

Kensington woman dies in New Year's day fire-related incident

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

Residents of the apartment building at 239 Kensington were saddened over what they call the "tragic" death January 1 of a well-liked elderly tenant.

An 84-year-old woman of limited mobility was found lying on the floor of her kitchen after her smoke detector went off around 7:20 pm, said Julie Gascon, head of the Montreal fire department's communications.

Family friends and fellow residents identified her as Yolande Leclair Lacroix, who had lived there some 45 years.

She was in cardiac arrest and had burns

over 50 percent of her body, Gascon said. Neither firefighters nor Urgences Santé were able to resuscitate her. A stove burner was on without a pot and the tap was running. There was some smoke but no flames and only slight fire damage on the kitchen floor.

No cause of death was made known by the end of last week and concerned residents were awaiting the results of an autopsy.

"We still don't know whether she suffered a heart attack first and fell into the stove or had a heart attack after her clothing caught fire," said Susan Kazenel, a resident of the building. "The circumstances were what makes this so tragic."

Lacroix appeared "quite frail but was extremely with it," Kazenel said. "She was always very continued on p. 16

First big storm of 2015



On January 5 in King George (Murray) Park, several trees had ice-laden and broken branches following the freezing rain the day before. See story, p. 3.
Photo: Ralph Thompson

\$3M decontamination claims still pending

City to pay Pomerleau \$272K in mediation settlement

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A final deal has been struck between the city of Westmount and contractor Pomerleau over construction of the Westmount recreation centre (WRC), Mayor Peter Trent said January 8.


The city will pay Pomerleau \$272,716 excluding taxes in settling outstanding claims of credits and extras by each party resolved in early December after mediation meetings in November. This is ex-

pected to be approved at the city council meeting January 12 after press time.

This brings the total amount of post-contract extras to \$751,342, or 2 percent of the overall contract, Trent said.

"I think we've done very well on an innovative project of this nature that's never been done before." The two underground ice rinks are believed to be first in the world.

Since the city will apply its \$500,000 "prize" from continued on p. 17



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No reply yet on city’s super-hospital statement

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A new tack in the city of Westmount’s fight against noise from the super-hospital site has so far failed to generate any official response from either Montreal mayor Denis Coderre or the Quebec minister of the Environment to whom the city reached out December 17.

“We’re still waiting for an answer,” Mayor Peter Trent said at the end of last week.

Before sending out the letter, however, he said preliminary consultation with Montreal officials indicated the noise was also of concern to them.

With the hospital set to open in April, the installation of baffles at that time would be extremely expensive, Trent told the *Independent*.

The city’s decision to reach out to both Quebec and Montreal came after appeals to the MUHC and its project manager, SNC-Lavalin. Their responses at two pub-

lic meetings was also less than encouraging, according to the statement from Trent.

“Unfortunately, rather than presenting concrete solutions, much of the December 8 public meeting was spent with SNC-Lavalin trying to make the case – a hardly disinterested case at that – to the effect that the current noise environment met all norms,” Trent wrote.

“In fact, it was clearly asserted that, not only do the current noise levels meet ‘government’ norms, but they were under the


maxima allowed under the city of Montreal’s noise by-law.”

Therefore, he continued, “there is no point for the city to continue to work with SNC-Lavalin in the matter.”

Trent disputes the SNC-Lavalin’s position and maintains it is the city of Montreal’s noise regulations that must be respected since the source of the problem is in Montreal territory.

A full text of the letter was posted on the city of Westmount website last week.

Does noise constitute reason to devalue property?



Real estate

ANDY DODGE, CRA

The question of contesting the value of properties affected by the noise from the MUHC super-hospital is mired in legalese and bureaucracy, it appears.

The city issued a notice last month (De-

cember 17, p. 23), reminding ratepayers of their right to file complaints in the second (or third) fiscal year for which a valuation roll applies, to take into account any changes in a property that would substantially affect its value, which have not already been acknowledged by the city assessor.

Dorothy Lipovenko, who is spearheading the citizen complaints about the noise from the ventilation system, was encouraged to contest the valuation of her York St.

property because, she said, “I will never be able to sell my house with this noise” in the background.

By rights, the existence of the noise is not a latent defect since it is readily apparent, but it becomes much more pronounced in the middle of the night when there is little other noise to compete with it. “You cannot know what it’s like until you try to sleep here,” she said.

Her first step was to seek out advice from Westmount city hall. Yes, she was

told, if one reads the back of the contestation form, one of the reasons for filing a complaint is “Failure by the assessor to make an alteration to the roll, despite an event occurring that should have lead [sic] to such an alteration.” Then later, under “Grounds Invoked,” the same instructions list, “for example, the defects of an immovable (breakage, construction defects, etc.), nuisances (noise, pollution, flooding, etc.) as well as its financial situation (loss of rent, *continued on p. 16*

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First storm of the year

Power holds steady as branches fall at some 100 locations, cars damaged

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The snow and ice storm January 3 and January 4 – and its aftermath – left Westmount without any power outages or reports of injuries from falls on sidewalks, Public Security and Hydro Westmount officials reported for last week.

Falling branches, however, were recorded at more than 90 locations as well as at another seven, where damage was reported to cars or private property. Most involved city trees. Reports of those with damage were sent the city's legal department.

Over those days, public safety officers reported moving branches away from streets, helping motorists push cars out of frozen snowbanks and continued to provide special attention to some 106 houses left vacant from December 20 to January 5.

"We were out there on the street day and night helping wherever we could and compiling lists of fallen branches requiring attention by Public Works and Hydro Westmount," said Public Security director

Greg McBain. "We tried to remove those in danger of falling on wires and causing blackouts."

"A lot of branches were hanging on wires but nothing that triggered a loss of power," said Hydro Westmount director Benoit Hurtubise last week "We're going around now cutting branches and assessing the situation according to priority."

