

Plans to wipe out WRC debt

City posts \$12M surplus

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

An unexpected surplus of \$12 million was generated by the city for the year 2014, Mayor Peter Trent revealed last week. It had been forecast at \$1.3 million.

The surplus will be used in part to essentially pay off the city's debt related to the Westmount recreation centre (WRC), which now stands at \$9 million. It would also eliminate the 2-percent related portion on property tax, he said.

Discovery of the multi-million surplus was brought to council's attention April 30 by the administration as a "miscalculation," Trent said. He attributed it in part to unrealized capital works projects and "hy-

per-conservative and sloppy" budgeting, which meant "taxing too much to run the city."

"I'm so angry about this," Trent stated. "We've been given lemons. On the other hand, we can use them to make lemonade."

Another significant surplus is foreseen for 2015, he added. Measures would be

"Today, we are better off than we were even before the merger."

— Peter Trent.

put in place, however, to prevent future recurrences. The budget process would be reviewed

as soon as a new person is hired to replace the city's treasurer who resigned May 4.

Two special funds are to be created, Trent said.

One of \$9 million would *continued on p. 8*

Cycling for Team Ian



Photo: Matt Faigan

One of two pelotons was set up under a tent in front of the Sherbrooke-St. entrance to the Metro grocery store June 7 to raise money for cancer informatics research. From left: Robert Therriault, Peter Smale, John Buchanan, Metro franchise owner Graham Fletcher and John Van Toch. See story, p. 18.

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Social Notes BY V. REDGRAVE p. 21

9 Lives BY L. FOWLER p. 20

Sports & Rec tries new approach for pool times

Kids can swim 'til 7:15

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The pool's summer schedule is to go into effect this week featuring several major changes introduced on a trial basis, Councillor Rosalind Davis announced last week. These come in response to requests for families to have more time to swim together at the end of the work day.

As a result, the time for "general swim" on weekdays will run straight through from 1 to 7:15 pm on weekdays instead of being interrupted by adult swim from 6 to

7 pm, Davis said. The adult swim will now take place from 7:15 pm until pool closes at 8:45 pm.

Pleas from a contingent of parents at the city council meeting June 1 included proposals to divide the pool during the traditional 6-7 pm adult swim time so that families might use the rest of it at the same time (see story June 9, p. 2).

"We decided to take a different approach from what had been suggested," Davis explained. "It enables families to use the pool at the *continued on p. 22*

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Tamara Courtney still missing, last seen at Atwater Metro

By MICHAEL MOORE

A 16-year-old Westmount teen remains missing after she vanished from the Atwater Metro station, according to Montreal police.

On June 6, Tamara Courtney was returning from a shopping trip with her grandmother when the pair decided to get on the Metro at the Atwater station. They split up to reach the Metro level, with Courtney using the stairs while her grandmother used an elevator in Alexis Nihon. Once the grandmother arrived, however, Courtney was nowhere to be found and has not been seen since.

An SPVM spokesperson told the *Independent* on June 19 that Courtney is still missing, and no new information on her disappearance has been uncovered.

At the time of her disappearance, Courtney, who is 5'3 tall and weighs approximately 115 pounds with brown eyes and black hair, was wearing a black Adidas vest, black pants and had a black bag with a



pair of jeans in it.

She is believed to have been carrying a cell phone, an OPUS card and \$10 in cash.

Police are asking anybody who has information about Courtney's disappearance to call Info-Crime at 514.393.1133.



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Checking out the ‘castle’



Restoration professionals are hoisted up by a giant crane June 12 to check out the condition of the exterior envelope of city hall. The parking lot was closed off during the work, which was carried out as part of the city's measures to upgrade municipal buildings.

By LAUREEN SWEENEY

There were no surprises found during an inspection of the building envelope of city hall June 12, Public Works director Patrick Raggo said last week. The assessment was carried out by restoration specialists hired by the city.


“We found what we expected,” he said. “It’s going to need some cleaning and re-pointing but nothing critical.”

The inspection required the use of crane truck at the north end of the driveway behind city hall blocking the parking lot.

The assessment updates the city's information on the condition of the 1922 building, which Raggo referred to as “a jewel.”

It is scheduled for masonry work under the city's capital works program in 2016 as the first of six phases to restore the building envelope.

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Moore questions MTQ's lack of English when reaching out to Westmount/NDG

BY ISAAC OLSON

It's called the Comité de bon voisinage NDG/Westmount. Hosted by Transport Quebec, public meetings are held every couple months in an effort to reach out to citizens and inform the population during the Turcot interchange reconstruction project. But, as one Westmounter pointed out at the recent June 8 meeting, none of the dialogue or information is presented in English despite being in an densely anglophone sector.

English isn't spoken during the meetings, questions posed by citizens in Eng-

ber for more in English.' There was, ironically, not a word in English. It was only in French."

Westmount is, by Quebec law, officially bilingual, said Moore, and NDG has a large English-speaking population.

"Oh, by the way," he added. "My wife was born in Quebec City. My kids have only gone to French school. So I'm a good person. I'm a professor at McGill and Oxford. I'm actually kind of smart, but I don't have good language skills in French."

The meeting's facilitator thanked Moore in English, saying his request has been heard.



Karl Moore addresses the Comité de bon voisinage NDG/Westmount on June 8.

lish are, if at all, responded to in French and the lead provincial representative, Martin Giroux, claims to be a unilingual Francophone.

To top it off, said Karl Moore, a university professor and CJAD radio host, the website disseminates important information about ongoing road closures and detours in French only. In fact, he said, when he called the Transport Quebec hotline for information in English, he was only responded to in French.

"I was looking at your website, and it would be nice to have a little bit of English," said Moore. "They delivered what I appreciate is an English and French leaflet to my house and it said 'phone this num-

Decoding Westmount's parking stickers

Mount Stephen poll taken to determine future use of 'orange' stickers

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

Residents of Mount Stephen had until June 19 to choose one of three parking options for their street following an outcry from one group of residents against the current "orange" permit system implemented in February.

These were the status quo, the previous system before the orange permits, or a modified status quo to allow for more 2-hour general parking spaces. This would double the number from five to 10 located at either end of the block.

While city officials were unable to provide a precise number of surveys delivered, they went to all households, according to traffic technician Jonathan Auger. They were slid under doors of apartments where possible.

While 80 copies of the form had been printed out, those remaining after distribution had not been counted, said Public Security Greg McBain, who estimated 60 to 70 had probably been handed out. The survey was also available on the city's website.

