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LOCAL NEWS
Nicholson's mark 1,500th
Wednesday night
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Writing in Westmount

Westmount writer Linda Leith launched her latest book *Writing in the Time of Nationalism* (From Two Solitudes to Blue Metropolis) last week, at the Nicholas Hoare bookstore on Greene Avenue. As a longtime writer, magazine editor, scholar, founder and director of the multilingual Blue Metropolis Montreal International Literary Festival, Leith has a unique insider's view of the Anglo Literary Revival currently in full swing in this city. Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland, Leith has been residing and working in Montreal (she recently moved from NDG to Westmount) for the better part of her life and her passionate connection to this city is evident in all of her books. (Photo credit: Jacques Pharaud)

Rossy ruling 'bittersweet' for the family

Quebec Court of Appeal now opens door for them to sue Westmount

Carmen Marie Fabio

In a move that surprised both lawyer Julius Grey and the Rossy family for its expeditious delivery, the Quebec Court of Appeal ruled in favour of the Rossys, opening the door for them to sue the City of Westmount for negligence in the 2006 death of their son Gabriel.

"I think it was a very gratifying judgment," said Grey from his Montreal office. "It was

fully researched and invoked common sense."

Rossy was killed when a 100-foot-tall poplar tree fell on his car during a severe rainstorm on the Westmount portion of Côte-des-Neiges Road. After reviewing a forestry engineer report which found that the tree was 80 per cent rotten, coroner Paul Dionne ruled that Rossy's death was a "preventable accident". The report described the tree as being riddled with fungus and that the presumption of health could not be

made simply by the presence of foliage.

The Rossys lost their initial court case in 2008 after Westmount argued that because Gabriel was in his car when he died, his death was the result of a car accident and was immune from further legal action under Quebec's no-fault insurance plan. "The car was not the agent of the accident," Grey pointed out, "but simply a place where it happened."

Continued on page 3

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Nicholsons mark 1,500th Wednesday Night in grand style

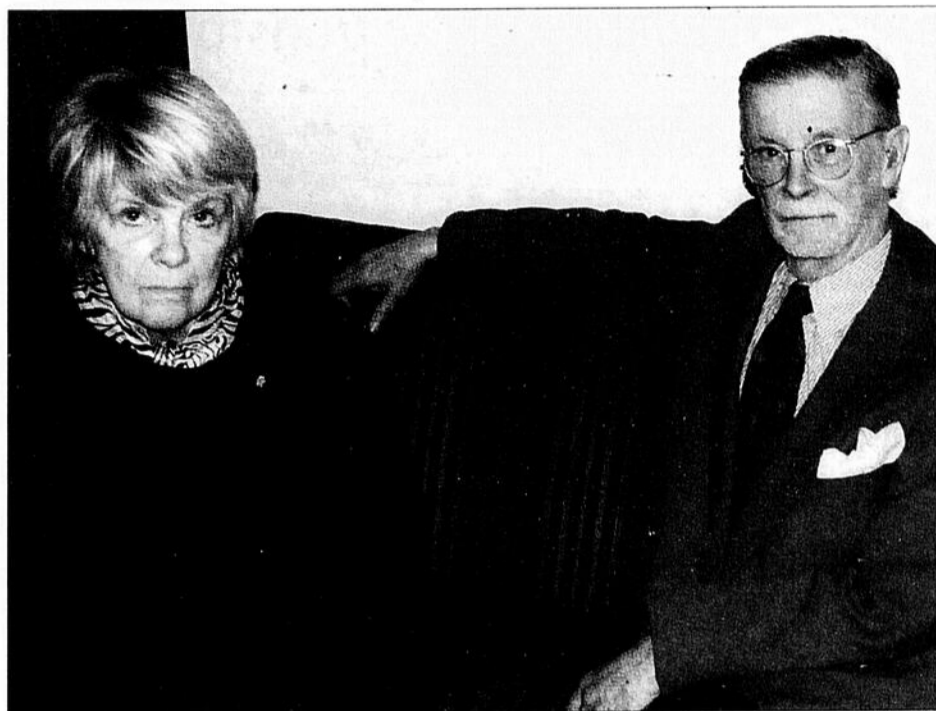
Wayne Larsen

Wine and good cheer were both flowing freely last Wednesday evening at the downtown University Club of Montreal — certainly a common sight this time of year — but this was a much more momentous occasion than a mere holiday office party.

