

## Commercial recycling pick-up comes to Greene

*Vic village still has wagon*

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A city recycling experiment to collect paper and cardboard from the back door of shops on Greene Ave. has been extended for another three months so winter conditions can be assessed, Public Works officials said last week.

Launched in October as a three-month trial, the project will now run to the end of March to collect bagged and bundled material every Tuesday noon from the back lanes – a service requested by 23 merchants in a city survey last September.

“It’s something they’ve been asking for,” said Marina Peter, city Environmental coordinator. “Ultimately, we would like to see the pilot expanded to the other commercial sectors.

“It’s fantastic,” said Rob Fagnoli at Tony Shoes, one of the users. As a board member of the Greene Ave. Merchants’ Association, he added, “So far, so good. We’re happy.” (See separate story, p. 12.)

The back-door pick-up and transport to the St. Michel treatment centre costs the city \$450 a week, Peter said. It typically serves the small shops that generate many recyclable boxes.

It also replaces the ..... blue on-street recycling *continued on p. 12*

## Westmounters with brooms celebrate curling club



Photo: Martin C. Barry

Westmounters joined the more than 100 people who attended the Royal Montreal Curling Club’s annual Founder’s Day celebration January 30. For story, see p. 8.

## City recovers \$838 in two incidents in 2012

# Graffiti costs cut in half as reported incidents drop

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Removing the work of graffiti vandals as quickly as possible seems to be paying off in Westmount, Public Security officials said last week. Not only was the number of reported incidents down 16 percent in 2012 but clean-up costs also dropped 45 percent to \$37,000 over the previous year.

There could be other factors as well, director David Sedgwick explained. “These things come in waves. But I think the

change in policy we made in 2011 helped.”

This was to accelerate the internal reporting system to enable faster removal of graffiti so it would not beget more, he said.

A total of 254 graffiti sightings were reported last year compared with 302 in 2011 when clean-up costs reached some \$67,000.

Recovering clean-up costs can be a lengthy process, however, according to interim city clerk Nancy ..... Gagnon. Once the iden- *continued on p. 10*



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## Design committee tours Westmount rec centre

# Both rinks covered, one enclosed

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Despite wide swings in weather and very cold temperatures, which tend to slow construction work, the new arena is now covered, almost enclosed and allows for the east rink to be heated.

In describing the most recent findings

**\$11.6M already paid out**

## Martin to report on Pomerleau arena payments

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Councillor Patrick Martin said last week he was hoping to have an up-to-date list of all payments made to Pomerleau Inc., the contractor for the Westmount recreation centre project, in time for presentation at the city council meeting after press time February 4.

The posting of payments had been requested at the January 14 meeting by the Westmount Municipal Association, to which Martin had said the city should be able to provide the amounts (see January 22, p. 3).

From June until the end of December, and including one payment so far for January, however, payments have totaled \$11.6 million including taxes, he confirmed at press time.

A portion of these are subject to the municipal tax rebate.

The city is also holding back 10 percent of each invoice pending satisfactory completion of the construction being undertaken on a fixed-price contract of \$33.5

from a site tour through the two rinks February 1, Councillor Patrick Martin told the *Independent* that keeping the ground warm would accelerate the pouring of the concrete floor.

“But the key thing for me was feeling the height and spaciousness of the rinks,” he said. “You can’t even tell you’re below

million, Martin said.

### Decontamination costs

Three other payments made to Pomerleau totaling \$1.8 million and designated for “transportation and disposition of contaminated soil” brings the total to some \$11.6 million.

The only additional extras the city has asked for and approved are the \$1-million rink extension, and \$12,000 in unforeseen asbestos removed from the old arena, which was other than that already identified.

The city has also requested extra costs for upgrades: ceramic tile for the washrooms (\$42,000) and architectural block for corridors (\$39,000). Both are features dealing with the later stages of construction.

“It’s important to note,” Martin said, “that we did not make any provision for contingency in the budget, so that any extras would have to come back to council for approval in public.”

ground.”

Planning to present a report on the site visit by the design committee at the February 4 council meeting, Martin said the ceiling of the new arena is higher than in the old one.

From ice level, looking up through the steel beams, the ceiling – or roof decking – is about 26 feet high.

This decking of corrugated metal already covers the east and west rink pro-

viding the support structure for the concrete roof that will be poured on top – “I’m guessing in March.” The addition of a membrane and earth will complete the green roof.

“The steel beams, which will be painted white, add to the feeling of height and were a great idea,” Martin said.

Originally concrete beams had been proposed, similar to those ..... in the old arena, “but by *continued on p. 23*



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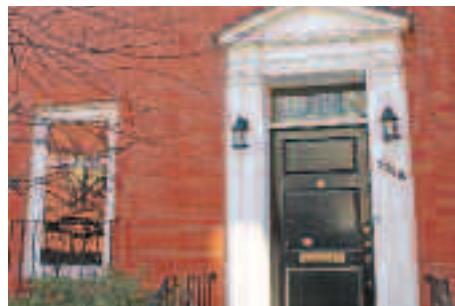
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Recognizes vested rights of side-yard foundations

# Demo decision gives green light to 15 Forden

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Owners of the house at 15 Forden Ave. received a go-ahead last week from the city's Demolition committee to continue the work of adding a second storey that had been stopped in December when a wall was taken down contrary to approved plans.

The loss of the wall pushed the split-level home just over the mark that subjects a building to a demolition hearing once 50 percent of the total exterior envelope is removed. This applies even if the structure is not razed to the ground.

In this case, as the architect Rhona Goldenberg told the hearing, the footprint of the house was not changing, nor was the ground floor. "We're just adding a higher roof," she said.

She also said the wall of the 1957 house that came down was found to be structurally unsound and had not been built according to the city's required 8 inches of masonry. The wall was integrated into the roof, "so as we started taking off the roof we found [the wall] was a very flimsy thing."

While the design and plan to add a second storey had already been approved by

the city's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) as a major renovation, and the permit issued in November, once it became a demolition project it "had to be approached in a different light," explained Paul Grenier, who represented the PAC at the hearing.

As a "new construction," the setbacks from both the property lines of seven feet no longer conformed because "the current zoning requires a 10-foot lateral setback," Grenier said.

However, the PAC "was okay with that" because it was able to apply By-law 1411, which allowed for walls to be extended up-

ward as long as the original foundations were maintained, the new plan harmonized with the street and allowed for a better solution. The garage at the front was also deemed acceptable.

It was the first time that By-law 1411, in force since December 2011, had been applied to a demolition project with regard to side-yard foundations subject to vested rights.

In the proposed design, a dormer window in the new roof conformed to the 10-foot setback, Goldenberg pointed out.