Congested neighbourhoods

The orange-sticker system had been created by the city to designate zoned parking reserved for residents in the congested neighbourhood of the Shaar Hashomayim synagogue, (see story February 10, p. 2).

It's the latest in a rainbow of city parking permits/stickers created over the years to control on-street parking and colour-coded by category. While some residents of Mount Stephen have wanted to eliminate

their own orange stickers, residents of other areas have been clamouring for their own "colour." These include those living on Redfern and in Victoria village.

The universal green or "W" sticker is the one provided at a cost of \$20 for cars belonging to Westmount residents not holding a 24-hour "red" permit. This enables them to park on the street for up to four hours, over-riding 1-hour and 2-hour restrictions but not in zones specifically signed as being reserved for local residents. Only one per household is issued.

The red sticker allows for "overnight" parking and generally 24-hour parking. It is available annually at a cost to all households without parking on their private property. This is also called the "G" permit. Costs are \$160 for the first car; \$320 for the second and \$480 for a third car.

Temporary residential parking

Blue stickers are given out for temporary residential parking, generally at or near construction sites, such as the current 175 Metcalfe condo project. Once the work is completed, the stickers are invalidated, such as those around the Westmount recreation centre and the 215 Redfern condos.

Other colours – such as the orange stickers for residents of Mount Stephen, Springfield and Metcalfe – are issued for specific zoned parking.

Permits do not over-ride other parking prohibitions including: in front of hydrants and meters, blocking driveways, in no-parking spots or those designated by temporary signage.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GOOD TO ANSWER EMAILS

Should Westmount council members answer every email from constituents?

The overwhelm answer is “yes” by unanimous consent according to Dave Lieber, an American writer, who states: “In the age of social media, email, like other forms of e-communication, is part of a dialogue, a two-way conversation. It is believed that officials should answer their email or at least acknowledge that a message has arrived. If nothing else, it builds relationships with voters. And it makes sense. Politicians are in the relationship business.”

Maintaining high standards in email communication is a sign of professionalism.

The question is: are the Westmount council members above the social norms and the professional statutes?

DIANA HERNANDEZ, ST. CATHERINE ST.

MORE FARMERS’ MARKETS, PLEASE

Regarding the Victoria village street festival, many thanks to the Victoria village street festival organizing committee for

their efforts to bring us another enjoyable event. It is always a pleasure to stroll through the area to see what is on offer and support our local merchants.

I was particularly thrilled this year to see that a farmers’ market was included on Sunday. While there were only a few stalls this time around, it was still wonderful to have access to a farmers’ market in the neighbourhood. I certainly hope many other people took advantage of the opportunity to buy high-quality seasonal produce directly from local growers.

I think it would be wonderful if the city could see their way to set up a farmers’ market in the area on a more regular basis. Even if it were just a weekly event, I am sure it would be well received and supported by enough shoppers to make it successful.

JOHN FISHER, SHERBROOKE ST.

PARK FOR ALL SORTS

In response to Johnny Davidson’s letter “Save Westmount Park for the non-dogs” (June 16, p. 6), I humbly correct his supposition that the park is for people, not pooches. The park is maintained by money from taxpayers, both dog owners

and non-dog owners. This means that all have access to it as long as the by-laws are obeyed.

Put on running shoes and take Fido for a long-leashed run? My dog is elderly, and I have arthritis in my lower spine. Neither of us is up to taking a long-leashed run. There are many older people who walk their dogs through the park, some with handicaps.

No, I am not a user of the dog run. Seems to me that most of the objections to sites proposed for the new dog run are coming from people who don’t own dogs. Westmount is/was a dog-friendly city. Sad to see such venom coming out.

Surprise, the universe does not revolve around you or me or any one person. Once we used to be able to live together in harmony, but it’s not like that any longer. The “me” generation has taken over. It seems there is zero tolerance for anyone or anything these days if someone doesn’t agree with the issue of the moment. Sigh.

BELINDA BOWES, ACADEMY RD.

WESTMOUNT PARK’S CRAB APPLE BLOSSOMS

Did you enjoy Westmount Park’s unofficial “apple blossom festival”? In other places too, the arrival of spring is heralded by brilliant colours from blossoming trees.

In Japan’s Honshui Island’s Hirosaki Park, *sakura* (cherry blossoms) numbering in the millions bloom in early spring. In Washington, warmer temperatures are marked with the blossoming of thousands of *yoshino* (cherry) trees (given as a gift in 1912 from Japan).

Westmount cannot compete with either location, but in our own small way, we did have a spectacular display of thousands of flowers, albeit for only two short weeks, from the parks’ sweet crab apple (*malus coronaria*) trees. During that time the park was ablaze with white and pinkish coloured blossoms that filled the air with a sweet fragrance.

Crab trees are native to Britain (originally introduced by the Romans) and are the ancestors of today’s cultivated (*cultivar*) apples. The tree’s name “crab” originates from the Norse word for scrubby, “*skrab*.”

The path from ancient crab trees to today’s domesticated apple cultivars is a fascinating story.

The story starts with the old silk roads – ancient trade routes from the Caspian region (Black Sea) to western China – established in the Neolithic (10,000 BC) period. Trains of pack animals would spread seeds from ingested fruit along the route causing

new hybrids to develop from previously isolated species. The invention of grafting techniques (by either the Persians or Chinese) and used by the Greeks created new apple cultivars as described in the botanical works of Theophrastus (around 300 BC). The Romans brought apple cultivars to Britain, where they flourished and hybridized to such an extent that by the 19th century, every town in central and southern England could lay claim to a local apple.

Apples were introduced to North America by the colonists in the 16th century in the form of seeds (grafting was rarely practised). In fact, entire apple orchards were started with seeds (pips) that allowed hybridization with local crab trees to produce new species of cultivars in a fashion described as a “vast experimental station.”

Next time you are walking through Westmount Park, where the paths are lined with crab apple trees – think back over seven centuries to Bartholomeus Anglicus who, in 1240, in one of the earliest botanical books describes “*Malus the Appyll tree*” as containing “*dyurs blossomes, and floures of swetnesse and ...: with goode fruyte and noble...some beryth sourysh fruyte and harde, and some ryght soure and some ryght swete, with a good savoure and mery.*”

MICHAEL WALSH, MELVILLE AVE.



Crab apple blossom in Westmount Park, photographed May 20.

