owner.
So, Callie is awaiting a permanent home where she will be appreciated for her gentleness and affectionate nature.
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Callie

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Can't decide on a summer camp? Try a free adviser

BY ISAAC OLSON

As the summer camp registration rush gets underway, some parents, especially those who are signing their children up for the first time, may find selecting that perfect kid getaway an overwhelming or even terrifying process.

Well, there's help out there and it's free. Aviva Reinitz is an agent with The Camp Experts and Teen Summers. With over 850 different participating overnight camps and programs around the world, the company has been helping parents choose where to send their children since

1987.

Giving advice over the phone and email, Reinitz, working out of her Hampstead home, receives a commission from camps when campers enroll.

Though the company has 29 agents internationally, Reinitz is the only one in Canada. She said agents visit camps in the summer to evaluate programs and offer parents well-researched advice. They will also cut ties with a camp if they find it is not up to company standards, she said.

"A lot of working parents don't have the time to look nor do they have the accessibility that I do with all these programs that

are aligned with us," said Reinitz. "It really helps the parents"

Often her clients are sending their kids to camp for the first time, she explained, and they sometimes need a little emotional consoling as well as advice because sending them away for four to eight weeks isn't always easy. Other parents are looking for specific types of camps or programs for their teens.

"Camps teach kids about independence," said Reinitz. "It teaches them to solve problems on their own rather than relying on their parents."

A Boston-based company called Stu-

dent Camp and Trip Advisors, with over 750 camps and programs to choose from, has been offering much the same service for more than 40 years.

Although the Montreal agents weren't available for comment, the company's president, Diane Borodkin, said parents talk with advisers over the phone or in person. The agents then sift through camp choices based on a variety of factors. If a child has a medical issue, for example, some camps may not accept them or the camp might not be close enough to a hospital. For information, visit: www.campadvisors.com or www.campexperts.com.



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When the Bell Rings: Westmount Students Speak Up

PRESENTED BY PHILIP CUTLER AND MICHELLE WARNER

We asked students who live or go to school in Westmount to answer the question, "How do you plan to support the 2010 Canadian Olympic team?" Here are what some students had to say.

Fighting the winter cold

"I plan to support the Canadian Olympic athletes through the purchase of various products. I wear my Vancouver 2010 red mittens all the time. I know that by buying products such as the mittens, the profit goes to support our team's needs in order to have a successful 2010 winter Olympic Games. Good luck to all the athletes! I'll be cheering and supporting."

Sarah Kitner, grade 11, Miss Edgar's and Miss Cramp's School

Gold on the ice

"As a proud Canadian and avid hockey player/fan, I plan to fully support our Canadian ice hockey teams. I am already

set with my new Team Canada hat and t-shirt and will be doing my part to show my Canadian spirit. I will be watching every game like it's the Stanley Cup playoffs. I hope Canada's hockey teams can bring home a pair of gold medals."

Sam Pearl, grade 12, Lower Canada College

Heading to Vancouver

"I am supporting the 2010 Canadian Olympic team by going to the Olympics and cheering them on. Through my dad, I am supporting a group of athletes that will be competing in many events. Banners, cowbells, and Canadian flags are what I'm planning to use and I will cheer as loud as I can. Eh-Oh-Canada-Go!!!"

Jason Miller, grade 8, Selwyn House School

Cheering from home

"To support the Canadian Olympic team, my family has been buying Coke and Excel gum, both sponsors of the Olympics. I am going to watch the



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Olympics in my living room and have fun with my family."

Marc-André Prévost, secondary 1, Vanguard Intercultural High School

Looking forward to hockey

"As Vancouver, Canada is hosting the Olympics, all Canadians will be supporting the Canadian Olympians in their own way, watching it in a bar or just chilling on their couch watching it themselves. I know I will be following it all day long, and am especially looking forward to Team Canada's men's hockey team. My brother

and sister like watching too, so I will probably watch some with them, hopefully seeing us win the gold medal."

Michael Hopmeyer, grade 11, Lower Canada College

This week's question

Send your answers to this week's question, along with your name, grade, and school to whenthebellrings@ymail.com. The deadline is Saturday, February 20 at noon.

This week's question: "What are your March break plans?"