In fact the formally attired guests were gathered to help David and Diana Nicholson celebrate their 1,500th consecutive Wednesday Night salon — the weekly discussion group that has grown in both scope and reputation to become a bona fide Westmount tradition.

But this time there was very little talk of politics or the stock market. The gala evening served as an opportunity for Wednesday Nighters to pay tribute to their long-time hosts through congratulatory speeches and some good-natured ribbing.

The milestone was even acknowledged in the House of Commons last Tuesday, when Westmount MP Marc Garneau — himself no stranger to the Nicholsons' table



Diana and David Nicholson: 1,500 consecutive Wednesday nights... and counting.

Photo: Wayne Larsen

— rose to publicly congratulate the couple on their milestone.

"The highlight of the evening would have to be Brian Morel's video presentation," Diana said of the nine-minute montage of scenes from Wednesday Nights past — some dating all the way back to the early to mid-1990s. "Brian did an amazing job — and fortunately, after it was shown it was left playing, so people could watch it again and see anything they missed the first time."

In their thank-you speeches, the Nicholsons acknowledged the absence of their good friend Herb Bercovitz, who has served as the Wednesday Night "scribe" for many years, taking notes on the conversations and compiling them for the weekly updating of the salon website (www.wednesday-night.com). Bercovitz was unable to attend the gala for personal reasons.

"We singled out Herb because we wanted people to know just how important he has been to us," said Diana.

Continued on page 13

Rossy ruling 'bittersweet' for the family



The well-known cottonwood in Westmount Park was cut down on November 16 by the City of Westmount, despite protests by some residents who claimed it still had a chance to be saved. City horticulturist, Claudette Savaria, stated, however, that all efforts had been exhausted and the tree was as good as dead. In light of the Rossy case and the \$1.3 M Westmount may be liable for, it's no surprise that the City isn't taking any chances. (Photo credit: Harvey Aisenthal)

trees falling out of the sky."

Though the ruling is bittersweet for the family, Sharon Rossy lauds its importance in that it opens a door empowering citizens to stand up to a seemingly unbeatable system.

"On any level, you can take action," she said. "It doesn't mean you'll be successful but you don't know unless you try."

The Rossy's victory does not change Quebec's no-fault insurance plan. But they

hope their win will help establish a precedent making it harder for cases of negligence to invoke the no-fault law.

"It's not about the money. The money merely represents accountability," said Sharon Rossy.

"That door had to be opened, and I think we've opened it."

The City of Westmount, which has 60 days to respond to the ruling, declined to comment on the case.

Continued from page 1

The November 22 Court of Appeal ruling found that, "The cause of the incident was totally independent of the operation of the automobile and the liability is not precluded by Quebec's no-fault system of automobile insurance."

"I think the judgment really did tell us what the law was about," said Grey.


"It's to remove fault, not to deal with

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OPINION

WikiLeaks: real journalism or irresponsible whistleblowing?



Toula
FOSCOLOS
toula.foscolos@transcontinental.ca
TOULA'S 'TAKE'

George Orwell wrote that "in a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act," and while I have many misgivings about WikiLeaks director Julian Assange, one has to admit there's something profoundly mutinous and intriguing about this non-profit organization and the confidential and classified documents they've blown the lid off.

However, what's highly troublesome to me is how governments around the world (particularly the U.S.) have chosen to react to, what, in many cases, has amounted to nothing more than the unrestrained disclosure of non-governmental, albeit highly embarrassing, diplomatic secrets.

Off with his head, many (politicians, mainly) are yelling. Assange should be prosecuted, should be killed; should be stopped. Why? What has he, and the organization he founded four years ago, doing that can be classified as anything other than "journalism"? WikiLeaks passes on factual information without modifying it. It doesn't steal it, it doesn't write it; it's simply disseminating it. Reputable news organizations like *The New York Times* and *The Guardian* have chosen to reprint this information - why aren't they being threatened with legal action?

There's a whole debate about accountability that we can get into here (and what, if any, of this information can actually be deemed a security risk), but prosecuted for what exactly? For exposing/embarrassing a number of politicians and diplomats and revealing a lot of backdoor dealings? Is that illegal? I thought that's exactly what journalists, fulfilling their role as government watchdogs, were supposed to do.

Media critic Norman Solomon called the media an echo chamber - meaning it basically echoes what those deemed important have to say. Despite his annoying grandstanding and questionable taste in haircuts, Assange has come and placed the focus directly on what those deemed important *choose not to say*.