Photo courtesy of Michael Walsh

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We welcome your letters but reserve the right to choose and edit them. Please limit to 300 words and submit before Friday 10 am to be considered for publication the following week. Please check your letter carefully as we may be unable to make subsequently submitted changes. E-mail any letter or comments to indie@westmountindependent.com.

Will the next election bring real change to citizens?



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MARC GARNEAU, MP FOR
WESTMOUNT-VILLE MARIE

new legislation based on the committee's recommendations within 18 months of forming a government.

Some of the other proposed changes include:

- Imposing spending limits on political parties *between* elections, not just during election campaigns;
- Overhauling the Canada Revenue Agency's operating practices, including proactively contacting Canadians who are not receiving tax benefits they're entitled to;
- Appointing an equal number of men and women to cabinet and adopting a government-wide appointment policy to ensure gender parity;
- Strengthening access-to-information laws and expanding the law to apply to the Prime Minister's Office and ministerial offices;
- Creating an all-party national security oversight committee to oversee the operation of security agencies such as CSIS;
- Ending the undemocratic practice of packaging various pieces of unrelated legislation into giant omnibus bills;
- Appointing an advertising commissioner to ensure government ads are non-parti-

san and related to actual government business;

- Creating an independent commission to organize leaders' debates during election campaigns.

When I first entered politics, one of my primary goals was to advocate for science and evidence-based decision-making in government. I think this is key to Canada's future prosperity. So I am particularly proud of our commitment to remove the Harper government's regulations that muzzle federal scientists.

In addition, we propose to create the position of chief science officer who would be responsible for ensuring that government science is freely available to the public through one central portal; restoring the long-form census and making Statistics Canada a fully independent agency.

As you can see, it's a very ambitious program and represents a major overhaul of how business is done in Ottawa.

I am happy that the parties, including my own, are unveiling their platforms well before the writ period. Hopefully this will encourage an election focused on policies and ideas.

I certainly look forward to discussing

them with you, my constituents, in the coming months.

New junior tennis courts open for play June 19

The city's new so-called junior tennis courts are now "open for business" director general Mike Deegan announced June 19. They replace the three original ones demolished during the building of the Westmount recreation centre.

The new ones were relocated about 24 feet to the east, between Academy Rd. and the bike path in Westmount Park on a budget of \$300,000. The work was contracted last August at a construction cost of \$257,000. Lighting added another \$45,000 (see story August 12, p. 1).



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BUREAUX ADMINISTRATIFS FERMÉS Les mercredis 24 juin et 1^{er} juillet 2015

Les bureaux administratifs de la Ville de Westmount, soit l'Hôtel de ville, Hydro Westmount, la Bibliothèque publique de Westmount, le centre communautaire Victoria Hall et les services de la sécurité publique, des sports et loisirs et des travaux publics seront fermés le mercredi 24 juin en raison de la Fête nationale du Québec et le mercredi 1^{er} juillet en raison de la Fête du Canada.

La collecte sélective s'effectuera selon l'horaire normal.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES CLOSED Wednesdays, June 24th and July 1st, 2015

The administrative offices of the City of Westmount, including City Hall, Hydro Westmount, Westmount Public Library, Victoria Hall Community Centre, Public Works, Public Security and Sports & Recreation, will be closed on Wednesday, June 24th for the Quebec National Holiday and on Wednesday, July 1st for the Canada Day holiday.

The recycling collection will take place according to the regular schedule.

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Roads/parks fund also in the works for surpluses

cont'd. from p. 1

off-set the city's WRC debt now held in 10-year non-callable debentures and use the interest to eliminate the 2-percent tax. The other, \$3 million portion would pay down other debt and "possibly be earmarked for roads and parks."

A separate roads and parks fund would include the 2015 surplus along with an infusion of some of the accumulated surpluses from other years, he said. This would be used for a "catch-up blitz" to improve the quality of this infrastructure.

Much of the city's \$20-million accumulated surplus had been built up at the expense of roads and parks, he explained.

In Westmount's case, where a substantial number of capital works projects is funded through pay-as-you-go provisions in the operation budget, delayed projects affect the bottom line and create "soft" surpluses, he said. These have created their own "debt" and crumbling roads and other infrastructure "have to be done down the line."

The 2014 surplus occurred despite the launch of the city's new automated financial system that had been touted as pro-

viding "real time" control management information for the city (see story February 28, 2014, p. 19).

Net debt reduced to \$9 million

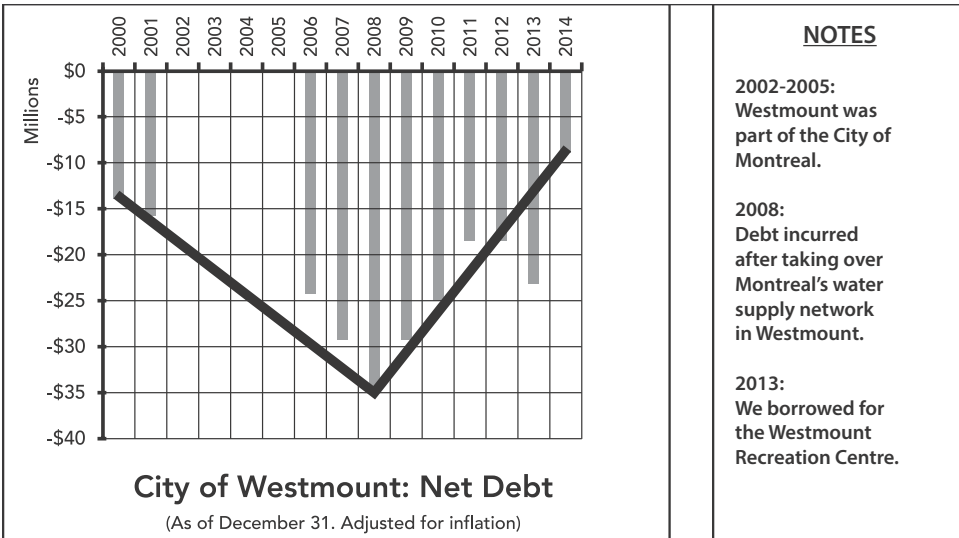
In a letter to citizens expected to be delivered late this week, Trent highlights the use of the 2014 surplus to pay down the city debt and the need to upgrade neglected infrastructure. "The current state of our roads (and traffic management) needs immediate attention."

Trent explains that the 2014 surplus of \$12 million added to the \$20 million in accumulated surplus offsets the overall debt of \$41 million (including the city's portion of the WRC loan). This lowers the net debt to \$9 million, according to Trent.