Retail Watch

BY ERIN STROPES

Osborne's design business marks 25 years

It's been 25 years since Kathryn Osborne opened her own interior design shop at 1357 Greene Ave., and she's still in the business of coming up with innovative decorating solutions for her clients. Over the years, Osborne has assembled a team of Quebec artisans who do everything from marble cutting to crafting mahogany dinner tables. "We can get anything," said Osborne, who attributes her success to giving clients exactly what they want, be it a handmade lamp finial or a custom-built sofa. Whether she's remodeling a kitchen from the walls inward



Kathryn Osborne

or figuring out how to downsize a home to fit into a seniors' residence, Osborne said "my reward is the moment when they say 'I love it.'"

New Java U redesigned

The redesigned Java U on Sherbrooke St. is open for business. Manager Felicity Parsisson says that the café's new "more interactive" floorplan has met with approval from customers familiar with the old design.

The chain's signature sandwiches and wraps remain a popular choice with clients, while salads from the "create-your-own" salad bar (\$9.99-\$11.99) are a particular favourite with Westmounters.

Parsisson said she is particularly looking forward to the summer, when the ter-



Java U manager Felicity Parsisson, right, with employee Bianca Lavoie-Mallette.

race windows will open and the café seating will spill out onto the sidewalk – a familiar Westmount sight that was missing this past summer as the franchise changed ownership.

Valentine anniversary for Alain Simon Fleurs

When Alain Simon opened a showroom for his florist business in Westmount on February 14, 2009, he wasn't just setting up in a great location – he was coming home.

A Westmount native who attended Marianopolis College before getting his degree from Concordia, Simon spent 25 years building his business at Fairview before deciding he needed an additional, more central location to spread out and display his work.

"We are a 'fleuriste-créateur,' which means I do all my own designs," said Simon, who uses only fresh cut flowers.



Alain Simon

His designs, which range from tiny centerpieces "for bridge games or tea parties"

to enormous floral centerpieces and arches, can be previewed in the Westmount showroom at 4110 St. Catherine St.

Boutique Intermix moving online

Independent mid- to high-end women's clothing store Boutique Intermix will be moving out of its space on Sherbrooke St. as of March 15.

Owner Priya Judge-Oberoi, who "grew up shopping in Westmount," said that she will miss her "wonderful" local clientele, but has chosen to move the business online because "online, the world is your customer, and we want to be able to reach women all over the world."

Fans of the boutique will still be able to shop online at www.styleme.ca, and a new site dedicated to Intermix's own line of jewelry will be online at www.iluvjewels.com this month.



Boutique Intermix

Décor Marie-Paule to close

Décor Marie-Paule – a 35-year fixture on Sherbrooke St. near Prince Albert Ave. – is closing. Management hopes to finalize the closure by the end of March.

The linen and design store is owned by three siblings, Paula and Dominic Pedicelli, and Maria (Mary) Pietracupa, who decided to call it quits in order to retire.

Décor Marie-Paule was founded by the two sisters as a "hobby and dream," it was explained in a letter to clients.

Marie-Paule grew into a multi-outlet enterprise. It has had branches on Sherbrooke near Guy and inside Ogilvy's. It currently has only one other store – on Laurier in Outremont, which will also be closing.

"We have reached a certain age and look forward to having no responsibilities, and to travelling and taking courses. I look forward to more piano and cooking lessons in Europe, especially learning the Tuscan way of making

beautiful food. We also plan to spend time with our grandchildren."

Rental rates – an area of concern to many Westmount merchants – have not been a factor in the decision because the siblings also own the Marie-Paule building, which they are now planning to sell.

– DP



Mary Pietracupa

News that appears in *Retail Watch* about its clients and non-clients is provided by the *Independent*. Businesses that appear do not pay for or approve what is written.

Atwater Library hits blogosphere

A Montreal history blog (www.montrealhistory.org) focusing on the Mechanics' Institution, the forerunner of the Atwater Library and Computer Centre, has been set up by Westmounter Susan McGuire. The site currently has about 12 items, but there will be more items appearing soon, said McGuire. Photos and illustrations will be added later.

So far, the biggest buzz has resulted from an item called "Copyright issues go back a long way," adapted from an article that originally appeared in the *Westmount Independent*. It was picked up by the large US blog boingboing.net.

Articles on montrealhistory.org feature such early Montreal notables as the Rev. Henry Esson, Dr. Jonathan Barber, engraver William Leney and fur trader François-Antoine LaRoque. Other items focus on the development of the Mechanics' Institution 1828-35.