Meanwhile, Public Works began snow loading operations January 5.

During the rain and heavy winds, traffic lights at Belmont and The Boulevard were found lying in the middle of the street at 1:54 pm January 4, appearing to have been knocked over by a loader, according to Public Security reports. Another one at Clarke and de Maisonneuve was also discovered in the street.

On the Sunday, a large branch was discovered to have fallen on the roof of a car at 52 Academy Rd., damaging the top and shattering the rear window. Falling branches also heavily damaged steps at 64 Bruce and cars at 25 Bruce, 4450 de Maisonneuve and a Lexus at 329 Roslyn.

On Monday, a patroller at 1:53 am discovered another branch that had damaged the hood and windshield of a car on Wood.

A branch was also found leaning on an electrical wire at the rear of Lansdowne at 7:15 pm. Hydro and Public Works were called.

Also on Monday, officers assisted two motorists trying to move their cars out of icy banks: one was on Redfern at 6:25 pm; the other outside 488 Wood, where a patroller was flagged down at 8:18 pm for a Jetta.

Pen salesman arrested after PSOs intervene

Answering a call from a resident about someone selling pens on Olivier December 28 at 2:24 pm, public safety officers intercepted a man on the street leading to his eventual arrest, Public Security officials said. The officers told him the city did not allow door-to-door sales.

Intercepted a second time on Grove Park, the man became aggressive, telling officers to stop following him.

Meanwhile, he was kept under surveillance until the arrival of police by which time he had made his way to Greene and de Maisonneuve.

The man was then identified and arrested on a warrant for breaking conditions related to a release from detention in Quebec City.

He was described as in his 50s and wearing a backpack.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CITY SHOULD ALLOW FOR
EARLIER SNOW CLEARING

Snow removal from the Westmount Park Church parking lot is a big problem with the severe restrictions and fines placed on contractors trying to operate in Westmount.

Westmount Public Security has told our contractor that he can only start clearing snow at 6 am, and they have threatened him with a \$1,500 fine. What are we to do? This is Canada. It snows anytime in 24 hours.

The city has to function.
Frankly, when I hear snowploughs in the night, it is music to my ears because I will be able to get around in the morning. It is understood snow removal is done after 10 cm have fallen. After this, clearing the snow late or not at all from the church parking lot in the morning could have serious consequences. It is the main entrance for Rainbow preschool.
Cleaning staff for the building, beginning with the preschool, start arriving at 6 am. More staff for Rainbow, Contactivity, Westmount Music Therapy and the Montreal Presbytery, start arriving around 7 am onwards, which means there are already

cars in the parking lot early in the morning.

It is a small lot, with 13 angled parking spots and a few cars parked along the hedge. We cannot afford to remove the snow so it is just pushed to the park side of the lot often taking away about two parking spots. Therefore, it only takes about two to four runs to clear the snow, 15 minutes max, and they are gone.

Our contractor, Oasis, has worked in Westmount for 25 years but he is only one of many contractors operating in Westmount.

No contractor can be giving good service to all their clients if they have to deal with traffic and pedestrians during morning rush hour if they are not allowed to clear snow significantly earlier.

The snow removal must be done prior to 6 am when cars with staff start arriving, and it certainly cannot be done when many children start being dropped off.

The groups and parents that need the church parking lot cleared will have great problems if some of these restrictions and the threat of fines are not lifted.

JOAN HAGERMAN, TREASURER OF
WESTMOUNT PARK CHURCH

LOOKING OUT FOR SAFETY
OF PSOs

Mr. Hopley raises some very valid points in his letter (“Bullet-proof vests? Really?” December 17, p. 7). Certainly we have witnessed an overall decline in crime rates throughout Quebec, a true testament to the hard work and dedication of our law enforcement officers. Westmount is fortunate enough to employ dedicated and passionate public safety officers, who are committed to maintaining the safe reputation that our city upholds.

That being said, I would encourage Mr. Hopley to spend a few hours with our public safety officers who have been assigned to supervising the south-east sector. There are a number of serious issues facing the city [leading to times when] our PSOs are forced to intervene with on a daily basis. I would agree that seeing our PSOs suddenly wearing these vests may come as a shock to residents – this is why a communication plan has been put in place well

before the vests will be introduced.
Though Mr. Hopley may feel that our officers do not have the training and special powers garnered by the Montreal police, that is not the case. Our officers are highly trained individuals, who are committed to the protection of Westmount’s residents. Despite regularly intervening in high-risk situations, our officers do not and will not carry firearms. For that reason we feel they should be protected adequately enough to conduct their operations with peace of mind.

I prefer to be proactive rather than reactive, particularly as it pertains to the health and well-being of our citizens and the city’s employees.

Introducing the argument that protecting our uniformed officers with puncture-proof vests will lead to a “police state” is quite the continuum fallacy, but has been noted nonetheless. We will do our best to avoid creating a “police state” here in Westmount, but we won’t
put the safety of our pub- continued on p. 14

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Snow clearing rules need to be changed



A city councillor's perspective

PATRICK MARTIN

It is time to put some sense into the rules for snow clearing by private contractors.

We had a 30 cm snowfall before Christmas that required much effort by contractors working overnight to clear the snow from lanes, driveways and parking lots before morning rush hour.

It is hard work, but a challenge they are contracted to meet. They are out there in the night working for us, making sure that we can get to work in the morning, that school lots can function, that doctors and medical personnel can get to their urgent appointments, that medical offices are accessible to staff and visitors, and that emergency vehicles can reach all of Westmount.

Can you imagine the chaos if this work impacts the morning rush hour? It would mean total gridlock, and the security of pedestrians (particularly children) would be at risk. We all count on essential snow

clearing to be completed before 7 am.

So how did we reward these contractors who worked so diligently in the pre-dawn hours? We fined them! Sixteen tickets totalling \$3,578 in fines.