"Today, we are better off than we were even before the merger," he writes.

At the time of the forced merger with Montreal in 2001, the net debt in today's dollar was \$15 million. By 2008, it had escalated to \$35 million, he explains.

"There is another kind of debt," however, he states, "a very concrete one, that needs attention – our aging infrastructure." This includes not only streets and sidewalks but also public buildings, Hydro



Graph from Mayor Peter Trent's letter dated June 18.

Westmount equipment and parks.

As a result, before the city can become debt-free, an investment in a blitz of infrastructure will be needed.

This will require increased capital funding, much of which is to be undertaken through higher "pay-as-you-go" allocations

in the operating budget, as well as from the roads and parks fund yet to be established.

It will also require improving the quality of work, construction methods, materials, quality control and supervision "to build pavements that last longer."

How the surplus came about

Just how did the city amass a surplus of \$12 million in its 2014 budget – almost 27-percent of the \$45 million allocated to local city operations?

Mayor Peter Trent attributes much of it to higher than expected "surprise" revenues in several areas that could not have been predicted. These include a backlog of fines – some \$.7 million – collected by Montreal court but never remitted to Westmount. The condo development at 1250 Greene also came on line swelling tax revenues.

Also involved was a practice of over-estimating expenses or "hyper" conservative

Items contributing to surplus	Million \$
Tax revenue over budget	1.6
Welcome tax, court fines, etc.	4.1
Hydro Quebec price changes	1.2
Demerger settlement	0.5
Hydro W. delayed projects	1.0
Other delayed projects	0.7
Higher than needed expense provisions	1.7
Miscellaneous items	1.2
Total	12.0

budgeting.

The following amounts, he said, contributed to the surplus:

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Batshaw Children Needing Homes Foster home sought for three sisters

A long-term foster home is being sought for three Caucasian sisters. The eldest child, Violet, is 14 years old and has assumed a parenting role in trying to make sure her sisters are taken care of. She is a serious and responsible girl, who is especially close to her youngest sister, Suki, aged nine.

Violet is a reserved teenager, who is happiest when immersed in her studies, particularly science. She is a good student.

Suki and her 12-year-old sister Gabriella also spend time together and are very affectionate girls, especially gravitating towards female mother figures.

Suki is extremely quiet and tends to pursue interests that don't involve socializing, like video games. However, she can come out of her shell and show her competitive side if engaged in playing a game of cards.

Gabriella is the most outgoing of the

siblings. She also has an artistic side and has recently started to collect and decorate rocks, using bright colours and sparkles. She can be demanding of attention but also seeks solitude at times, finding solace in taking her dog for a walk to have some quiet time.

None of the girls present behavioural challenges, but all three need a lot of help in learning to express their emotions and to make and develop friendships. The ideal caregiver would be nurturing, patient and accepting of their needs and difficulties.

The children have experienced much loss and are in need of a one- or two-parent foster family able to offer stability and emotional support on a long-term basis.

For more information about these children, please call Batshaw Youth and Family Centres at 514.932.7161, extension 1139.

Four get curfew tickets at 1:45 am

Two men and two women in their late teens were given \$76 tickets June 11 for breaking the midnight park curfew at the Summit lookout, Public Security officials said. On arrival of officers at 1:45 am, the group was spotted carrying a bottle of Havana rum but not seen consuming it.

The four were identified as residents of Outremont and Montreal, aged 17 and 18.

7 skateboarders jumping at Greene/de Maisonneuve

Seven skateboarders were told to replace a city protective tree grill they were using as a jump June 14, Public Security officials said. The group was discovered on the north side of the intersection at Greene and de Maisonneuve after a complaint at 5:05 pm. They were also ordered not to skateboard in the area.



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Ulysses comes alive



Christopher Moore and Susan Gilmore were the last readers of the day supported by the off-stage supporting voices of Louise Chalmers and Pat Matchin.

BY RALPH THOMPSON

Dramatic readings from James Joyce’s *Ulysses* took place in the Westmount Room at the Westmount Public Library June 16 between 11 am and 3 pm.

The room was packed with some 50 literary enthusiasts, some following the prepared notes and at least one woman cradling a large copy of the book on her lap.

The cast of readers included writer Mark

Abley of the *Gazette* and CBC Daybreak host Mike Finnerty.

The *Ulysses* reading was part of a larger five-day “Program for Bloomsday” that took place across Montreal and included music, film, a walking tour of Irish Montreal, a pub quiz and games.

Many events took place in the various Irish pubs in Montreal, including McKibbins, Fiddlers Green, the Irish Embassy, Hurley’s and Old Orchard.

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JUNE BUILDING PERMITS What's permitted

The following permits for demolition, exterior construction, alteration and renovation were approved at the city council meeting June 1.

32 Summit Cresc.: to add a storey, modify openings and install windows and doors;

3298 Cedar: to build an underground garage in the front yard in advance of the 40-foot building line on Cedar;

Surrey Gardens (vacant lot): to build a new residence;

531 Grosvenor: to rebuild the stone retaining walls and stairs of the front yard and modify the width of the garage door opening provided the garage door is wood;

76 Arlington: to rebuild the rooftop terrace at the rear;

30 Stanton: to replace railings on balconies of the apartment building;

4322 Montrose: to replace some windows;

11 Willow: to build a new addition and do some exterior modifications;

3001 St. Antoine: to replace the windows;

55 Sunnyside: landscaping at rear;

65 Forden: at a Category I house, to de-

molish an existing greenhouse on the south side and build a garage addition in its place (see photo);

51 Hallowell: to build an addition at the rear and rebuild the front stairs;

2 Braeside Pl.: to replace the veranda roof covering, soffits, fasciae and gutters;

463 Mount Stephen: to landscape the back yard and replace a fence on condition that it replicates the existing one;

597 Argyle: landscaping work at the front, sides and rear provided a railing is wrought iron;

4342 Montrose: landscaping in the front yard;

537 Lansdowne: to demolish a balcony and rebuild it in a new location, to replace some windows and modify door and window openings;

4306 Montrose: landscaping in rear and side yards, including modifications to the rear terrace;

352 Lansdowne: to widen existing openings on the rear wall to install a new window and two French doors;

451 Clarke: to modify window and door openings at the rear and side and build a new rear basement access;



65 Forden, taken June 18.

783 Upper Lansdowne: landscaping in the front and side yards;

640 Murray Hill: to replace a window in the existing accessory building;

76 Arlington: to install a new fence;

1113 Greene: at a Category I house, to replace a front door on condition it is made of wood;

584 Lansdowne: to block a window opening *continued on p. 15*

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Permits cont'd. from p. 14

on the side and create a new one at the rear provided the new lintel is arched to match the existing openings;

32 Edgehill: to demolish a secondary nonstructural chimney;

63 Chesterfield: at a Category I house, to replace a door, install a new front railing and demolish a shed on the upper rear balcony and continue the existing railing;

4 Grenville: to repave the driveway and walkway and rebuild the retaining wall provided it is made with cut stone of smaller dimensions;

625 Lansdowne: to replace a side door;

619 Clarke: at a Category I house, to replace a rear door provided the leading is applied on the exterior of the glass;

36 Roxborough: to build an extension to the kitchen at the rear, rebuild the deck, and replace and install windows and doors;

539 Lansdowne: to rebuild a rear balcony door.

The following permits for demolition, exterior construction, alteration and renovation were approved at the city council meeting June 15.