As part of the demolition process, the project *continued on p. 10*



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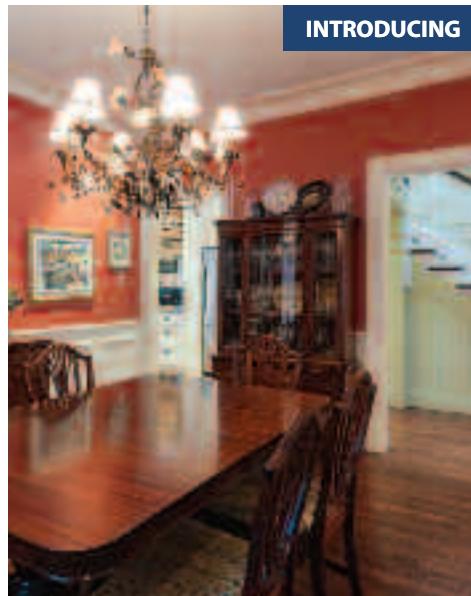


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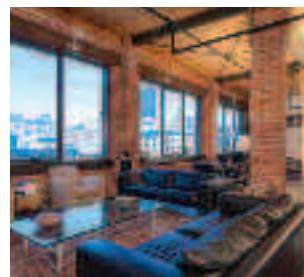
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PH-A54 | \$2,345,000 - \$9,500/mo  
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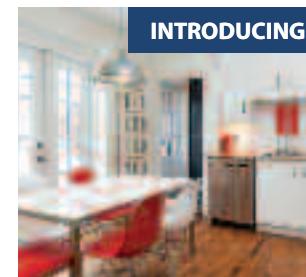
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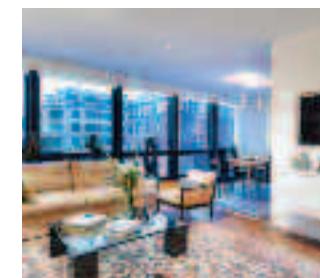
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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## THANKS FOR QUICK ACTION, POST WIND STORM

Thursday's high winds caused this branch to fall and block the entire width of

Chesterfield Ave. Within the hour of the call to Public Works, the street and branch were cleared.

ANTOINE CLÉMENT, CHESTERFIELD AVE.



Photo taken January 24 on Chesterfield.

Photo courtesy of Antoine Clément

## OPPOSED TO CLOSURE OF PRINCE ALBERT POST OFFICE

I am writing to share my opposition to the closure of the Prince Albert Canada Post office. I also contacted Canada Post customer relations at 1.800.267.1177.

While the post office on Prince Albert may be one of 20 within a few kilometres, it is one of only two legitimate post offices in Westmount, where employees are trained by Canada Post. The other is a kiosk on Greene Ave. The post offices in the Pharmaprix on Vendôme and in Alexis Nihon are franchises run by pharmacy employees, who may or may not arrive for their shifts.

Prince Albert is the only post office where customers don't haul parcels either through the mall or from the parking lot, then through aisles of closely spaced retail products and shoppers to a loosely operated kiosk, where you stand in line amid

boxes of toilet paper and Kleenex.

Westmount and NDG make up the largest catchment of seniors in the country and for those who do not drive, they will not have the option of going to a real post office, and that extra exertion of navigating the aisles will be another age-related challenge. And of course they are barely wheelchair accessible.

Closing a post office located in the heart of the Westmount community would not only negate Canada Post's recent customer service efforts of the Venture One card and the CP gift boutique, it might drive clients of Canada Post to competitors such as UPS, which has a storefront location conveniently located on St. Catherine St. near Greene Ave. And it would siphon business from both Victoria and Sherbrooke merchants.

MARILYNN VANDERSTAAY,  
ST. CATHERINE ST.

## Prof: Climate change could spell end of outdoor rinks

BY MICHAEL MOORE

The Canadian tradition of outdoor hockey rinks may become environmentally impossible within 50 years due to rising global temperatures, claimed McGill professor Lawrence Mysak.

"Over the last 50 years, we've seen the skating season diminish by one, two, three weeks. In the future, there could be no more outdoor skating rinks," he said in a

front of a packed crowd at the Westmount Public Library on January 31.

The talk was presented by the Westmount Healthy City Project.

To showcase the real world impact of climate change, Mysak, an Edmonton-born professor of ocean, climate and paleoclimate dynamics at McGill, co-authored a study about the effect that rising global temperatures has had on ..... the season length of out- *continued on p. 18*

## WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT

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McGill professor Lawrence Mysak talked about a tangible impact of climate change at Westmount Library on Jan. 31.

# Seniors get schooled in financial safety

BY MICHAEL MOORE

A group of Westmount seniors received a crash course in financial literacy on January 28, designed to teach them safety in a monetary world continually reshaped by technological advancements.

“The scamming system must work because there’s billions of dollars lost to scams each year,” said financial literacy educator Brian Smith during the talk at Atwater Library. “We have to keep ourselves from becoming victims.”

Smith guided the roughly 20 audience members, most of whom were at or nearing retirement age, through some of the more common financial shams, including credit card and bank fraud, “phishing” schemes and financial elder abuse.

The talk quickly evolved into a discus-

sion with both Smith and audience members sharing tips to thwart potential cons, such as using only ATMs from reputable banks and shredding financial documents before recycling them.

“What the scammer does is try to find a gap. Once they find it, they are through and can wreak havoc,” said Smith.

For most audience members, the discussion on financial scams covered unfamiliar territory; others, including Smith himself, admitted they were victims of fraud and were looking to ensure they wouldn’t be swindled again.

“We all like to think that it won’t happen to us,” said Smith, who said his debit card had once been cloned at a small dépanneur. “But the reality is that it can happen to anybody.”



Financial literacy educator Brian Smith provided financial safety tips to Westmount residents at the Atwater Library on January 28.

# Raising the roof



*Councillor's Photo of the Month*

PATRICK MARTIN

View of the Westmount recreation centre site from the Westmount Park United Church January 15. The east rink (left) is fully covered and protected from the elements, allowing construction indoors in heated conditions. The west rink (right) roof beams are in place, and is in the process of being covered as well.



Photo courtesy of the city of Westmount

## Two dog infractions, one ticket

A Toronto woman was issued a \$75 ticket January 22 after a public safety officer spotted a large black dog running off leash about 25 meters ahead of her in Westmount Park. The dog also defecated, prompting the officer to ask the woman to clean up the droppings. She was let off from the one infraction but ticketed for the dog being off leash.

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## What's to Eat Westmount?

### Valentine's Day recipe for the lamb lover

BY REBECCA BINICK

Valentine's Day is one of the two busiest restaurant days of the year. If you prefer to spend a quiet and romantic evening at home, Nigel Slater has the perfect winter lamb recipe for you in his new book *The Kitchen Diaries II*. The recipe is highly spiced with cumin and cinnamon to get the blood going and packs a sweet romantic pinch with dried apricots. It is also a braised dish – a super cooking method from February through March.

The recipe uses neck of lamb, which I found at my butcher in Verdun (he's the greatest), although you can use small lamb shanks that will have to be turned over halfway through the cooking time. It is a forgiving recipe so if you prefer less cumin and more chilli, feel free to experiment. I will only warn against adding more cinnamon.

2¾ pounds or 8 pieces of neck of lamb  
3 tbsp all-purpose flour  
salt and fresh pepper  
2 tbsp olive oil  
2 medium onions, roughly chopped  
1 tsp cumin seeds  
2 tsp ground coriander  
½ tsp dried chilli flakes  
2 cloves garlic, finely sliced  
1 tbsp finely grated fresh ginger  
lemon zest  
1 cinnamon stick  
7 dried apricots, chopped  
750 ml chicken stock or water



Heat oven to 320°F. Put a large heavy bottom pot (such as a Le Creuset Dutch oven) on the stove.