Westmount's by-laws state that snow clearing can only take place between 7 am and 11 pm. An exception is made for snowfalls greater than 10 cm, allowing snow clearing to start at 5 am. But that is obviously not enough time to clear 30 cm of snow throughout Westmount before rush hour. And it is unsafe and almost impossible to do the work once the streets are filled with traffic.

A snowfall like this occurs a few times a year. Surely we can all put up with the sound of contractors occasionally clearing the snow very early in the morning so that the city can function.

Fifty years ago, schools might close for several days due to heavy snow. Snow was pushed to the side of the road, and eventually snowblowers would toss it onto our lawns, with snow banks 2 metres high. Today, residents demand clear streets for traffic and parking, and for snow to be transported away at ten times the cost.

And they also want peace and quiet at night.

Well, you can't have it both ways. Residents pay heavy taxes for the quality of life in Westmount, and that includes being able to get into and out of their houses in a timely fashion. We must be tolerant of the periodic occasions when contractors need to work at night making Westmount safe and accessible.

We should refund the fines to the contractors, and change the by-law.

Patrick Martin is commissioner of Public Works.

Possible break-in reported on De Casson

A house on De Casson was possibly broken into December 25, though nothing appeared to have been stolen in the absence of residents, Public Security officials said. A neighbour noticed that a window pane in the back door had been broken and called patrollers to the scene at 1:11 pm. After verifying the damage and finding the door unlocked, officers called police. A search of the house indicated nothing had been taken. Residents, who turned out to be vacationing in Mexico, were finally contacted when a neighbour connected with them via Facebook.



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Outgoing DG gives the Independent his 'take' on Westmount in post-job interview

Campbell finds council's approach 'unique,' city resistant to change

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

After six years at the helm of the city administration, retiring director general Duncan Campbell last week described his attempts to “modernize” the organization and put it on track for the future. His last day was January 9.

Brought in from the “outside” on the retirement of Bruce St. Louis, Campbell discovered the city and its citizenry “may be a little more resistant to change,” than other municipalities.

After heading the Town of Mount Royal operation for 14 years and serving as associate director general of the Montreal megacity, Campbell’s “take” on Westmount might be considered to present a different perspective.

“The resistance to change here may stem from the attitude the council has toward residents,” he suggests. The council listens to every opinion, he says, and “tries to be everything to all people – maybe to a

fault. It’s highly democratic, mulls over the comments and decides what can be accomplished.”

In his experience, he adds, “It’s something unique. While it may make decision-making longer, it results in more buy-in.”

And is that frustrating to an administrator?

“It is,” he says, adding “to this administrator. I’ve always been an operations guy all my life.”

Nevertheless, he said, he is proud of what has been accomplished during his tenure. Heading the list, he said, is the “modernization” of the organization and bringing in the Westmount recreation centre (WRC).

Emerging from merger

In September 2008 when he arrived, he recalled the city was still transitioning from the merger years with Montreal. It was suffering the impact of losing \$21 million from the experience. It was planning for the new arena and was still using many processes and practices that belonged to a bygone pre-merger era, including financial software.

“The challenge was how do you maintain services while trying to modernize underneath?”

As in any organization, he says, human resources – including succession planning

– became a priority. “It’s all about having the right people in place.”

Working conditions were based on history rather than the marketplace, he found. New HR processes, hiring practices and competitive salary levels had to be put in place, he explained. But these changes were largely “hidden” to the public.

Campbell is also very proud to be associated with the WRC. “Given the city’s resistance to change, to bring in the \$40-million WRC is a feather in anyone’s cap.”

The idea of going underground “was a stroke of genius,” he said, as was the switch to a design-build concept, which eliminated debate on the design. “It put the emphasis on the program rather than on what colour the doors should be.”

This didn’t happen overnight, however. It involved “a lot of legal jockeying, which the public didn’t see.” The design-build approach, he said, “was a calculated risk that locked in the price and left the design to the real professionals.”

Success in collecting more than \$6 million in fundraising was another “fascinating element.”

What’s ahead for Westmount?

The ground work has now been laid for realizing a number of projects in the short-term, he said. These include implementation of

continued on p. 15

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Duncan Campbell, right, at his last Westmount council meeting December 15, poses with incoming director general Mike Deegan, by the portrait of Campbell's great-grandfather, George Hogg, mayor from 1927 to 1932.





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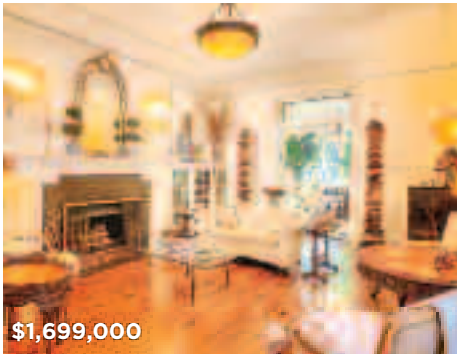
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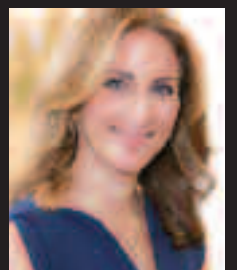
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2014.01.13 • Vol. 3/01
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HÔTEL DE VILLE

Projet Turcot : séance du 14 janvier

Le mercredi 14 janvier, 19 h, Victoria Hall, 4626, rue Sherbrooke O. Le public est invité à une séance publique d'information au sujet de la construction du nouvel échangeur Turcot. Un représentant du Ministère des transports du Québec expliquera les travaux à venir et les impacts sur Westmount.