New Segal Centre director

The Segal Centre for Performing Arts has a new executive director at the helm. Manon Gauthier, with a background in both the arts and business, will be working alongside board president and Westmounter Alvin Segal and artistic director Bryna Wasserman. The Segal Centre for Performing Arts is a multi-disciplinary performing arts organization.



From left, Bryna Wasserman, Alvin Segal and Manon Gauthier.

Priory plants seeds for peaceful gestures

Continuing The Priory School's monthly exploration of peace, teachers received a flower pot and seeds during a special assembly on February 5. This month, every time a polite word is said or a good gesture is noticed, a symbolic planting takes place, in which teachers drop "politeness seeds" (from a pumpkin) into a flower pot.

The Priory is believed to be the first Quebec private school to join Peaceful Schools International – a Canadian-based

non-profit initiative aimed at supporting peace-focused schools around the world. For a school to be considered a "peaceful school," it must meet a number of criteria, among them a collaborative approach to decision making, curricular or extracurricular peace education initiatives, and teaching methods that stress participation and cooperation.



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A Westmount hockey family

Four brothers, one team, first time

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

In what is probably a unique situation, four brothers are playing together this year on the same team in Westmount's Senior B hockey league.

In fact, "it's unusual enough to have them in the same league but, no, I've never seen four brothers together on the same team," said Sports and Recreation administrator Dave Lapointe.

Ranging in age from 18 to 35, all four Macdougalls – Benjamin, Maxime, Jonathan and Sebastian – have grown up skating in the city's hockey program. But it was only with Benjamin turning 18 in time for this year's hockey season that all were eligible to team up together as members of the Flyers.

"It feels great because my older brothers and I have been playing together for three years," said Maxime, 20. "Now I can

play with my little brother on defence."

And while the family chemistry is good on the ice, he added, they're proving to teammates there's absolutely no truth to the suggestion that having more than three Macdougalls on the ice "is a curse."

In fact, the Flyers were fourth out of 10 teams in league standings as of February 10, "which is pretty good," said Sports and Recreation director Mike Deegan.

All four brothers play defence, which doesn't surprise their father, Andrew. "When Maxime was skating at age 2," he explained, "Sebastian and Jonathan took him under their wing and got him skating backwards right away. This is important in defence. So he benefitted from that."

Andrew wishes he had had similar opportunities himself. But growing up England, he learned to skate only after arriving in Canada as an expectant father. "It's pretty hard to become a good hockey player if you haven't started as a child," he said.

He hung up his skates a few years ago, but "of course as a proud father I try to attend most games, which is easier with all four on the same team. I wish I could be out there on the ice with them."

The brothers enjoy each other's company, he says. "Playing together is a great opportunity for the two younger ones, who still live at home, to see their older brothers, other than at family dinners."



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Macdougall brothers playing for the Flyers in Westmount's Senior B hockey league are, from left, Benjamin, Maxime, Sebastian and Jonathan.

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Turning cooking oil into bio-diesel Student fuels his own education

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

A young Westmounter attending Concordia University has found an environmentally-friendly way to help pay for his studies while working at a company that converts vegetable oil into bio-diesel fuel.

As a customer service representative for Byonerga, it's David Brunelle's job to make the rounds of restaurants that have signed up for the program and arrange for the collection their used oil. Most restaurants use large quantities of cooking oil for deep frying, and disposing of it afterwards can be a burdensome and messy ordeal.

Byonerga installs a collection unit free of charge and then pays the client a fee ranging from \$15 to \$25 per barrel, depending on the quality of the used oil taken away.

The oil is brought to the company's operational centre and warehouse on Meilleur St. in Montreal's old garment district, where it undergoes a filtration process. It is then sent to buyers in North America and overseas, who convert it into bio-diesel to be used as fuel for powering internal combustion engines or for heating homes.

According to Brunelle, Byonerga is currently one of the only small players in Montreal specializing in this field. He said there are other larger companies that will also pick up used restaurant oil for free, but they recycle it as an additive to be used in animal feed.

"The problem with that is that it's bad for the environment," says the St. Antoine St. resident. "It's also bad for the animals and has been banned Europe-wide be-



David Brunelle shows a waste oil collector.

cause of mad cow disease."

A restaurateur who's a Byonerga client seems pleased with the deal. "It's worry-free," said Mendy Mockin, the owner of a Decarie Blvd. sushi establishment. He has used the service for nearly a year. "I pour it out into the bin and don't worry about it after that."