Put flour, salt and pepper into a stainless steel bowl and toss with lamb pieces. Heat olive oil in pot. Add lamb to the pot and lightly brown the pieces on all sides. You'll probably have to do the pieces in batches so as not to crowd them. While the lamb is browning, empty the left-over flour from bowl, and wipe. Remove lamb from pot and set aside in bowl.

Look at oil in pot. If it is blackened or has blackened bits in it, discard and replace with 2 tbsp fresh olive oil. Otherwise, soften chopped onion over medium heat (10 minutes).

Add cumin seeds and coriander and stir. Add chilli flakes and stir. Add sliced garlic, ginger, lemon zest and cinnamon stick and stir until it smells fragrant. Add chopped apricots then add stock or water. Return lamb to pot, bring to a simmer, taste and add salt or pepper as desired. Cover with a lid and place in the oven for 1.5 hours. While serving, garnish with lemon zest and fresh oregano or mint.

*Rebecca Binick is the manager at Appetite for Books.*

## Super-hospital taking shape



Construction workers walk through what will become the Research Institute's atrium in the northwest sector of the incoming super-hospital in eastern NDG. Officials with the construction firm SNC Lavalin and the McGill University Health Centre gave media a site tour on January 18, showing the progress made on a facility set to open in the summer of 2015. The Research Institute has a large atrium spanning several stories and is held together by strategic x-bracing used to keep the buildings together in the event of an earthquake.

Photo: Isaac Olson

### Concrete pouring generates two complaints

Bright lights at the 215 Redfern construction site Saturday, January 12 turned out to be needed for pouring concrete for the fifth-storey floor slab, Public Security officials said. The city had permitted the work to take place at the condo development until midnight. A complaint had been received at 5:30 pm from a resident

of the adjacent apartment building at 4300 de Maisonneuve.

The next night at 10:09 pm, another complaint was received for a noisy fan in operation, reportedly to help dry the cement. No workers were on the scene and the incident was to be referred to Urban Planning the following morning.

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# Rotarians told health, social services need more philanthropy

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

The province's health and social services network could use some of the old-fashioned private sector philanthropy that was common before Quebec nationalized the system, the head of a West End Montreal centre for the treatment of intellectual disabilities told the Rotary Club of Westmount.

Addressing the Rotarians during their weekly lunch-hour meeting on January 30, Ron Creary, interim executive director of the West Montreal Readaptation Centre, described how Quebec's health and social

services system "grew and grew" until the late 1970s when a recession set in and money to support the network gradually dried up.

He said the closing of seven Montreal hospitals during the 1990s, including the Queen Elizabeth in NDG, was part of a raft of measures implemented by the provincial government to save money, but the main problem is still with us.

"The problem essentially is that we're not creating enough wealth to support our system," said Creary, who has worked in the province's public health and social services system since the mid-1970s.

"The problem is not going to be fixed until we look at it from another perspective. I believe that the system has to go back to what it was before the Quiet Revolution in Quebec. We have to bring responsibility for our social services and our health services back to local communities, who oftentimes created them in the first place. The ways to do this are through volunteerism, and the English-speaking community has a long history of volunteerism."

While Creary also noted the role of philanthropy, he said that when it last "ruled the roost" more than 40 years ago, "our taxation level was a percentage of what it is now, so people who were inclined to give had more money." But, he insisted, philanthropy and volunteerism "are really the only ways we can go."

As an example, he cited a \$100,000 seed money donation that the Rotary Club of Westmount made in 2008 towards the construction of the Eleanor Côté Home, a respite care facility for the intellectually disabled that opened in Beaconsfield two years ago.

Blair Tisshaw, executive director of the Taylor-Birks Foundation, which raised about \$1 million for the facility, emphasized the importance of the Rotarians' donation. "In most capital campaigns of any sort of importance, you need that one major donor," he said. "That first step by Westmount Rotary was huge because that was instant credibility for the foundation."



From left, Rotary Club of Westmount past presidents Merle Binmore, Heather Borrelli, Blair Tisshaw, Ron Creary, and current president Ian Moodie pose with a framed photo montage of the opening of the Eleanor Côté Home that was presented by Tisshaw and Creary to Westmount Rotarians.

## Public Security frees trapped driver, assists wife at The Boulevard, Grosvenor

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A woman was transported to hospital January 27 after a two-car collision at The Boulevard and Grosvenor, where she was found sitting on the road in the intersection by a public safety officer on patrol at 1:24 pm. Her husband, the driver of one vehicle, was trapped inside, Public Security officials said.

The woman, who spoke neither English nor French, refused to be touched but was taken to safety in the patrol car to await an ambulance, which arrived at 1:32 pm.

The public safety officer managed to free the woman's husband from the dri-

ver's seat of the car that had filled with smoke or steam. He also was taken to the patrol vehicle. Neither he nor the occupants of the other car were reported injured. The woman was transported to the Jewish General.

The fire department, police and Public Works also attended and a liquid leaking from one of the vehicles was cleaned up. Both cars were towed and public safety officers remained on the scene until 2:21 pm.

The accident was believed to have occurred in part when the driver of the west-bound car was blinded by glare from the sun, officers said.

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# ‘Borderline’ demo, Poirier agrees

cont'd. from p. 4

had not received any letters of concern, Councillor Patrick Martin, Demolition committee chairman, was told. In fact, four letters of support had been received.

The higher house was an improvement over the original one, noted Antony Kovic, a neighbour, who was the only member of the public attending the meeting other than the homeowners, Jonathan Chomski and Debra Schwartz.

## Suggests another category

Goldenberg also took the opportunity to

bring up the city's demolition criteria. Some "other municipalities," she said, had a different category that would cover this type of major transformation that did not involve outright demolition.

"We must look at the intention," she said. "We don't want to rip down the whole house." But simply removing the roof brought the house close to Westmount's 50-percent demolition mark.

"I agree with you, it's borderline," said Urban Planning director Joanne Poirier, who added that the city's criteria were designed in part as a way to inform neighbours through a public meeting.

At that point, the Demolition committee of councillors Martin, Kathleen Duncan and Theodora Samiotis adjourned to begin deliberations.

After the hearing, Grenier told the *Independent* that the issue raised by Goldenberg of holding public hearings for major transformations that were not outright

demolitions *per se* was one that the PAC had discussed many times. Given the number of major renovations ongoing in Westmount, however, holding public information meetings for all of them was deemed to be impractical and very time consuming.



The new design for 15 Forden as shown at the public hearing.

Image courtesy of Rubin+Goldenberg architects



Architect Rhona Goldenberg, foreground, speaks at the demolition hearing January 24 while homeowners Debra Schwartz and Jonathan Chomski look on.

## Graffiti cont'd. from p. 1

tivity of the culprit has been established, the city has to wait for the clean-up bill before sending out an initial invoice.

While three that were processed in 2011 are still pending, the city has recently recovered costs related to two incidents in April 2012, she said. One was for \$763.73 and another for \$72.44.

The former amount relates to an incident April 12 when Public Security pursued and caught a man at Wood and St. Catherine around 4 am in a string of graffiti on signs and walls along St. Catherine and neighbouring streets.

The smaller one pertains to a report April 20 when officers caught two youths in Westmount Park, ticketed them \$118 each for defacing public property at the comfort station and benches, and notified their parents.