Séance extraordinaire du conseil

Le conseil municipal de la Ville de Westmount présentera le rapport de la situation financière du Régime de retraite pour les fonctionnaires et les employés de la Ville de Westmount lors d'une séance extraordinaire qui se tiendra à la salle du conseil de l'hôtel de ville **le 19 janvier 2015 à 17 h**.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE

Conférences de 14 h : *Samson and Delilah*

Le mercredi 14 janvier, 14 h. George Wall présente *Opera 101: Samson and Delilah*. Veuillez vous inscrire au comptoir de prêt. Info : 514 989-5299.

Cercle de lecture "Reflections on Aging"

Le mercredi 14 janvier, 14 h. Découvrez des écrits de types très variés qui mettent en scène des aînés. L'inscription est requise. Info : 514 989-5386.

Club de lecture anglaise

Le mardi 20 janvier, 19 h. Discussion : *The Age of Innocence* d'Edith Wharton. Info : 514 989-5299.

Ateliers de poésie avec Ann Lloyd

Le mercredi 21 janvier et 4 février, 10 h 15. Libérez votre créativité dans une ambiance décontractée. Info : 514 989-5386.

ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

Exposition : Elizabeth Cameron

Du 15 janvier au 7 février. La galerie du Victoria Hall est fière de présenter les œuvres d'Elizabeth Cameron. Info : victoriahall@westmount.org ou 514 989-5521.

Carnaval d'hiver de Westmount

Les jeudi, vendredi et samedi 5, 6 et 7 février, parc Westmount et Victoria Hall. Fêtez l'hiver lors du 32^e Carnaval annuel de Westmount avec des activités pour tous : patinage, promenades en traîneau, soirée familiale et plus. Info : 514 989-5353.

Société d'horticulture de Westmount : La conception de jardins

Le mardi 13 janvier, 19 h (café et thé offerts à compter de 18 h 30), bibliothèque. Conférencier invité : Stefan Sobkowiak, biologiste et architecte paysager. Non-membres : \$5. Info : 514 932-9349.



Prochaine séance du conseil le lundi 2 février

TRAVAUX PUBLICS

Collecte de sapins de Noël



Jusqu'au 31 janvier. Placez l'arbre, dépouillé de toute décoration, à l'arrière du trottoir en tout temps. S.V.P., faites preuve de patience pendant les périodes de déneigement. Info : 514 989-5311.

Rappels : opérations de déneigement

La neige provenant des entrées privées peut être ajoutée aux bancs de neige existants avant leur enlèvement, mais ne doit jamais être poussée ou pelletée de façon à obstruer une rue, ruelle ou trottoir public. Autant les propriétaires que les entrepreneurs sont passibles d'amendes pour toute infraction. Les jours de collecte, déposez vos matières de façon à ne pas entraver le déneigement des rues et des trottoirs. Votre collaboration assurera un déneigement efficace.

Patinoires extérieures

Les patinoires King George et Stayner sont désormais ouvertes. Consultez le www.westmount.org pour connaître l'état des patinoires extérieures; leur fermeture temporaire est parfois nécessaire en raison des conditions météorologiques. Info : 514 989-5311.

SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE

Piste cyclable : conditions hivernales et mises à jour sur le déneigement

Les cyclistes sont invités à s'informer de l'état de la piste cyclable De Maisonneuve en s'abonnant au compte Twitter @westmount_cycle.

Stationnement pendant le déneigement

Les opérations de déneigement sont annoncées à l'aide de feux clignotants ou fixes sur les artères principales et de pancartes spéciales dans les rues secondaires. Veuillez vérifier la présence de ces avertissements dans les jours suivant une importante chute de neige ; les véhicules entravant les opérations de déneigement seront remorqués. Info : 514 989-5222.

HYDRO WESTMOUNT

Consommation d'électricité pendant les périodes très froides

En raison de la forte demande en périodes de grands froids, Hydro Westmount demande à ses clients de réduire leur consommation d'électricité pendant les heures de pointe, soit entre 7 h 30 et 9 h 30 et entre 16 h 30 et 19 h les jours de semaine. Il est recommandé notamment de reporter l'utilisation de sècheuses et de lave-vaisselle pendant ces périodes.

CITY HALL

Turcot project: January 14 meeting

Wednesday, January 14, 7 p.m., Victoria Hall, 4626 Sherbrooke St. W. The public is invited to attend an information session concerning the construction of the new Turcot Interchange. A representative of the Ministère des transports du Québec will explain the upcoming work and its impact on Westmount.

Special Council Meeting

The Municipal Council of the City of Westmount will present a report on the financial situation of the Pension Plan for the Officers and Employees of the City of Westmount at a special sitting to be held in the Council Chamber at City Hall on **January 19, 2015 at 5 p.m.**

LIBRARY

2 O'Clock Series: *Samson and Delilah*

Wednesday, January 14, 2 p.m. *Opera 101: Samson and Delilah* with George Wall. Please register at the circulation desk. Info : 514 989-5299.

"Reflections on Aging" Reading Circle

Wednesday, January 14, 2 p.m. Explore the experiences of older adults through a wide range of writings. Registration required. Info : 514 989-5386.

English Book Club

Tuesday, January 20, 7 p.m. Discussion: *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton. Info : 514 989-5299.

Poetry Workshops with Ann Lloyd

Wednesdays, January 21 and February 4, 10:15 a.m. Get creative in these light-hearted workshops. Info : 514 989-5386.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Exhibition: Elizabeth Cameron

January 15 to February 7. The Gallery at Victoria Hall is pleased to feature the works of Elizabeth Cameron. Info : victoriahall@westmount.org or 514 989-5521.

Westmount Winter Carnival

Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 5, 6 & 7, Westmount Park and Victoria Hall. Celebrate the winter season at Westmount's 32nd annual Carnival, with activities for everyone, including skating, sleigh rides, family night and more. Details soon. Info : 514 989-5353.