There's a perverted "benevolent deception" at work in government that WikiLeaks is at war with. Too many governments (on a national, international and local scale) employ a paternalistic approach that smacks of arrogance; choosing not to divulge important information to their citizens, so "they can move things along," because citizens really "don't need to know," and ultimately it's "for their own good."

WikiLeaks is, not only lifting, but indecidentally *yanking* off the heavy veil of government and corporate secrecy. In predictable fashion, governments and politicians are pulling up the gates and circling the wag-

ons, and threatening legal action (the U.S. Justice Department has threatened criminal charges, for what, I'm not sure yet) and in Sweden rape allegations have (conveniently, in my humble opinion) sprung up, as well.

However you feel about the information that has been leaked out, you have to admit that it aims to bring about a certain balance of power, and that, perhaps, is the organization's ultimate goal.

Journalist Neil Macdonald of the CBC News once wrote: "While I am perfectly prepared to concede that today's newspaper reporters and their broadcast colleagues have always been a flawed bunch, I also know, having spent 33 years in this dodge, 11 of them at three newspapers, that many of the people who govern us do not believe the public has a right to know very much at all. (...) Information is empowering, which makes its release politically risky. So, given a choice, those in power will hoard it." Bingo!

Now, more than ever, readers need to approach news with a discerning and probing mind and learn the art of reading between the lines. By fighting to maintain even the semblance of some sort of transparency and accountability in government,

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

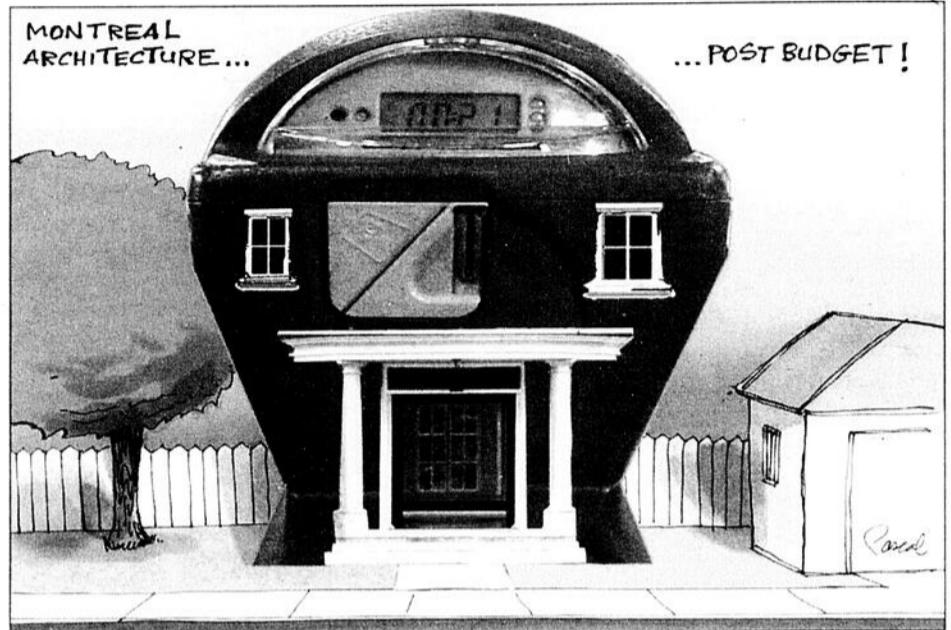
We're all mega-ed out!

To the editor:

Councillor Lulham stated at the council meeting on Dec. 6 that the McGill University Hospital Complex did not like to be called the superhospital. But it is a super-hospital and everybody knows it. It will also be super expensive. And everybody knows that too.

We live in the age of mega projects and Westmount is joining in full steam ahead. Look at the mega houses that have been built here. And of course now, the super sports complex which is being built mostly for hockey (year round).

Westmount is putting a suburban-like mega-complex in a small part of a small city. What will be included in the complex also fits the term "super." Construction of a concession boutique (rink #1), construction of a cafeteria (main entrance), construction of gift shop area (main entrance) construction of employee cafete-



by being a watchdog and keeping tabs on all the backdoor dealings that politicians deem we don't need to know (or aren't equipped to handle) I firmly believe WikiLeaks serves a vital role.