A third clean-up bill for last year amounting to \$166 has also just been turned over to the city clerk's office related to overnight vandalism at the rear of 389 Claremont and the capture of a suspect on

November 26 (see December 4, p. 3).

While municipalities cannot use Small Claims Court to collect outstanding claims, Gagnon explained, a decision has to be made in each case whether or not to pursue unpaid bills in Quebec Court, which can be a costly procedure.

## Salt truck needs its own 'medicine'

Public safety officers were called at 4:10 am January 17 to assist a city salt truck slipping on the steep hill near 29 Bellevue, Public Security officials said. The truck was trying to manoeuvre a turn but was unable to drive past a parked Porsche. When efforts to contact the car owner failed, enough salt from the truck was spread on the road to allow it to move by.

It was not the first time a parked car at that location has interfered with a salt truck (see January 15, p. 5). The parking problem was referred to the city's Administrative Traffic Committee.



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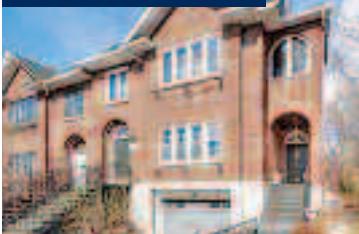


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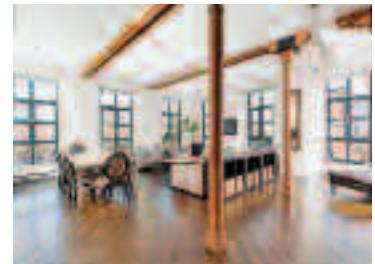
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## Warned not to leave dogs in cold car

A woman was warned January 25 not to leave her dog in a car parked in front of 4846 Sherbrooke near Victoria, Public Security officials said. The incident occurred during a prolonged deep-freeze. The dog had been noticed by a parking inspector for some 20 minutes. A responding public safety officer reported the dog appeared to be in good condition but remained with it until the owner returned. She was advised not to leave it unattended in the cold.

## PSO intervenes in vandalism

An 18-year-old NDG resident ripped off the plastic covering from a bus schedule and threw it in snow at Sherbrooke and Strathcona January 20, Public Security officials said. He was spotted at 12:45 am by a public safety officer, who asked him to replace it, which he did. The young man and three friends who had been throwing snowballs were watched as they headed west out of Westmount without further ado.

## Recycling, cont'd. from p. 1

trailer, which merchants complained took up two badly needed parking spaces, was too small and detracted from the aesthetics of the street.

The trailer continues to be parked as scheduled in the Victoria village commercial district, where merchants also expressed a need for back-door collection in a random survey by the *Independent* two years ago (see March 8, 2011, p. 1).

### Lanes make easy pickup

The lane network off Greene made the city's east-end commercial district an easier location for introducing the pilot project, Peter explained. A smaller recycling truck is being used by BFI Canada to collect an average of about 420 kg per week from the lanes.

The time, day and decision to pick up only paper products were based on what the Greene merchants had listed in the survey as their greatest need, she said.

"Since most of the stores open at 10 am, we decided that 12 noon would give them time to get their folded and bundled cardboard and bagged paper into the laneway." It also eliminates the use of large bins that could further narrow and clutter the lanes.

While the city identified a potential 66 businesses on Greene from Sherbrooke to St. Catherine in the survey, some businesses do not generate much paper. Larger stores or those belonging to a chain typically have their own private recycling services. Others have access to services provided by their buildings, such as those on the west side of Greene from de Maisonneuve to St. Catherine.

As a result, the truck collects from shops backing onto the lanes on the east and west sides of Greene from Sherbrooke to de Maisonneuve and a handful, such as Babar en Ville, on the east side just north of St. Catherine.

Most of the stores on St. Catherine St. made little use of the mobile trailer, Peter said.

## Merchants 'happy' with pilot, Vic village waiting

Merchant representatives in both the east- and west-end commercial districts told the *Independent* they were "happy" about the back lane recycling pilot on Greene, but those who had been calling for it in Victoria village said they did not know it was under way.

"I'm glad the city's moving ahead on the experiment, because it's what we're looking for too," said Gerard Fellerath, owner of Folklore 1 on Sherbrooke and president of the Sherbrooke/Victoria Merchants' Association.

While it was the first he had heard of the pilot project on Greene, he said, the back-door pick-up is what is needed since the mobile trailer is limited in size and often inconvenient for merchants.

He acknowledged it would be more of a challenge in Victoria village, however, where the through-lane network "is a bit spotty." But where there is no lane access, he suggested, collection might have to be made from the front, which might not be too bad "if it only has to stay out there for a couple of hours."

Meanwhile on Greene, Rob Fagnoli, of the Tony Shoe Shop suggested that ideally, the pick-up could be twice a week. Many small shops don't have enough storage space to wait a week, he explained. He also felt the trial phase should extend into April when much of the spring and summer merchandise arrives. He would also like to see plastic included since "every product now comes in plastic."

Michael Millman, owner of West End Gallery, who heads the Greene Ave. Merchants' Association, said he does not use the city service in his own business but "our objective was to get the trailer off the street." — LS

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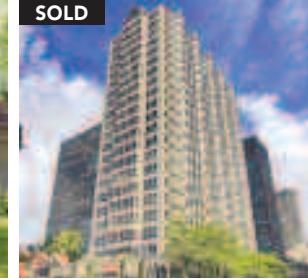
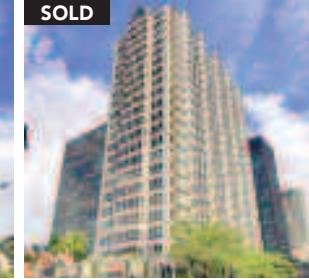
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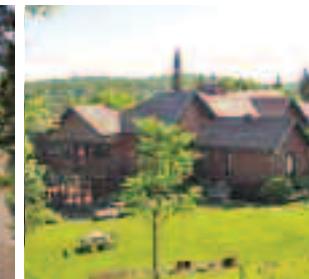
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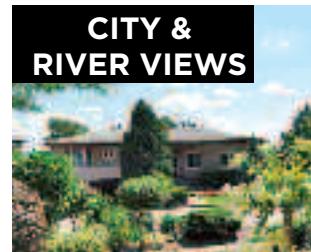
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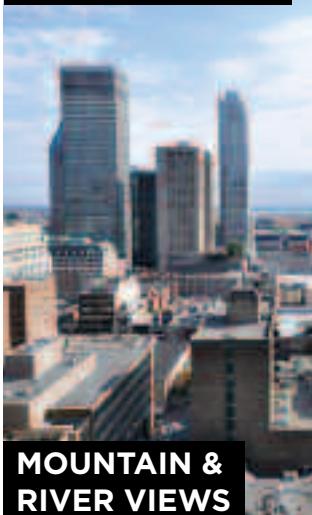
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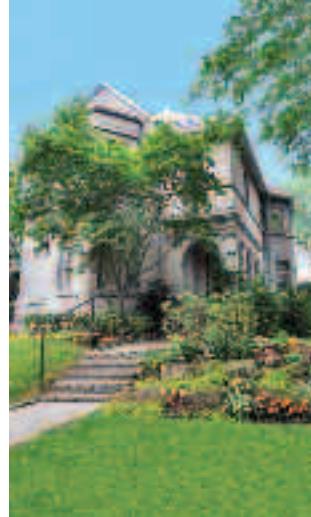
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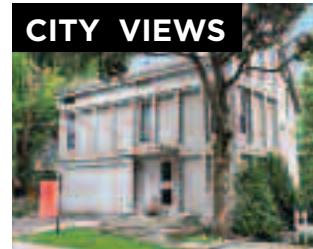
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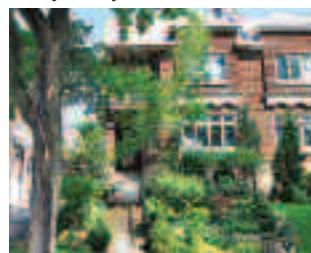
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## Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in December 2012

For real estate transfers, please consult paper archive.