7 Braeside Place: to build a solarium;

757 Upper Belmont: to build a rear ground-level addition;

628 Victoria: to modify openings in the rear façade;

663 Grosvenor: to modify the rear veranda and balcony;

660 Victoria: landscaping at rear;

60 Summit Circle: to replace three rear glass doors;

559 Lansdowne: landscaping work at the rear;

131-133 Lewis: to replace basement windows;

562 Claremont: to rebuild front balcony, build a new rear one and modify basement access;

572 Lansdowne: to replace some front and rear windows, and demolish basement rear access;

1220 Greene: to replace an existing sign with one for "Scotia McLeod" and remove lettering on existing panels;

Alexis Nihon Plaza: to install new signs for parking at St. Catherine and at de Maisonneuve;

755 Upper Lansdowne: to build a fence at the side and rear property lines;

110 Sunnyside: to build new stairs beside the driveway to access the backyard;

317 Prince Albert: to replace rear fence on property line;

557 Roslyn: to build a new basement side access, a new rear terrace and modify rear openings;

3040 Sherbrooke: at Dawson College, a 1* building, landscaping in the east yard;

4383 Westmount: to cut two spruce trees in the front yard provided a pair of shrub-sized woody plants is planted at an adequate distance from the building as a replacement as per a report of the city arboriculture inspector;

4 Belfrage: to cut trees to install a French drain on condition that new species are planted at the end of the work;

31 Forden Ave.: to cut two trees in the front yard provided two new ones are planted;

475 Roslyn: to cut three trees in the front yard provided new replacements are planted at an appropriate distance from the building's foundation.



4383 Westmount Ave., taken June 18.



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Colours to be retrieved from city hall June 23

‘Westmount’s’ 401 squadron reactivated in Cold Lake

BY LAUREEN SWEENEY

The “colours” of the 401 (City of Westmount) Squadron are to be escorted to Cold Lake, Alberta, June 23, to a new home. They have been preserved and displayed at Westmount city hall since the acclaimed air force unit was disbanded in 1996.

The squadron is being re-activated by the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) as 401 Tactical Fighter Squadron and the colours reinstated in a ceremony June 30, according to a letter to Mayor Peter Trent June 12 from the Cold Water base. This is the RCAF’s busiest fighter base in Canada.

“It is with great honour and respect that we thank the city of Westmount for safe-keeping ... the colours so that one day they would once again be flown as an active squadron,” wrote Colonel E.J. Kenny.

Westmount’s “own” 401 was the only Canadian unit to fight in the Battle of Britain in 1940, and at the end of World

War II had lost 53 pilots.

Considering the long and historic association the squadron had with the city, Trent said last week it was “sad to see the standards leave but I think [the former members of the 401] would be very happy to see it revived as a fighter squadron.”

The colours were to be handed over to two Cold Lake officers, Captain Dominic Dion and Warrant Officer Warren Platzer.

In a newspaper column shortly after the squadron was disbanded, Trent had written: “The 401’s colours with their battle honours have found their only appropriate resting place: Westmount City Hall.

“So when you see that glass case, think of the sacrifices our brave airmen made, and think of the Westmounters who fought in the skies above a little island during the darkest hours of the Battle of Britain.”

Formed in Westmount in 1934

The squadron’s association with West-

mount dates back to its inception in 1934, initially as 115 Squadron, a reserve unit, formed by a group of local weekend fliers headquartered at 4500 Sherbrooke, the building at the southwest corner of Metcalfe, now converted into condos.

The squadron was renumbered to 401 during World War II to avoid confusion with the Royal Air Force (RAF) numbering. The name of “City of Westmount” was added to the squadron’s title in 1952.

At the end of the war, 401 reverted to a reserve unit on return home and flew helicopters out of St. Hubert before being disbanded in 1996.

During the Battle of Britain, the squadron lost three pilots along with 16 of its initial 20 planes, Hurricanes. Ten pilots were wounded and three Distinguished Flying Crosses were awarded.

Among the wounded was the now-late Senator Hartland Molson, whose plane was shot down and who was reported to have bailed out at 20,000 feet. He was subsequently awarded the Order of the British Empire.

By the end of the war, the 401 had fought across Europe right into Germany. It had been part of the allied invasion force in 1944 and was recorded as being the highest “scoring” unit in the RCAF during the entire war.

In fact, according to Trent, “As well as being the only Canadian unit to fight in the Battle of Britain, 401 was also the first Canadian squadron to engage the *Luftwaffe* and the first RAF or RCAF squadron to score a victory over a jet fighter. 401 flew more sorties (10,527) and downed more enemy planes (195) than any other RCAF squadron during the war. This came at a heavy price. Fifty-three of its pilots were

killed.”

On the squadron’s 50th anniversary in September 1984, the city bestowed the Freedom of the City honour on the squadron, presented during a ceremony by then mayor Brian Gallery. This tradition enables a military unit to march through the city with “bayonets fixed, colours flying and bands playing” on ceremonial occasions.

Records of the occasion state the framed scroll presented to the squadron was hand-painted at a cost of \$600 using gold leaf. Only one was made. The city retained a photocopy.

On September 9, 1990, the squadron was again honoured by the city at a send-off ceremony for a contingent of 48 members leaving for London to mark the Battle of Britain’s 50th anniversary when the colours were paraded at Buckingham Palace.

Proud of the 401

“We are very proud of the role your squadron played in the battle,” then mayor May Cutler told them.

After the war, many former members of the 401 kept in regular touch socially with each other through the 306 Maple Leaf Wing of the RCAF Association, which owned the building at 4500 Sherbrooke.