Westmount Horticultural Society:



Garden Design

Tuesday, January 13, 7 p.m. (tea & coffee from 6:30 p.m.), Library. Speaker: Stefan Sobkowiak, biologist and landscape architect. Non-members, \$5. Info : 514 932-9349.

Next Council Meeting

Monday, February 2nd

PUBLIC WORKS

Christmas Tree Collection

Until January 31. Remove all decorations and place the tree behind the sidewalk at any time. Please be patient during snow operations. Info: 514 989-5311.

Snow removal operations - reminders

Snow from private driveways and walkways may be added to the existing snowbanks prior to their removal, but must never obstruct public sidewalks, lanes or streets. Fines may be levied on homeowners and/or contractors who contravene these regulations. On collection days, please ensure that materials are kept out of the path of street and sidewalk plows. Your cooperation contributes to the efficiency of the City's snow removal operations.

Outdoor Skating Rinks

Skating rinks are now open at King George Park and Stayner Park. Check the condition of all the outdoor skating rinks at www.westmount.org; weather conditions may require their closure from time to time. Info: 514 989-5311.

PUBLIC SECURITY

Bicycle Path: winter conditions and snow removal updates

Cyclists using the De Maisonneuve bicycle path are invited to subscribe to the Twitter account @westmount_cycle for updates on the conditions.

Parking during snow removal

Advance warning of snow removal is provided by flashing or fixed lights on major thoroughfares and by special notices placed on side streets. Please check carefully in the days following a heavy snowfall; vehicles blocking snow removal operations will be towed. Info: 514 989-5222.

HYDRO WESTMOUNT

Electricity consumption during periods of intense cold weather

Due to extreme demand during very cold weather, Hydro Westmount asks its customers to reduce their electricity use during peak periods (weekdays, 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., and also 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.). Where possible, please delay using major appliances, particularly dryers and dishwashers, until after these peak periods.



McKenty launches book about husband's years in journalism



Catherine McKenty, wife of broadcaster Neil McKenty, signs copies of *McKenty Live December 12 at Folklore 1*. "After Neil passed away in May 2012, I started to go through all his papers and notes, and found a huge collection of funny stories, incidents and events that had been part of his life including his 13 years in radio and on TV," she said. "Compiling all these, including Aislin cartoons, into a book was a big task but with help from others and editing by Alan Hustak we made it." Royalties from the sale of the book are to create *The Neil McKenty Scholarship in Journalism* at Dawson College.

Photo: Ralph Thompson

Window open on Claremont

A front window was found slightly ajar at a house on Claremont near Lorraine December 26 and again January 2, Public Security officials said. On the second occasion, public safety officers were able to contact a relative in the absence of residents. She was to check out the house and close the window.

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Batshaw Children Needing Homes

May, at 4, needs more stability

A long-term foster home is being sought for four-year-old May, a shy, energetic child who enjoys music, loves to play dress-up and seems to be more comfortable in the company of adults. She is presently in an emergency foster home and is in need of a permanent one.

May has suffered much instability throughout her young life and has shown significant progress in adjusting to rules and routine in her present environment.

She has a history of neglect and has been lacking in activities to stimulate her development, resulting in developmental delays in speech. It is sometimes difficult

to understand her as she has a difficult time with expressive language. May is presently receiving services in the community, where she is progressing in her expressive language.

Her parents are unable to take care of her. She needs a family that can make a long-term commitment, as well as being open to structured visits from her parents. The ideal foster family would be that of a two-parent Cree/Soto or of aboriginal heritage for as long as she needs.

For more information about May please call Batshaw Youth and Family Centres at 514.932.7161, local 1139.

Gas leak forces evacuation of 10 houses on Stayner

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

A gas leak January 5 outside 47 Stayner caused firefighters to evacuate 10 houses on the street and cordon off a wide danger area, Public Security officials said. Meanwhile, Stayner, Greene, Clandeboye and Prospect were blocked to traffic by police and public safety officers.

All evacuees were reported to have had somewhere to relocate to over the two-hour period it took Gaz Metro to cap the leak. As a result, the fire department's bus did not have to be used for shelter. It was one of 12 fire vehicles at the scene along with 13 other emergency vehicles.

The leak occurred shortly before 11:24 am when a city contractor working on a water main accidentally hit the gas line, said Public Security director Greg McBain. Emergency services were summoned by Public Works.

Once repairs were completed, a city salt

truck was pressed into action to spread salt and abrasives on the street. A heavy accumulation of ice had built up from the use of hydrants.

Public safety officers left the scene at 1:52 pm.

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Police Report

Heater, other tools stolen from Dorchester construction site

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

By MICHAEL MOORE

A group of thieves reportedly stole a

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haul of industrial-grade construction equipment from a deserted Dorchester Blvd. renovation project in the middle of the night between December 1 and 2.

The suspects forced their way through the garage door to enter the office building, which was undergoing “major renovations,” said Station 12 constable Stephan Laperrière.

Once inside, the suspects took a large, industrial-strength rental heater, an electrical generator and a battery charger, taking the time to disconnect all three items from their respective power sources before fleeing the site.

There are no leads or descriptions of the suspects reported to police, according to Laperrière.

Hit-run driver flees over back fences

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

A hit-and-run suspect fled over back fences January 1 after crashing his car into two others parked in the area of 330 Lansdowne, Public Security officials said. In his rush to get away, he left his wallet in his heavily damaged car.

The incident occurred just before 2:14 pm, witnessed by an oil delivery man. The northbound car was reported to have mounted the sidewalk at 305 Lansdowne at Westmount Park Church. It hit a no-parking sign and backed out into the street hitting the two cars parked on the west side.

The delivery man called out to the driver

Letters, cont'd. from p. 6

lic safety officers at risk.