For analysis, see p. 21.



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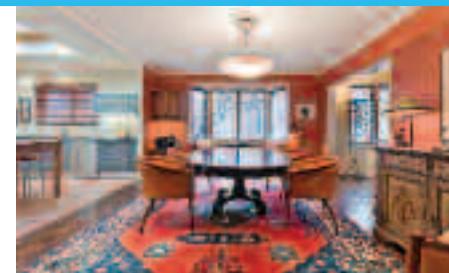
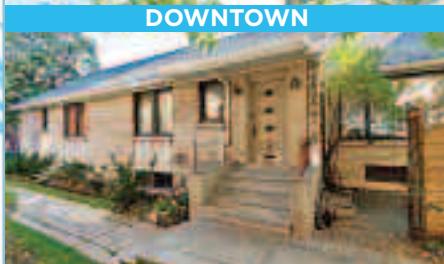
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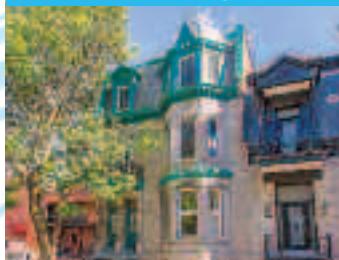
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## Station 12 Reports

## 3 cars stolen in 7 days

By ISAAC OLSON

*The following news stories are based on information from police reports provided by a Station 12 constable in an interview with the reporter.*

Late last month, three cars parked in Westmount vanished without a trace and, according to police, two of the crimes may be related.

The first incident took place on Kitchener Ave. near de Maisonneuve Blvd., explained Station 12 constable Caroline Gauthier. It happened sometime between January 19 and 23. The vehicle, a 2010 Lexus SUV, was parked in the owner's driveway, the alarm was set and the doors were locked. The car was stolen, she said, without witnesses, noise or even evidence of broken glass. There were no cameras on site, and police have no leads.

Sometime in the night between January 28 and 29, a Lexus 2010 sedan was stolen from its driveway on Argyle Ave. near Montrose. The car, said Gauthier, didn't have an alarm, but the doors were

locked. In this case, there were no witnesses, and no broken glass or cameras on site either, she said, meaning, like the incident on Kitchener, there weren't any leads.

Because the cars are of the same make and year and the criminals' methods in both cases were similar, she said there is reason to believe the crimes are related. It may be a group of skilled thieves, she said, selling the cars as a whole or in parts. At this point, she noted, these are only theories as police continue to investigate.

While those two incidents may have been carefully planned out, a January 23 car theft was more likely a result of opportunity, said Gauthier.

The victim parked his car on Sherbrooke St. at 8:45 am, grabbed a coffee and came back to an empty parking spot some five or 10 minutes later. The Kia, she said, was not of high value, but the car was full of tools. Those tools, she said, are easy to sell.

Even though the door was locked, said Gauthier, the Kia was stolen without breaking any glass. Police have verified

## Hockey rinks, cont'd. from p. 6

door rinks in Canada.

Using historical data since the 1950s to measure temperatures from over 140 locations across Canada, Mysak and his team looked at the weather conditions required to sufficiently sustain solid ice surfaces, opting to use the first three straight days of  $-5^{\circ}\text{C}$  weather in November as the beginning of the season, a low enough temperature to freeze not only the ice surface but the ground underneath it as well.

The study calculated the number of days of suitable hockey-playing conditions until the end of February, while subtracting the number of days that were too warm to be considered "hockey suitable."

According to Mysak, the team found a definitive pattern of worsening over the last 55 years – Canada's outdoor hockey season is growing alarmingly short. The study found that in some areas of the country, climate change has reduced the length of the season by up to two weeks.

that the car was not towed for any reason, she said. There were no witnesses and no leads.

The constable said it is important to set an alarm, lock doors and limit any oppor-

If that trend continues, Mysak said, the only method of sustaining outdoor rinks in the future would be to use artificially refrigerated ice surfaces, like the one in use at the Westmount Athletic Grounds.

To demonstrate the cause of the shortening season, Mysak invoked another hockey-related topic: the "hockey stick profile," a term coined by climatologist Jerry Mahlman, which looks at the sharp increase in global temperature and CO2 emission in the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution.

In the profile, centuries of relatively little change in temperature and CO2 represent the long, steady shaft of a hockey stick laid flat, with sky-rocketing levels in both categories since the start of the 20th century viewed as the curved blade of a hockey stick, pointing ever-upward.

"We don't really know where the CO2 levels are going, but [they're going] up," said Mysak.

tunities for a thief. When parked in a driveway, she said, it is a good idea to have a motion-activated light on. If thieves find themselves under a spotlight, they might think twice about stealing, she said.

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# Black Tip a playful youngster



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

Black Tip enjoyed the indoor life until he was tossed outside like garbage, when the family moved away. A kind woman saw him trying to survive outdoors three months ago, and she brought him in to



Black Tip

give him a chance until he was placed with a forever family.

Black Tip is quite the handsome young fellow: a pristine, white shorthair with a black mask and cape, contrasting his incredible green eyes and adorable pink

## Woman opens car door into passing taxi

A woman opened the driver's door of a Toyota Camry parked outside 4910 Sherbrooke at Prince Albert just as a taxi was passing January 12 about 3:45 pm, Public Security officials said. The side of the taxi was scraped from front to back and the Camry's door was so damaged the car had to be towed away. "Be very careful getting out of a car," said assistant director Greg McBain. As well, he said, "On busy streets, cars should be parked as close to the curb as possible."

nose.

He is young and curious, bold and adventurous – not the least bit timid. This cat is very sociable, loves company and being pet. He is very good with children, and enjoys playing.

Black Tip is a healthy young cat, and has been vaccinated and neutered. He would be best as a single cat in the household as he tested positive to the feline FIV test, but this does not affect him in any symptomatic way. He is happy and strong, with an affectionate and playful nature that is hard to resist.

For more information on Black Tip, please contact Gerdy's Rescue and Adoptions at 514.203.9180 or email info@gerdysrescue.org. You can also refer to her website at www.gerdysrescue.org.

Your neighbour,  
Lysanne

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## Shingles fly off Westmount Park church



With wind speeds up to 100 km/h, shingles were ripped off large sections of the roof of Westmount Park United Church January 31. This photo was taken around 2 pm.

Photo: Ralph Thompson

## Pedestrian hit at Redfern, Sherbrooke

A 37-year-old woman suffered minor leg and arm injuries January 25 when hit by a turning car at Redfern and Sherbrooke, Public Security officials report. A public safety officer assisted her until the arrival of an ambulance and arranged with Urgences Santé personnel to transport her to a hospital in Longueuil, where she resides.