In a speech to the Westmount Historical Association November 22, 2001, publisher John Sancton, a former member of the 401, stated that “whatever the future may hold for this municipality through political tuggery, the name ‘City of Westmount’ shall live through the memory of this distinguished squadron whatever else this place might ever be called.”

Roof job stopped till permit obtained

Roofing work was reported to have been stopped after a caller complained at 6:10 pm that it was continuing after hours, Public Security officials said. Responding officers found the roofers and a crane truck in the lane behind 396 Olivier. They were about ready to leave for the day. They were informed to obtain a permit to occupy the public way before resuming work the next day.

Itinerants refuse needed medical help

Public safety officers called Urgences Santé June 4 to help two itinerants in the Tupper lane found to need medical attention. Public Security officials said both men were well-known to the patrollers who spotted them in a group at 11:53 pm. One had a gash over one eye from hitting his head on a wall. The other, who was using a walker, was noticed to have “seriously infected legs.” Police were also summoned but both were described as “uncooperative,” did not want assistance. The man with the infected legs signed a waiver stating his refusal to be taken to hospital.



One of the World War II planes flown by 401 (City of Westmount) Squadron in England and Europe, from the photo album of squadron intelligence officer (the late) John Sancton.

Photo courtesy of Ted Sancton

Comin’ Up

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1

Canada Day BBQ, 12 pm at the Westmount Recreation centre. “Splash Bash” at the pool at 2 pm.

TUESDAY, JULY 7

Outdoor play for ages 5 and up, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, 2 pm in West-

mount Park. Game of croquet and a Mad Hatter tea to follow. Costumes encouraged. Register: 514.989.5229.

THURSDAY, JULY 9

A group exhibition at The Gallery at Victoria Hall until August 8. Artists include Harvey Corn, Pascale Delhaye, Pierre Lessard, Loran, Oriana Pizzingrilli, Eliane Rivard and Andrew Stringer.

Seniors raised their arms – and voices – to address elder abuse

By JOANNE PENHALE

Westmount seniors' centre Contactivity hosted about 50 guests for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day June 15. The event included interactive theatre, guest speakers, lunch, singing and dancing.

The centre's executive director Mary Stark told the *Independent* that in her 19 years at Contactivity, she has witnessed a few suspected cases of elder abuse, including physical abuse by a burnt-out caregiver, and financial abuse by a senior's financial advisor. Stark said seniors are often reticent to address abuse because they can be emotionally dependent on their abuser.

"Elder abuse can also be subtle," Stark noted.

At Contactivity's event, Montreal seniors' group Respecting Elders: Communities Against Abuse (RECAA) performed a short theatre scene depicting a son who successfully coerces his widowed mother, Anya, into signing an agreement with a real estate agent to sell her large, well-kept home. The piece was called "I Know What's Good For You."

After the scene was performed, audience members shared their impressions, which included, "She was forced to sign," and, "She was bullied."

Get advice

Audience members suggested Anya could seek legal advice, get help from a social worker or find a trusted friend to talk to.

One audience member alluded to a clause in many real estate contracts that allows sellers to back out of a contract within 72 hours.

RECAA actors played the scene a second time, with audience members stopping the action to suggest how Anya could act differently to improve her situation. Any audience member who stopped the scene would then take the place of Anya.

"No, I'm not ready to sell. But when I am, I will tell you," said an audience member, who stepped up to play the part. "Now, how about a cup of tea?"

Another audience member took a different approach, agreeing to check out sen-



Contactivity capped off an afternoon of programming at Westmount Park United Church with a high-energy group dance performed by members of RECAA and Contactivity. In the photo, centre, San Fernandes, and, right, Nancy Ship, raise their hands in sync with other dancers.

iors' homes with the son – but clearly stating she was not ready to make a commitment. "The timing's up to me," she said.

"Once upon a time [elder abuse] was a very difficult thing to bring up," said RECAA coordinator Anne Caines, recalling the years before 2006, when World Elder Abuse Awareness Day had not yet been recognized by the United Nations (UN).

"Ever since 2006, people have been aware that they should do something," Caines told the *Independent*. Elder abuse, which can include negligence, violence, fraud, humiliation and disrespect, can still be hard for people to acknowledge, Caines noted.

She announced a petition seeking a UN convention on the rights of older people now has enough signatures to be voted

on.

A social worker from CLSC Métro spoke at the event, encouraging seniors to reach out to different resources to build a network of people around them.

Station 12 constable Stephan Laperriere spoke as well. "We are here, the police, to help you with this," he said, advising seniors to call the police when they are being mistreated.

Lyna Boushel, vice president of Seniors Action Quebec spoke at the event. She said the group, whose mission includes enhancing the vitality of English-speaking Quebec seniors, would soon be attending a forum on elder abuse in Quebec City, hosted by the provincial government.

Quebec's elder abuse hotline is 514.489.2287 or 1.888.489.2287.

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Police Report

Hillside car crash sends two to hospital with serious injuries

BY MICHAEL MOORE

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

An 88-year-old driver slammed into two pedestrians on Hillside near Metcalfe on June 10 after he mixed up the accelerator with the brake, according to police reports.

The two male victims, aged 26 and 57, were standing on the side of the road speaking to a third individual when they were hit by the Toyota Camry just after noon. The 26-year-old suffered open fractures to his leg and ankle, while the 57-year-old incurred injuries to his head and upper body.

The third pedestrian was unharmed.

Nurses on the scene

When police arrived at the crash site, multiple nurses from the nearby Hillside Medical Centre were already on the scene delivering care to the victims. Their efforts received high praise from the responding police officers, who called it “exemplary work” in bold letters in their report of the incident, according to Station 12 constable Adalbert Pimentel.

“[The nurses] were the first responders in this case because they were right next door. We were lucky to have them,” he said.

Two ambulances were called to transport the victims to the Montreal General Hospital, and a fire truck also arrived to provide additional support. A third ambulance was later called to bring the driver to the hospital.

The responding police officers reportedly found the driver in a state of shock, though otherwise unharmed, and the keys still in the ignition. After removing the keys and ensuring the care of the victims, the officers began setting up a perimeter to preserve the scene from any contamination, said Pimentel.

Reconstruct crash

Investigators will use that information from the collision and eye witness accounts to reconstruct the crash. Based on what is uncovered, the investigators can recommend what punishment be levied against the driver, including stripping his licence or charging him with Highway Safety Code violations, as per Pimentel.