On December 3, Texas Republican

Congressman, Ron Paul, spoke out publicly in support of Assange; "In a free society we're supposed to know the truth," Paul said. "In a society where truth becomes treason, then we're in big trouble." Big trouble, indeed.

ria (other installation) construction of repair shop (rink #1) — these are a few of the items on the list from the entente between the provincial government and the City of Westmount (see translation at WestmountWatch.org).

This massive project will have a negative effect on the surrounding neighbourhood, traffic and especially on Westmount Park.

Marilynn Gillies,
Melville Avenue

What next, ice palace?

To the editor:

I am pleased to see no reference to the "two NHL-sized hockey arenas" in the latest Examiner issue. I note that the terms now being bandied around are "mega-hockey project," "two-hockey-rink ice palace," and "ill-fated projects."

The online Oxford dictionary defines mega as "very large, huge, or excellent." I prefer the last definition, as, it seems, does a

majority of the Westmounters that cared to offer their opinion when polled. As for the ice palace, well I will leave that idea to the gentle reader.

Peter Naylor,
Abbott Avenue

Hockey can be played on almost any rink

To the editor:

For Peter Naylor: Describing a rink as being NHL-sized is not inappropriate. The official NHL size for a rink is 200' x 85'. The Olympic standard is 210' x 98'. Many rinks are smaller than 200' x 85'. You can play hockey on all sizes of rinks. Usually the rink size depends on the size of the building in which they're housed. I recall playing on the rink in the Bonaventure Arena, for example, which had a tiny neutral zone. The Bruins played on a rink that was 191' x 85'.

Andy Froncioni,
St. Catherine Street

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Commercial Classified Ad Sales Representative:
Françoise Girouard 514-363-5656, ext. 222
News Director: Marc Lalonde (marc.lalonde@transcontinental.ca)
Bureau Chief: Toula Foscolos (toula.foscolos@transcontinental.ca)
Journalist: Wayne Larsen
Graphic Design: Innograf Montreal
Production Manager: Robert Bourcier

Contributors: Andy Dodge, Matthew Surrudge,
Marilynn Vanderstaay, Robert N. Wilkins
Regional Manager: Stéphane Vinet
Printed by: Imprimeries Transcontinental 2003 inc.
Transmag Division
Distribution: Transcontinental Media inc.
Publi-sac Western Montreal
Published by: Transcontinental Medias G.P.
www.transcontinentalmedia.com
President: Natalie Larivière

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Ethanol fireplaces: the allure and ambiance of fire without the harmful emissions

Carmen Marie Fabio

The rain was falling in biblical proportions the afternoon I visited Urban Patio to learn all about ethanol fireplaces. And as fireplaces are apt to do, they provided the perfect warmth and comforting relief to the wind and rain pelting Royalmount Avenue.

Ethanol is a relatively new trend in residential fireplaces but its popularity is growing due to its adaptability integrating into any living environment and ease of set-up. Since the town of Hampstead banned the installation of new woodstoves in 2008, the city of Montreal has been looking closely at the matter. After the 1998 ice-storm saw a substantial increase in the use of wood burning stoves, the cumulative effect of wood stove emissions led to an unprecedented annual issue of winter smog alerts. In winter 2009, a record breaking 25 smog alerts were issued.

Faced with impending restrictions, Montrealers are looking to alternatives to provide the allure and ambiance of fire without the harmful emissions and general mess associated with wood burning

stoves. Ethanol bridges the gap, allowing even apartment dwellers to enjoy a cozy evening by an ambient fire.

Ethanol is a flammable liquid distilled from the sugars found in various renewable

crops, including corn and sugarcane. Although it's similar to fondue fuel, a specific, high-quality ethanol is recommended for in-home fireplaces, ensuring that no toxic byproducts are released in the burning process. Ethanol fireplaces offer distinct advantages over conventional wood-burning options: there is no emission or soot released in the burning process, no ash residue to clean up and, best of all, the fireplaces can be placed virtually anywhere in a home or apartment, and can be packed up and moved when changing residences.

Urban Patio offers three different brands of fireplaces at their Town of Mount Royal location. The European suppliers Radius and Planika meet German manufacturing standards equivalent to Underwriters Laboratory of Canada (ULC). They are also

proud to offer a locally made line - Decoflame from Granby, Quebec which is ULC approved.