## 35 cars towed in 3 days, ticketed for \$102 each

A total of 35 cars were towed from snow removal zones over three days January 21 to 23, despite warning phone calls to many drivers the night before the work, Public Security officials said. "In a smaller snowfall, people may not be expecting the signs to be up, but they should be checking at night," said director David Sedg-

## Stolen car recovered

A Saab reported stolen January 17 in a break and enter on Lansdowne was recovered by public safety officers on Murray Hill four days later, Public Security officials said. A complaint from a resident stating the Saab hadn't been moved led to officers checking it out with local police Station 12.

## Lab taken home, owner ticketed

It wasn't the first time a brown Lab took itself for a walk on Summit Circle, according to Public Security reports. The dog was spotted walking alone January 16 at 9:40 am by a public safety officer at the lookout. It was taken home, thanks to its licence tag. But the owner, who had received previous related tickets, was issued another for \$75.

wick.

He said "the goal is to accelerate the snow removal process and eliminate the need for trucks to wait while people move their cars or have them towed." Tickets for \$102 were issued; this includes a set \$50 fee for the towing.

## Graffiti found in lane

A rash of graffiti was discovered the morning of January 16 along a lane south of St. Catherine, from Lewis to Irvine, Public Security officials report. It was believed to have occurred overnight. Playground equipment in Westmount Park had also been vandalized but with a different tag.

## Windshield smashed by possible flying object



A house window flying through the air due to high winds on January 30 was thought to be the cause of a smashed windshield of a car parked in the municipal parking lot on St. Catherine between Victoria and Prince Albert. The owner of the car discovered the gaping hole in the windshield and the approximately four-by-four building fixture lying on the ground next to her car that afternoon.

Photo: Westmount Independent



## Volunteering in and around Westmount

The Meals on Wheels group based out of St. Matthias' Church is looking for volunteers to deliver hot meals to seniors in Westmount. Availability must be Mondays or Thursdays from 10:30 am to 12:15. Contact Nancy Dumais at 514.842.3351.

Chez Doris is looking for volunteers to help organize clothing donations. Also, help is needed at reception and for the meal service. Contact Felicia Katsouros at 514.937.2341 or volunteer@chezdoriz.ca.

## Boy has seizure in school bus

A public safety officer came across a school bus that appeared disabled in traffic at Atwater and St. Catherine January 24 and found that a boy on board was having a seizure. Public Security officials said she rendered medical assistance right away at 4:41 pm until the arrival of the fire department's first responders at 4:47 pm and Urgences Santé at 4:50 pm. The boy, aged 8 or 10, was described as unresponsive but conscious. He was taken to the nearby Montreal Children's Hospital.

## Curling club releases new book

There were many Westmounters among the more than 100 people who attended the Royal Montreal Curling Club's (RMCC) annual Founder's Day and Robbie Burns Day celebration January 30 at the club on de Maisonneuve Blvd. four blocks east of Atwater. From left: Jean-Pierre Picard, Bev Hutchison, Steph Peron, Katie Leonard, Jamie Hutchison, Krista Garver, David Tait, Frits Beran and Tony Kalhok. A piper was on hand to accompany the haggis in and a "wee dram"

was offered to participants. The evening also saw the official launch of a new book, *The First Two Hundred Years*, a history of the club, which marked its bicentennial in 2007. The RMCC maintains it is North America's oldest sporting club – a claim no one has disputed for at least a century, according to club member David Tait, who also said the club welcomes new members. To join call 514.935.3411. – MCB

For photo, see p. 1.

# December averages move up



*Real estate*

ANDY DODGE

*The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in December 2012, provided by city officials. A list of sales can be found on p. 16.*

Prices were a little stronger in real estate transfers registered in December last year. Ten single-family dwellings changed hands in what is usually a slow month for notaries; between six and nine such sales have been closed in December in each of the years back to 2005.

The highest price was \$2,275,000 for 54 Summit Circle, corner Upper Bellevue Ave. – the only \$2 million-plus sale of the month. The elegant stone house sold some 10 percent above its \$2,074,600 val-

uation. The only mark-up lower than that involved 624 Murray Hill, which sold nine percent over valuation.

Lowest price in December was \$685,000 for 61 Somerville Ave., but that was almost 50 percent over its 2011 municipal tax value. It was one of only three sales with a registered price under \$1 million. An even higher mark-up was recorded in the \$1,475,000 sale of 804 Upper Lansdowne Ave., 61 percent above its assessment.

The average mark-up was 26.8 percent, some eight percent more than the average for November and the highest monthly average since August. It helped pull the value of the “typical” Westmount home back over the \$1.5-million mark for the first time since August.

While the 10 sales actually had an average price of \$1,307,200, this was higher than the \$1,293,500 average of 12 sales in November.

Two condominium sales in December

brought to seven the number sold in the fourth quarter of 2012, with apartment 303 at Le Cacherel, 295 Victoria Ave., the lowest price in the quarter at \$329,000. Highest price in the quarter was the October sale of apartment 803 at 1 Wood Ave. for \$1,480,000, offering an average for the seven sales of \$790,857 and an average mark-up of 15.1 percent, higher than the third-quarter statistic but still not as strong as the single-family average mark-up.

The only other sale in December involved a share of 415-15A Mount Pleasant Ave., including the exclusive use of 415A Mount Pleasant. This is only the fourth share of a duplex or triplex that sold this year and has not (yet) been divided into condominiums.

The 2012 sales represent the basis of the new valuation roll which will be deposited next September and will apply to the next three years’ property taxes.

## Vacant Victoria



*These three shops on Victoria south of Somerville photographed on January 29 have been empty for some time and are starting to show signs of neglect. The graffiti was whitewashed over afterwards.*

Photo: Westmount Independent



*The highest price paid in December 2012 was \$2,275,000 for 54 Summit Circle.*

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## Shedding light in Westmount



CS Design recently moved from Sherbrooke at Victoria to 310 Victoria. The firm of lighting architects was founded five years ago by Conor Sampson and specializes in lighting for projects ranging from private houses (including three projects currently under way in Westmount) to institutional work (including work in progress for the Visual Arts Centre's studios). Most of the fixtures that it uses are off the rack, but the firm can also design from scratch, including the one in the above photo, which is a prototype for a conference centre. From left, Sampson, Alicia Dávila, Alexandra Dostie, Anna Rocki and Andrew Hruby.

Photo: Westmount Independent

## Maxymych hoping for post-lock-out sales boom

BY MICHAEL MOORE

A satisfied smile creeps across Peter Maxymych's face as he gleefully discusses the end of the National Hockey League (NHL)'s 119-day labour dispute.

"During the lock-out, let's just say I wasn't nice to be around," he joked. "I just wanted them to get back on the ice and to start playing."

Unlike most hockey-crazed Habs fans going through winter withdrawal without Le Bleu-Blanc-Rouge, Maxymych readily admits he's "not a big hockey guy." Rather, the Westmount resident's buoyant mood comes from the knowledge that his fledgling hockey tickets business should soon be back on track.

The founder and president of E-mail, which owns thousands of dot-ca domain names, including travel site Cheaptickets.ca, Maxymych has decided to turn his vacant online lots into money-generating businesses, starting with Hockeytickets.ca.