None of the individuals involved in the incident are Westmount residents.

Van Toch aims for \$80,000 for cancer research

BY MATT FAIGAN

Two pelotons rode under tents, one in front of the Sherbrooke-St. entrance to the Metro grocery store and the other in front of RBC across the street June 7, riding to raise money for cancer informatics research.

Westmounter John Van Toch, father to the late Ian Van Toch, who died from heart disease at the age of 22 just after graduating from Queen’s University with a bachelor’s degree in biomedical computing (focused on cancer bioinformatics), formed “Team Ian” in 2010. Since then, the team has raised over \$250,000.

Van Toch explained “we are cycling from Kingston to Montreal because Ian went to Queen’s – the route has symbolic significance.”

The ride takes place on August 15 and 16. This year, Westmount-based sponsors

included the Victoria Ave. and Westmount Square branches of the Royal Bank, Metro, Martin Swiss Cycle, Chez Nick Restaurant and BGK accountants.

At press time, the group had raised \$18,238 of its goal of \$80,000, according to Van Toch.

To learn more, visit team-ian.org.

See p. 1 for photo.

PSOs remove jammed key

Public safety officers helped a Westmount resident into a house on Roslyn June 13 after the keys became stuck in the door lock June 13, Public Security officials said. The woman was trying to get into the house to walk the dog for a friend at 8:17 pm. Application of a little silicone lubricant did the trick.

No claim to family who survived Titanic sinking

DNA test reveals woman is not part of Westmount’s Allison family

BY ROBERT J. GALBRAITH

One of the greatest mysteries in the sinking of the *RMS Titanic* has finally been solved, involving a former Westmount family living on Roslyn and its ancestors over the identity of a young girl, who allegedly died in the 1912 tragedy.

Two-year-old Loraine Allison was traveling on the passenger vessel with her father Hudson, mother Bess and 11-month-old brother Trevor, as well as an entourage of servants. During the sinking, Allison



A 2012 photo shows 464 Roslyn Ave. which was home to the Allison family, who lived there when the HMS Titanic hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic in April 1912. At the time, they were having a larger house built on Belmont.

was thought to have boarded a lifeboat when the “unsinkable ship” hit an iceberg off the coast of Newfoundland, sinking 103 years ago. But apparently she did not get into a boat because her parents were trying to find Trevor amongst great confusion as the ship went under. Trevor would be the only family member to survive when he was put into a lifeboat by one the family’s maids.

The fraud controversy started in 1940 (28 years after the sinking) when a woman came forward claiming to be the young Allison, stating she had survived the sinking. The alleged heiress, Helen Kramer, provided intimate family details about the wealthy family, wishing to have the family accept her as a relative, most of whom doubted her claim. In fact, the family fought to reveal her as a fraud who was out to scam them for their money.

Kramer died in 1992, but one of her daughters continued the fight after her mother’s death.

The controversy over the claim had led to restraining orders taken out, accusa-

tions of harassment and the hiring of security personnel to protect a burial plot from interference.

But the results of DNA testing released in January 2014 show there is absolutely no genetic link between the fraudster and the Allison descendants. The tests were conducted by The Loraine Allison Identification Project (a group of *Titanic* historians). The group had analysed DNA samples from the Kramer family and the Allison family, and didn’t find a genetic link.

A surviving Allison descendant told a British newspaper that the family never accepted Kramer’s claim, and her push for it had caused great grief amongst the family members who were forced to relive painful and haunting memories.

The finding means that Loraine Allison will “remain” the only child from first class to die in the infamous sinking.

Only the body of Hudson, the family’s father, was recovered. The surviving child, Trevor, was raised by his uncle and aunt, George and Lillian Allison of Westmount. Trevor would meet his own unfortunate end at the young age of 18 from food poisoning in 1929, while on vacation in Maine.

The exposure of Kramer’s scam is similar to that of Anna Anderson, who claimed to be Anastasia, the daughter of Russian tsar, Nicholas II, who was killed in 1918. DNA sampling of Anderson, after her death, proved no genetic link between the families.

The Titanic sinking claimed 1,514 lives. Westmounter Harry Markland Molson also died in the tragedy.

See also “Centennial of Titanic sinking: A Westmount family goes down with the Titanic in 1912,” (April 10, 2012, p. 23.)



Trevor, left, and Loraine Allison

Transformer problem cuts power twice

A blown electrical transformer June 10 at 60 Hillside Ave. left many houses in the area without power, Public Security officials said. The first outage was reported at 5:50 pm and was restored. A second black-out occurred a few hours later. Patrollers controlled traffic at Park Place and St. Catherine in the absence of lights. The problem was to have been repaired after 10 pm.

Cars collide at Grosvenor and The Blvd.

Two cars were found badly damaged in the intersection of The Boulevard and Grosvenor June 11 at 2:42 pm, Public Security officials said. One airbag had been deployed. While one driver complained of back pain and respiratory problems, no one was taken to hospital. Police, fire and two tow trucks were summoned.

Welcome to the neighbourhood

New residents to Westmount told public safety officers they were unaware of the city's regulation against using noisy construction equipment on Sundays, Public Security officials said. The patrollers had been called to the house on Grosvenor following a complaint at 3:24 pm. The two were found drilling a cabinet. They said they had just moved in.

Get licences, don't leave dogs alone at run

A man living near the Westmount Athletic Grounds was issued a \$76 ticket June 5 for not obtaining licences for his two dogs found in the dog run there, Public Security officials said. The dogs were unattended at 6:33 pm. The owner was found over by the playing field. He was warned against leaving them alone and given 14 days to obtain licences.



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Westmount traffic, observed



Left: This vehicle was seen going the wrong way (east) on de Maisonneuve at Victoria on June 16 just before 4 pm. It happens fairly often. Right: On June 5, this garbage collection truck was using the sidewalk on de Maisonneuve between Metcalfe and Melville in order to avoid the cycling path bollards. Photo: Westmount Independent.

Photos: Westmount Independent

Renoir, the black cat



9 Lives

LYSANNE FOWLER

This exquisite black cat with gold eyes came in from the cold. He just hung around our street and came over to the door to eat, so it was evident he had nowhere to go since the weather was horrible and any cat worth his feline dignity would have gone to a warm home if he had one.

So, Renoir stepped over the threshold and came into the house. He is truly a wonderful purring houseguest. He is now at our veterinarian getting his inoculations and sterilization taken care of.