PHILIP CUTLER, COMMISSIONER OF PUBLIC SECURITY

CLARIFYING POSITION ON TRAFFIC LIGHTS ON GREENE

I was slightly misquoted* in the article on December 17 (“Trial assessed, Greene traffic lights reset,” p. 5) on a minor points that I made in comments to your reporter on the subject of the traffic lights trial at Greene and de Maisonneuve.

What I said was that not only pedestrians but also those arriving by car to shop in the area would be put at risk by this very dangerous situation. My main points were the following: this is a high-density neighbourhood with a high proportion of seniors living independently, aging in place, who rely on local shops and services and who need secure and safe pedestrian crossings.

Secondly, the city of Westmount spent a lot of money to redesign the Greene Ave. streetscape, as well as this intersection, to enhance its “walkability” in line with its policy of improving the southwest sector and Greene Ave. in particular.

Thirdly, there is a school nearby and many children and parents cross at that intersection.

Finally, there is already a major problem of cyclists not stopping for signs and even red lights. Among the many local people and merchants that I spoke to about this matter, the consensus was that it is a bad idea and should be abandoned, a view summed up by one long-time resident: “This is a death waiting to happen.”

EDITH KATZ, OLIVIER AVE.

* Editor's note: It is our belief that the reporter condensed the opinions of Edith

asking whether he was okay and telling him he had called police.

At the mention of police, the driver fled,

Katz and didn't misquote her.

— KM

NDP IS WORKING TO KEEP HOME MAIL DELIVERY

I noted in your article “Liberals wooed to keep home delivery of mail,” (December 9, 2014, p. 1) that the federal opposition parties were called upon to mount an effective campaign to delay and thwart the implementation of this wrong-headed policy until it can be subject to an in-depth review and redesign after the next federal election, under a new government.

To this end, you neglected to mention that the New Democrats have been extremely vocal in the house of commons, asking dozens of questions over the past year. Tom Mulcair has been very clear in expressing his opposition to this policy. Public meetings and canvassing drives have been organized across the country, and a national petition is being circulated opposing the move (<http://petition.ndp.ca/stop-the-cuts-to-our-postal-service>).

The official opposition is following Mayor Peter Trent's advice to the letter and would, I am sure, be very pleased to work with him and council to try to stave off this serious blow to our community.

I commend Mayor Trent on his attempt to get the member of parliament for Westmount-Ville Marie and the Liberal party go beyond private assurances that they oppose the current Canada Post program to eliminate domestic direct delivery. This is a vital service upon which the citizens of Westmount depend, and I assure them that the NDP is resisting the change to community mail boxes with great vigour and determination.

GEOFFREY CHAMBERS, PRESIDENT OF THE NDP RIDING ASSOCIATION OF NDG-WESTMOUNT

leaving behind so much damage to the green Pontiac Sunfire he had been driving and a parked charcoal Toyota Yaris that both had to be towed away.

At the same time, Public Security received a call from a resident saying a man was jumping over fences on properties between Lansdowne and Roslyn. When officers responded, they linked the suspect to the hit-and-run incident. Police arrived soon after but the suspect had made good his escape. His wallet and identification papers were soon in the hands of police.

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Campbell, cont'd. from p. 8

the Master Traffic Plan, modernizing parking meters, bringing in a new Hydro Westmount billing system and computerizing building permits, probably next year.

Others include the updating of by-laws and the implementation of a capital assets management plan. In respect to the latter, he said, "The focus is on better planning" so a commitment to investment can be made "in the right places."

Why have results of the CIMA+ studies on parking in the southwest sector and on bike paths taken so long to be announced?

The parking study is now being worked on by the Transportation Advisory Committee, particularly for the Victoria village, he said. This includes "the whole aspect of blue stickers," which allow for resident parking.

On the other hand, the "political review" of bike paths is what has taken most of the time with that study, he said. The question facing the council is: "How do we resolve the acceptability of bike paths" on residential streets such as de Maisonneuve, Côte St. Antoine or Westmount Ave., he said. "Montreal's way would be to just put it in."

On being city manager

As for the role of director general, he

says, despite the authority and responsibility invested in the position, "it's important never to cross the line and think you're bigger than the council. It's like being the mother of the groom at the wedding: Wear beige and keep your mouth shut."

His philosophy to the job, he said, has been to maintain a good work-life balance rather than working 24/7. It's something he has been encouraging in others, he said. In this day of instant communication, it is particularly important at the end of the day and week to "go home and spend time with your family."

What's ahead for Campbell after handing over the reins of the city to Mike Deegan?

"I plan to help Mike out if he needs me but it's important that I make myself scarce unless he asks. Sometimes the best way to learn is to jump right into the cold water."

In the next couple of months, Campbell says he plans to take the time to work on his house in Baie d'Urfé and continue teaching skiing twice a week at Tremblant. After that, he said, he may consider a couple of short-term offers.

He has lots of energy at age 63, he adds. "You do the best you can in a job and then move on and let someone else continue the work. Hopefully I've made a positive change."

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September transfers: Listless market



Real estate

ANDY DODGE, CRA

The following article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in September 2014, gleaned from non-city sources. A list of sales can be found on p. 17.

Westmount property sold in September last year indicated a somewhat listless real estate market here, though all but two of the home sales cleared the \$1-million mark

and the average mark-up moved above parity again after dropping below 100 percent in August.

Two houses very close to each other at 78 Summit Circle and 78 Sunnyside Ave. sold for \$2,100,000 each in September. The first went for 21 percent less than its municipal valuation, the biggest mark-down of the month, while the second sold for eight percent more than city value.

The lowest price was \$880,000 for 45 Prospect St., and the highest mark-up involved the only duplex sale of the month, 56-58 Chesterfield Ave., which sold for 49 percent more than its \$1,043,100 valuation. (Another double address, 543-45 Grosvenor, has been completely renovated

as a single-family dwelling in recent years, and even the city no longer gives it duplex status.)