"Hockey just seemed like the obvious choice because it is the sport in Canada and for Canadians. Nothing else really comes close," he said.

Teaming up with Steven Hindle, a local writer who covers the Canadiens for Hockeybuzz.com, Maxymych launched the site partway through the 2010-11 NHL season, essentially becoming the scalpers of the digital age, with hushed haggling in the shadows of the Bell Centre replaced by glossy credit card transactions online.

"How sweet is it to stand outside, stand in front of the scalper and buy the tickets for a better price," said Hindle.

The site provides tickets for any NHL arena across North America and is supplied through online ticketing giant TicketNetwork, allowing customers to opt between picking up their tickets, having them mailed or simply printing them at

home. Hindle claims that generally tickets sell for 10 to 15 percent less than face value, though Maxymych admits that premium seats, especially those for marquee match-ups, aren't likely to have as big of a discount.

In preparation for the new season this fall, Hockertickets.ca underwent a dramatic design overhaul and added hockey news and articles written by Hindle to further stimulate web traffic and, by extension, tickets sales.



Peter Maxymych, left, and Steven Hindle January 15 at Maxymych's office in the old RCA building on Lenox.

Poised to make a bigger splash in the hockey-crazed country, Hockeytickets.ca's web traffic slowed to a crawl as the prolonged labour dispute between the NHL and the players' association crippled it and other hockey-centric businesses. According to a December report by credit and debit card processor Moneris, spending near the Bell Centre decreased by more than 21 percent from game days last year.

When the lock-out officially ended on January 12, Hockeytickets.ca noticed an instantaneous increase in traffic as fans came out of hockey hibernation looking for tickets.

"We aren't the only ones who got slammed [by the lockout]," said Maxymych. "Now we're hoping to make up for lost time."



Ville de Westmount  
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DONNÉ à Westmount, le 5 février 2013.

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PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given by the undersigned, Treasurer of the City of Westmount:

THAT the general collection roll of taxes for fiscal year 2013 was filed at my office located at 4333 Sherbrooke Street West, Westmount on January 28, 2013; and

THAT the tax accounts have been mailed within the allotted time.

GIVEN at Westmount on February 5, 2013.

Annette DUPRÉ  
Trésorière / Treasurer

# Looking ahead to 2013



## Our Man in Ottawa

MARC GARNEAU, MP  
FOR WESTMOUNT-  
VILLE MARIE

As we all tend to do at this time of year, it's time to reflect on the year gone by and think about the year ahead. Here are my own thoughts.

As your member of parliament, it has been an honour to represent you in the house of commons during 2012 and to champion the values we share. While I will not always be able to speak for everyone on every issue, I have done my best to speak for the majority of Westmount-Ville Marie residents. Ultimately, of course, you are the judge.

It has also been an honour for me to be house leader for the Liberal party. This has allowed me to become intimately familiar with the workings of the house, participate in the preparation of the daily question pe-

riod and develop strategy as we debate each new piece of legislation.

I believe the Liberal party achieved success in raising awareness of the government's lack of respect for democracy – whether we're talking about massive omnibus bills reduced to a single vote, excessively limiting the time of debates on new bills or controlling the workings of parliamentary committees. Canadians took note of this during 2012 and voiced their displeasure.

### Conservative performance on economy 'unimpressive'

Looking ahead to 2013, there is no expectation of a federal election, and the government focus will undoubtedly remain on the economy, which, according to many, is still far from robust. On that score, I believe the government's performance has been unimpressive. Regrettably, Mr. Harper seems content to merely point out that Canada is doing better than other G7 countries. While this is true, this is setting the bar very low at a time when

Canada should be seizing the opportunity to address many of the structural weaknesses in our economy.

### Leading Liberal party

This brings me to my own objective for 2013, which is to become the leader of the Liberal party by focusing on those structural weaknesses and other issues.

My campaign has been under way since November 28 and is proceeding very well. My sense is that Canadians like what they are hearing from me in terms of policy and that I am viewed as a strong contender for the position of leader. While the campaign has another three months to go and will include five candidate debates, I feel I am off to a good start.

The outcome of the leadership race will be determined on April 14.

In the meantime, let me wish all of you a happy New Year and assure you of my continued commitment to representing you with pride in the parliament of Canada.

## Westmounters recently recognized by GG for contributions to Canada

Grosvenor Ave. resident Irene Tschernomor, was recently awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal for her "contribution in the field of health-care." She is executive director of the Queen Elizabeth Health Complex, a not-for-profit organization that offers health care covered by the provincial health and social services system. Some 60 000 Canadians said to be "recognized for their contributions to Canada" were to receive a jubilee medal in 2012.

### McKeon awarded 'caring Canadian'

Maura McKeon of Clarke Ave. was pre-

sented the Governor General of Canada's Caring Canadian Award by David Johnston, the governor general of Canada on November 27. An award ceremony was held at the Armoury of Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal Regiment in Montreal. McKeon, a retired high school teacher in social studies is the wife of Robert Wilkins, a former city clerk and secretary of the city of Westmount. According to Wilkins, she was recognized for "her long-standing compassion towards society's most vulnerable, and for the home-cooked food hampers she makes for them."

## Snow noise irks resident of 4300

A resident of the apartment complex at 4300 de Maisonneuve called Public Security at 4:42 am Saturday, January 19 to complain about snow removal noise. Responding officers found a contractor working at the entrance and handed him a copy of a document stating he could not work overnight unless 10 cm of snow had fallen. The contractor stated he would return at 7 am.

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## Arena cont'd. from p. 3

using steel, not only do we have a more airy feeling, but we also save about two months by not having to pour concrete at the site in cold weather. Also, the steel beams are made in a factory where quality control can be closely monitored under ideal conditions."

While the west rink has yet to be enclosed on the west (Lansdowne) and the south sides, many other aspects of the work are going on, Martin explained. These include plumbing, the laying of electrical conduits, drainage and the installation of piping to warm the seating area. This uses heat extracted from the cooling of the ice.

"We're also using the heat to melt the ice shavings from the Zamboni after the cleaning of the rinks. In the old arena, the staff had to pour hot water on the shavings!"

### Pool not yet excavated

At the moment, the pool area has not been excavated and is being used as a staging ground as well as for the cars of workers. "They've been very, very good about parking within the site rather than taking up spaces on the street," he said.

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# Black with lace touches adorn guests at JGH event



## Social Notes from Westmount and Beyond

VERONICA REDGRAVE

Westmount's Congregation Shaar Hashomayim was totally transformed for the Jewish General Hospital's (JGH) third annual doctors' gala on November 20, honouring the hospital's department of surgical services.

Instead of entering on Metcalfe, the black-tie-clad guests came in through the temple's main doors on Côte St. Antoine. The Shaar's walls were draped with fabric so that all familiar elements were rendered unrecognizable thanks to the design team of Danielle Bitton, Raphy Benbaron and

The 500 party goers listened to presentations by JGH's Foundation chair **Allen Rubin**, there with his wife **Sarah**, in a black velvety to-the-knee dress; president **Rick Dubrovsky**, with **Elaine**, also in black with lace sleeves; and chief surgical services **Lawrence Rosenberg**, attending with his wife, **Donna**.