Renoir is available for adoption in a neighbourhood family who would like a friendly, affectionate, playful adult cat who asks for very little except a very full bowl of

food and cuddles, more cuddles and scratches just behind his ears.

For more information on Renoir, please contact me at 514.909.7186 or lysflow@gmail.com.

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St. Léon students graduate from bike safety program



Ten of the St. Léon school grade five students who successfully completed the bicycle safety program are seen here with officials and parents from the school, Vélo Québec, the city of Westmount, Montreal Police and the Westmount Walking and Cycling Association.

By MARTIN C. BARRY

Around 30 out of more than 60 grade five students attending St. Léon on Clarke Ave. have successfully completed a bicycle safety program sponsored by Vélo Québec.

They received graduation certificates on June 10. Others received certificates attesting to their participation in the program.

According to Magali Bebronne of Vélo Québec, the program is demanding as it requires young cyclists to have as much road safety awareness as adults.

St. Léon's was one of five Montreal-area schools where the program took place as a

Vélo Québec pilot project.

The Westmount Walking and Cycling Association (which recently changed its name to the Association of Pedestrians and Cyclists of Westmount) provided assistance during training exercises and with the final exam, Bebronne said.

Estate sale signs removed

Signs advertising an estate sale on Kensington were taken off city poles June 13 by patrollers, Public Security officials said. They were found at many locations around de Maisonneuve.

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Patron of honour Rovinescu joins Subban at MCH gala



*Social Notes
from Westmount
and Beyond*

VERONICA REDGRAVE

On May 21, just days before the Montreal Children’s Hospital (MCH) moved to its new location at the MUHC Glen site, Montreal’s business and philanthropic leaders came together at the ball for the Children’s at historic Windsor Station.

The sold-out evening’s theme “Evolution” paid tribute to the MCH while celebrating the future. The gala was under the leadership of patron of honour, Westmounter **Calin Rovinescu**, president and CEO of Air Canada, there with his wife **Elaine**, glamorous in a white-sequined gown.

Surprise guest was **P.K. Subban**, who conducted an auction of hockey memora-

bilia, raising \$138,200. (The Rovinescus bought #76!)

Subban also gave 11-year-old MCH patient **Gabriel Bellefleur** the thrill of a lifetime, inviting him to a game and to meet Canadiens players. Bellefleur, fighting blackfan-diamond syndrome, has always adored Subban, admitted the boy’s father Eric.

Westmounter **John Leopold**, senior partner at Stikeman Elliott, and MCH Foundation board vice-chair attended with his wife **Joanne**, resplendent in sequined black accented with fuchsia satin.

Noted in the sea of chic were **Thomas Mulcair** and his wife **Catherine**, **Jacques Chagnon**, president of the provincial legislature, and Transport minister **Robert Poëti**.

Local residents enjoying the night included **Alexandra Schwarz** and **Colin Brown**, **Kathryn** and continued on p. 22



Elaine and Calin Rovinescu, with P.K. Subban, middle.



Joanne, left, and John Leopold.



Claudio, left, and Diane Bussandri.



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From left: Phil Dixon, Michelle Cormier, Mickie and Peter Morton.

Social Notes cont'd. from p. 21

ter Trent, Meryl and Sheldon Elman, Susan and Dan Lavy, Mickie and Peter Morton, Michelle Cormier and Phil Dixon, Diane and Claudio Bussandri, chair of the MUHC board, as well as Andrea Wolff and Eric Maldoff, Martin Spalding, Anna and

John Broccolini, Lois and Bernard Shapiro, Geneviève Bich and Louis-Martin Richer, Ingrid Heck and François Laurin, Anna and John Broccolini, and media celebs Mutsumi Takahashi, Jamie Orchard, and Todd Travis, and and the MCH's Marie-Josée Gariépy, president of the foundation and Kim Fraser, vice president communi-

cations. The ball raised a record \$1,307,000.

Warned to get dog licences

Two dog owners were told to obtain licences for their dogs when spotted without tags in the run at King George (Murray) Park June 11 at 4:20 pm, Public Security officials said. One lived in Westmount, the other just outside on Highland Ave.

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Ingrid Heck, left, and François Laurin.

Pool cont'd. from p. 1

6-7 time but also respects the feelings of many adults who feel uncomfortable being in the water at the same time as the children."

In another change, the pool will open earlier on weekends than in previous years to provide an adult swim time from 9 to 10 am. As in the past, however, the adult swim will be maintained from 6-7 pm on weekends after which the pool will be open again for general swim until closing.

"Whatever we do, we won't satisfy everybody," Davis said. "But we're trying."

Angela Lehrer, who spearheaded a petition last year for more family swim time and led off this year's contingent at the council meeting, told the *Independent* on hearing the news that she was glad "we could make waves." She said the new

weekday hours were "a step in the right direction for Westmount but there's a need for more."

Specifically, she said, she hoped the general swim could be extended to 7:15 pm on the weekends as well. "It's a community pool that we all need to share."

The idea of finding another time for the 6-7 pm adult swim had actually been suggested by two of the parents who had addressed council at the June 1 meeting.

Richard Leon of Surrey Gardens suggested scheduling a period "for seniors at a more convenient time." Lisa Modell of Kensington proposed moving the adult swim "to later hours," an option that would "accommodate families."

"I'll go back to Sports and Rec department," Davis replied.

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AWE launched May 28



The Atwater Library hosted the launch of the Atwater Writers Exhibition (AWE) May 28. According to Elise Moser, its coordinator, the exhibition was designed to celebrate Quebec English literature from 1769 onwards. The event featured history, poetry, artwork and numerous Quebec authors. The event was put on by Moser and the director of Atwater Library, Lynn Verge. See previous coverage on AWE, October 7, 2014, p. 24.

Photo: Matt Faigan

Don't smoke here, or...



Amid the bustle of Claremont and Sherbrooke, this city bench on the northeast corner has a hand-drawn sign saying "no smoking please," as seen June 15 at 9 am.

Photo: Ralph Thompson

Rotary offers truck to local non-profits



The Rotary Club of Westmount truck was parked outside Victoria Hall last week, advertising a service that the club was willing to offer. The pick-up truck and a driver are available to local community charitable groups, with suitable notice, if they need the use of such a vehicle. It has already helped a local church with the left-overs from a recent garage sale. Interested organizations can contact the Rotary club for more details at 514.935.3344 or info@rotarywestmount.org.

Photo: W1



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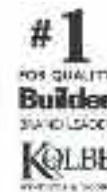
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