To the average person, the idea of turning vegetable oil into fuel may not be all that clear, even though the concept has been around for a few years. Engineers have been experimenting with using vegetable oils as fuel since the beginning of the 20th century. Over time, shortages of conventional petroleum fuel products have spurred research into the use of vegetable oil as a substitute.

Polak new honorary consul for Netherlands

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

Michael Polak, a resident of Prospect St., was appointed honorary consul for the Netherlands February 5. Although the country once had a consulate in Montreal, Polak said they shut it down some years ago for budgetary reasons. While the Netherlands has an embassy in Ottawa, the country wanted to maintain a presence in Montreal and asked Polak if he would do the task. A lawyer with a practice at Westmount Square, Polak is of Dutch ancestry and has done legal work for the Dutch government.

He is also a citizen of the Netherlands and Canada. "For all those reasons they came and asked if I was interested," he told the *Independent*.

While the role of honorary consul confers no diplomatic privileges and is unremunerated, his job will be largely that of a liaison for the embassy in Ottawa. As an added perk, Polak will be able to attach special "CC" licence plates to his car, allowing him to park in special areas reserved for diplomats. However, he



Michael Polak

will not be entitled to the same legal immunity as fully-accredited diplomatic officials.

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Community Health and Social Services Network is an organization dedicated to improving access to health and social services in English for Québec's English-speaking communities



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Marianopolis College Speaker Series presents Westmounter **Michael Goldbloom** on "Media and Democracy in the 21st Century," 7 pm. Info: 514.931.8792, ext. 204.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18

- The **Montreal Children's Library** holds its annual general meeting, 11 am at 1200 Atwater in the lower level of the Atwater Library. All welcome.
- **Photographers** Diana Bruno, Richard Lock and Jaroslava Miler display their work at the Gallery at Victoria Hall, until March 13.
- Seniors homemade lunch and guest speaker at Contactivity, lawyer Cettinia Ragusa of the Montreal Bar Association on leases, **rent increases** and renewals. 1 pm. Reserve: 514.932.2326.
- "The evolution of fire station No. 2" with speaker Elizabeth Shapiro, architect, pre-

Local cops in Haiti

Two police officers from local police station 12 were serving in Haiti as part of a UN contingent when the earthquake struck January 12.

Station commander Stéphane Plourde said last week that Sgt. Yvan Richard had already returned home and is now on vacation while Sgt. Joanne Matte is expected back this week.

Plourde, who also served in the Haiti mission some 12 years ago, said he was shocked on hearing news of the devastation. "I was scared for all the Montreal officers serving there because I know how poor the construction is." He also recalled how he and others had stayed at the Montana Hotel, which was levelled during the 7.0 magnitude quake.

Police and Westmount public safety officers will hold a Haiti fundraising hockey game February 18 at the LCC arena (see details, p. 3).

sented by **Westmount Historical Society**, Westmount Library, 7 to 9 pm. Cost: free for members, non-members \$5 at door. Info: 514.989.5510 or 514.932.6688.

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 23
A mass for the repose of the soul of Regina von Habsburg, Archduchess of Austria, née Princess of Saxe-Meiningen, wife of Otto von Habsburg, will be said at the Church of the Ascension of Our Lord, Sherbrooke at Clarke, 5 pm.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26
Former Westmounter **Lisa Pasold** reads from and discusses her debut novel *Rats of Las Vegas*, set in 1940s Vancouver and Las Vegas. Atwater Library, 12:30 pm. Saxophonist Dave Turner plays music of the era.

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 28
Kids First Costume Purim Party at Temple Emanu-El-Beth Sholom (395 Elm Ave.), 10:30 am. Games, snacks and the Story of Esther. All welcome, no reservations. Cost: \$10 per family. Info: 514.937.3575.

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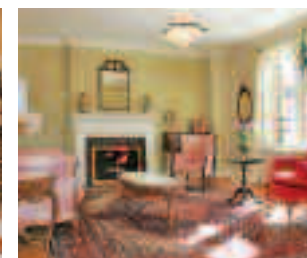
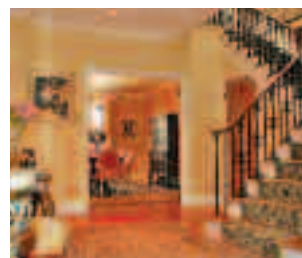
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