Guests included Westmounters **Dorothy and Hartley Stern**, **Alta and Harvey Levenson**, **Heleena and Eddy Wiltzer**, **Merle and Bernard Stotland**, **Marlene and Joel King**, **Janice and Lloyd Sheiner**, **Terry Kaspi**, **Pauline and Jeff Segel**, **Angie and Tony Loffreda**, **Nan and Bill**

**Lassner**, **Hillel Greenbaum**, **Joanne and Douglas Cohen**, **Morey and Diane Cohen**, **Saryl and Stephen Gross**, and **Manish Khanna**.

Black with touches of lace were the sartorial stand-outs at this elegant eve. Noted were **Marvin Epstein** and **Annette Hellmeister**, in a short frock of black lace on white; **Myer and Carole**

**Bick**, whose ball gown had a long matching black shawl with silver edging; **Bruce and Joelle Kent**, in a simple, black strapless dress; and **Morton and Bernice Brownstein**, chic in black lacey couture.

But in the sea of black, **Elyce Minogue's** chic lace dress in red caught the eye.

The event raised \$1,250,000 for the department of surgical services at the Jewish General.

Please send your information on spring fundraisers to [redgrave@videotron.ca](mailto:redgrave@videotron.ca) for the Westmount Independent spring calendar.



From left: Jason and Rachel Schwartz, and Joelle and Bruce Kent.



Sarah and Allen Rubin.

### Lorne Levitt.

Gala co-chairs were Dorel Industries' founder and CEO **Martin Schwartz**, attending with his wife **Sondra**, in a silver lacey gown, and Pava Corporation's **Peter Triassi**, there with his daughter **Angelina**.

Fabulous food was made by Citrus Traiteur's chefs **Mo**, **Ian Giroux**, **Ryan** and **Candice Mitkoff**. The event was coordinated by **Annette Goldman**.

Guests were moved by Neil Oakshott's (Eclipse Productions) video of patient testimonials, which was accompanied by electro-violinist Dr. Draw. Chanteuse Jacynthe was special guest, backed by the Montreal Rhapsody Orchestra.



Carole and Myer Bick.



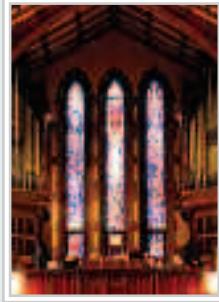
Peter Tirassi, left, and Martin Schwartz.



Elaine and Rick Dubrovsky.

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## Comin' Up

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 7

- **Westmount winter carnival** starts. See [www.westmount.org](http://www.westmount.org) for list of scheduled events. See story January 29, p.1.
- “Turn down the heat, turn up your sweater!” with a **panda mascot** – event for children, 3 to 5 pm at the Westmount Public Library. In conjunction with the World Wildlife Fund. Free.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12

**Westmount Horticultural Society** speaker Nicholas Hoare on his collection of 1,500 gardening books, house designs in Annapolis Royal and other topics, 7 pm at the Westmount Public Library. Cost: \$5 for guests.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14

• Back-to-back **demolition hearings** for 91 Summit Crescent and 3219 The Boulevard (Braemar) at 5 pm and 6 pm respectively, at city hall (see story January 29, p. 2.)

• Artists **Anna Gedalof and Aileen Marie Vantomme** exhibit their work at The Gallery at Victoria Hall, until March 9.

• **Montreal Storytellers' Guild** celebrate the theme of love and courtship with stories, songs and poems, 7 pm at the Westmount Public Library. Coffee/tea and cookies. Free.

**University Women's Club of Montreal**  
Roxanne Stanners, Lawyer, and former UWCM President, will share her experience as an Adjudicator with the Truth & Reconciliation Commission. 6:00 pm., Wednesday, February 13, 2013, Atwater Club, 3505 Atwater Avenue. Cost: \$30.76; non-members \$40. Newcomers welcome. To reserve, call **514-932-3922**.  
[www.uwcm.com](http://www.uwcm.com)

The **Montreal Children's Library** cordially invites you to a special event: An evening of storytelling for adults!  
**Saturday, February 9, 2013 at 7:30 p.m.**  
Mountainside United Church  
687 Roslyn, Westmount  
Admission – \$40 (refreshments included, partial tax receipt)  
Please reserve your tickets today by calling us at **514-931-2304**

### Think Greene on Valentine's Day! Come help us celebrate with a lunch.

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## My daughter, the frequent flyer



### Parenthood Uncensored

SOPHIE TARNOWSKA

At the tender age of 9, my daughter is a frequent flyer. Not in the Westmount way, as in “we visit our home in Florida on a regular basis, dahling,” but in the “my parents are divorced and live in two different countries” kind of way.

I went through the same thing as a child, although my father lived oceans away, often in countries that required either vaccinations or at least a visa. However, I travelled with my brother, which meant we took care of each other, at least in theory. In practice, it meant we fought in airports a lot; like the time he was so tired of my 12-year-old bossiness that he left our carry-on luggage on a moving escalator and walked away snickering, while I threatened to kill him at the top of my lungs.

After I moved to Montreal, my ex would fly in to see our daughter every two weeks. Then he had another child, and another, and I suppose he had to choose between spending weekends alone with his eldest daughter, and having the very full diapers of his new children thrown at his head by his wife for being absent so often. So he started sending a family member to Montreal to pick up our daughter and fly back with her, like a very precious FedEx package.

This was hard for me because I don't like flying. I've been known to chant prayers under my breath during turbulence (except for the time I was chanting

so loud that my child had to shush me, like a crazy lady). I can assess whether we're flying on a Boeing or an Airbus just by the sound of the engines, and I've amassed an inventory of random facts about planes, as though understanding them better will prevent them from falling out of the sky.

Still, knowing that the average 747 carries enough fuel in its wings to fuel a gazillion cars hasn't helped much. Nor has flying with friends who spend an unreasonable amount of time telling me how unreasonable my fear is. “Please shut up and pass me your wine,” say I.

So when my ex suggested our child start flying as an unaccompanied minor – as in *alone* – I had mental images of slamming him over the head with a frying pan – a familiar fantasy but one I hadn't had since we got separated. For months I was dead set against it.

Until the day when my daughter's flight companion's flight was cancelled, and I'd made plans to leave the country soon after she was scheduled to leave. The weather was good, her family awaited, and she was excited to go alone, “Mama, I know the airport so well! It's so easy!”

I had to face the fact that my fear of her flying, though reasonable, was my fear and mine alone, and that it was making an already complicated situation even more complex. So I plastered a fake “I'm-a-mature-adult” smile on my face, drove her to the airport, checked her in, and did my best to be extra nice to the United Airlines staff who would take her to New Jersey while hopefully conveying unspoken threats of potential hellfire if they forgot her in the bathroom or gave her those mini bottles of vodka as a snack.

And I encouraged her, and I smiled, and I waved until she was gone. And then I cried. And I cursed my ex. And borders. And divorce.

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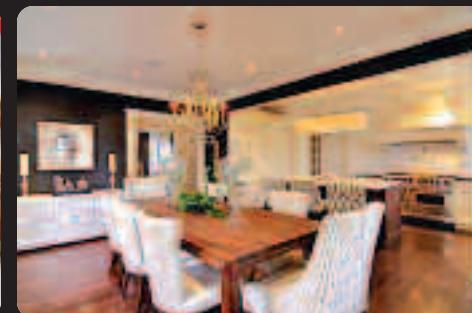
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