Overall, 11 single-family homes and one duplex sold for an average \$1,381,500 and an average mark-up of 3.5 percent, about the same level it has averaged for the entire year.

Three condominiums, one in a former duplex and two apartments, sold in September, bringing the total for the third quarter of 2014 to 11 sales, two of which were over \$1 million and including the \$4,895,000 sale of a penthouse at 1 Wood Ave. some 78 percent above valuation, which seriously distorts the averages. Without that one sale, 10 sales averaged

\$618,459, which was about three percent below municipal valuation. Of the 10, in fact, five sold above tax value and five below.

Two other sales that have come to the *Independent's* attention are included in the list of sales, one for a townhouse at 4893 de Maisonneuve Blvd., whose price of \$835,000 last May was closer to the \$875,000 valuation now in place than the \$1,007,900 original 2014 valuation. Also, the 25-unit apartment building at the corner of Grosvenor Ave. and St. Catherine St., 288 Grosvenor, sold in June for \$4,430,000.

Valuation, cont'd. from p. 2

high expenses)..."

The pure mention of noise as a nuisance and the stipulation that she would be allowed to file "in the course of the financial year in which the event justifying an alteration occurs or prior to the end of the following financial year," as stipulated by the city's ad referred to above, gave Lipovenko

hope that she would be able to apply.

Not so fast, say officials from the city valuation department, whom she called to ensure they would be on side with this procedure. The law itself says nothing about noise, pollution or flooding, etc., only damage by fire or demolition. Article 174.6 of the provincial Act Respecting Municipal Taxation clearly states, "The assessor shall alter the roll...to indicate a decrease in the value of a unit of assessment which results from a fire in or the destruction, demolition or disappearance of all or part of an immovable comprised in the unit." That clause has not been amended or embellished since the law was first enacted in 1980, though another clause has been added having to do with waterways and water supply.

Valuation department officials say that the "event" referred to on the application form applies only to the property being assessed, and not to the environment around it, which is constantly changing. "Did the arrival of the hospital increase the value of property in the area?" one official asked, and then explained that even if

it did, he would not be allowed to increase the valuations of all the properties because of that.

He also pointed to the recent reconstruction debacle on Park Ave. as an example, where the city was unable to reduce valuations for the various stores that were suffering badly from the continued upheavals, unless they involved a specific "event" (fire or demolition) within a single property.

For all these situations, he said, the valuation department would have to take a long hard look at the areas involved in creating the next (2017) valuation roll, which will be based on the market values of properties as at July 1, 2015. By then, of course, the situation may be rectified in one way or another, in which case there may be no need to give special attention to valuations in the southwest Westmount neighbourhood.

Lacroix, cont'd. from p. 1

friendly when we would meet in the lobby. She was a lovely person. We all liked her."

The funeral is to take place at St. Léon de Westmount church at a time to be announced, said Paulette Zielinski, a family friend for some 60 years. She said Lacroix was born in Ottawa and came to the apartment building after her marriage to Gérard Lacroix. They had no children.

"She led a simple life but family was at the core of it," Zielinski said. Lacroix had worked as a secretary at Steinberg's and Avon, retiring from Teleglobe.

Dusty Solomon, who has lived in the building since 1967 when it was built, also described Lacroix as "a really nice person." Her apartment was "quite lovely." She had not been well and usually used a walker, she said.

The walker was later found in her bedroom, however, so it appeared she had not been using it in the kitchen, Zielinski said.

Lacroix was "quiet but darling," said another resident who had just recently shared a taxi with her from hair appointments at Salon Olivier on Greene Ave., where hairdresser Francine Lacroix (no relative) had become a good friend of the deceased.

"I've been doing her hair ever since she moved into the building 45 years ago," Francine said. "We became close friends, and it's hard to fathom this could happen." She said Yolande chose to live in Westmount because it was close to downtown.

Fire officials said the call to the apartment had been received via Lifeline, a monitoring service whose medical alert bracelet Lacroix was wearing when the smoke detector went off. Tenants of the 11-storey building had assembled in the lobby when firefighters arrived as the main fire alarm system rang.



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TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

Westmount Toastmasters Club's open house with guest speaker Yaw Perbi, president of ISMC, 7 pm to 9 pm at Victoria Hall. Free. Info: 514.927.1748.



University Women's Club of Montreal
Wednesday, January 21st at 6 pm
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Stories from the Mount Royal Cemetery. This illustrated talk will show the final resting place of many famous people who played an important role in the development of the country and renowned figures. \$31.04 (members), \$50 (non members; glass-wine included). Reservations required. Newcomers welcome.

For reservations or information, call Carly:
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Bought & Sold – real estate transfers in September 2014

For real estate transfers, please consult paper archive.

Pomerleau, cont'd. from p. 1

Hydro Quebec to the total net cost of the project, the cost of the extras to the city would be \$251,342 or some 0.7 percent, Trent said. It is also understood that fundraising has brought in more than the \$6 million budgetted.

“With this deal from Pomerleau, I’m still sticking to my original estimate of \$40.7 million cost for the project,” he told the *Independent*.

As part of the settlement, Pomerleau agreed to cancel \$164,167 of interest charges, Trent said.

Decontamination costs

Some \$3 million in decontamination costs disputed by the city will be “a separate claim by the city,” he said. The city had originally budgetted \$1 million for this purpose, a cost to be borne by the city, not Pomerleau. Once work got under way, it was disclosed these might reach \$2 million more in the “worst case scenario” (see June 4, 2013, p. 4).

The mediation sessions took place under the guidance of retired superior court judge André Forget.

The city’s original contract with Pomerleau for \$34.6 million included \$1.1 million in contracted extras such as the \$1-million rink extension and \$0.1 million for addi-

tional asbestos removal and the use of ceramic tile and architectural-grade concrete block.

Additional extras of some \$480,000 had also been approved by council before the mediation. These included the cost of additional back-fill for pool excavation and costs related to an old leaking pipe discovered during excavation.

Trent also said that two thirds of additional costs originally requested by Pomerleau had related to the discovery of the Bell Canada trunk line on de Maisonneuve that had not been shown on the city’s infrastructure maps. This led to delays and extra costs of winter work to the contractor.

For Andy Dodge’s analysis, see p. 16.

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YM-YWHA spring hockey fundraiser launched



*Social Notes
from Westmount
and Beyond*
VERONICA REDGRAVE

In early November, Westmounters Francine Wiseman, founding partner of GWBR LLP, and Robert Wiseman, president of RDH Property Group, held a reception in their beautifully renovated house. It had been recently re-designed, and now holds their fabulous art collection, which includes the internationally renowned Damien Hirst diamond-dust encrusted skull print and an enormous dip-tych by artist Stikki Peaches.

Wiseman is the co-chair of Hockey de Rue 2015, a street hockey tournament to raise money for the Montreal Canadiens Children's Foundation (MCCF) and the YM-YWHA. The May 2015 event is being planned with co-chair Westmounter Steve

Stotland, who attended the cocktail with his wife Glorianne. "The goal of both the Y and MCCF is to improve the health of young people in the Montreal area, as well as offering them athletic opportunities," said Wiseman.

Sponsorships for the Hockey de Rue one-day event are being offered at the \$2,000, \$5,000 and \$10,000 levels, as well as \$25,000 for three major sponsors.

PK Subban will provide mentoring support for six youth teams of 9- and 10-year olds from the municipalities or boroughs where the MCCF has built, or is now building, outdoor hockey facilities. Sponsorship of the PK teams is being offered at \$5,000 per team. For a donation of \$1,500 per player, 10 weekend athletes could play in a ball hockey game with Montreal Canadiens' legends. (P.S. We hope you week-enders are in good shape!)

Describing the importance of the programs, Pierre Boivin, president of the MCCF and president/CEO of Claridge Inc., addressed the invitation-only crowd.

Honorary presidents of Hockey de Rue are former Canadiens defenceman Patrice Brisebois and Montreal businessman Robert Oringer.

Also present were Geneviève Paquette, executive director, MCCF; Neil Uditsky, di-

rector Financial Resource Development, YM-YWHA; Christopher Donato, TD Wealth; and Westmounters Jonathan Pinsler, also with TD Wealth, Linda Smith and philanthropist Howard Wiseman, a team sponsor.



Chris Donato, left, and Jonathan Pinsler.

Rash of graffiti found over holiday period

Warm weather just before the holidays was believed to have led to a rash of graffiti, Public Security officials said. Between December 22 and January 3, a number of locations were discovered to have been hit. These included the west wall of Clifford's market on St. Catherine at Abbott and 4515 St. Catherine, where a witness saw three suspects.

More graffiti was recorded on a garage

door and wall on Olivier, as well as in laneways from Greene Ave. west to Abbott, the apartment building at 4501 Sherbrooke and inside the comfort station in Prince Albert Park.

On January 3, a suspect was reported to have been apprehended near 10 Somerville and handed over to police. No changes were laid when police were unable to find the marker used.



From left: Robert Wiseman, Geneviève Paquin and Pierre Boivin.

Photos courtesy of Ryan Blau



Patrice Brisebois and Linda Smith.



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490 Argyle \$1,195,000
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 MLS 24526789



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300 Lansdowne Apt 63 \$2250/ mo.
 One penthouse condo in Victoria Village, panoramic views, 2 balconies, 1 Bdr, garage. MLS 23106020



WESTMOUNT ADJ

3066 Trafalgar \$2,975,000
 Stunning home with views from large decks in great location with a pool! MLS 10545075



WESTMOUNT ADJ

4692 Av. Victoria \$959,000
 Steps to Westmount, this contemporary yet traditional renovated 4 bdr semi detached, offers lovely garden, parking included. MLS 15297413



MT-ROYAL PARK

2721 Hill Park Circle \$1,025,000
 Lovely 3 bedroom townhouse with garage on the Mountain MLS 10035953



PLATEAU MONT-ROYAL

3987 Rue Mentana \$539,000
 Unique, renovated 1300 SF 2 Bdr condo, Steps to Park Lafontaine w/large deck & prkg (1) MLS 12686072



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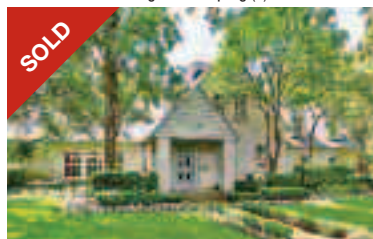
50 Berlioz Apt 105 \$519,000
 Magnificent garden level corner unit, 2 bdr, open concept beautiful kitchen & bathrm. MLS 1780443



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80 Berlioz Apt 208 \$395,000
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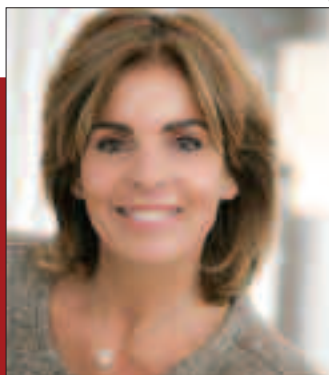
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80 Berlioz Apt 204 \$469,000
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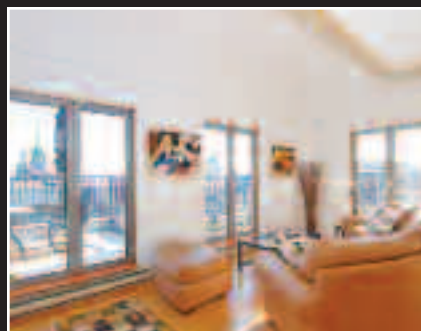
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