The flexibility of ethanol has allowed for design innovations to be incorporated with the beauty of fire. No longer relegated to a basement floor and surrounded by bricks, a fireplace can now sit on your coffee-table or be wall-mounted, much like a plasma television. Colour choices and finishes encompass

a wide spectrum and flames can be displayed as is or with the addition of river rocks. Urban Patio also offers an outdoor model, ideal for use on patios and decks.

Although home-owners and apartment



dwellers are advised to check with their respective insurers and city bylaws, ethanol fireplaces safely offer the appeal and allure of open flame in a myriad places, even standard masonry fireplaces which had previously been condemned from traditional wood-burning. Urban Patio offers stunning ceramic logs crafted to their own specifications which, accompanied by the dancing orange flames, are virtually indistinguishable from a traditional wood fire. They also sell essential-oil holders which sit suspended in a shallow glass dish hanging from the fireplace wall. When warmed, the delicate scent adds to the fireplace's warmth and ambiance.

The British Thermal Unit (BTU) output of a small ethanol fireplace will not significantly raise the room temperature, making it ideal for cozy corners. A larger 10,000 BTU fireplace, if lit for a longer period, will

emit a mellow warm glow in the surrounding area. The size of the flame can be manipulated by adjusting the opening of the damper, thereby controlling the oxygen feed. Unlike the drying effects of a standard combustion wood-burning stove, ethanol provides a gentle moist heat, releasing only traces of water vapour and CO₂, comparable to what we exhale.

The simplicity and ecologically friendly appeal of ethanol makes it an obvious choice to bring a touch of warmth and energy to any room. The range of sizes and

prices offered by Urban Patio will appeal to everyone from home-owners to first-time renters. With winter peaking over the horizon, there's no better time to explore the option of ethanol fireplaces. Define your own ambient space and meet the season head-on by enjoying the beauty of fire without all the fuss.

Urban Patio is located at 5438 avenue Royalmount, Town of Mount Royal. 514.344.1119. info@urbanpatio.ca

*"With ethanol fireplaces
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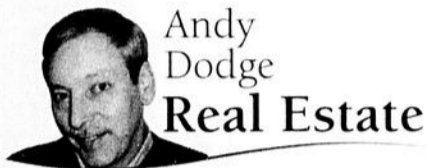
Have a happy holiday and a wonderful New Year!





Westmount Real Estate Section

Lower prices, higher markups in August



Andy
Dodge
Real Estate

Prices were lower but markups were higher in Westmount real estate transfers signed in August this year, with only one sale over \$2 million but an average markup (compared to the 2007 valuation) of more than 36 percent.

Highest price in the month was \$3,200,000 for 3243 The Boulevard, a semi-detached home at the corner of Braeside Place which includes almost 14,000 square feet of land and an in-ground pool. Next-highest was far less, \$1,685,000, paid for 414 Roslyn Avenue, just north of Sherbrooke Street. That was one of six houses sold in the \$1 million range, compared to seven at less than \$1 million, going down to \$512,500 paid out for 6 Burton Avenue, the

seventh-lowest price for a home in Westmount so far this year.

Still, the top price helps boost the average for August to just over \$1,150,000, down from \$1,394,381 in July, but the average markup over valuation jumped from 126.6 percent in July to 136.7 percent in August, with only one property — 35 Church Hill, its second sale this year — at less than the 2007 valuation. The top markup involved one of the lower prices, as 543 Lansdowne sold for \$835,000, almost double its \$432,300 2007 valuation.

Westmount's condominium market was busy in August, with two apartments and four duplex/triplex flats selling for an average \$421,333, all but two in the range of \$430,000 to \$510,000. The average markup was 24 percent, but so far this year the average is pushing 30 percent, roughly in the same range as single-family dwellings. Highest markup involved 23 Burton, the ground floor and basement of a duplex which sold for \$458,000; the lowest was for

Apartment 504 at 200 Lansdowne Avenue, only 10 percent above the 2007 valuation.

Also sold were two shares of property, one of a triplex and including exclusive rights to 442 Claremont Avenue, the other of a duplex and including exclusive rights to 506 Prince Albert Avenue.

The 15 one- and two-family dwelling sales closed in August is significantly below

the average for the month, but it brings the annual total to 145 sales so far this year, equal to the total number registered in all of 2009.

NOTE: The preceding article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in August, 2010, provided by city officials. A list of sales can be found on Page 8.

Volume collapsed in September

Andy Dodge

The volume of signatures to purchase new houses in Westmount dropped sharply in September this year, as only seven single-family homes and one duplex changed hands, but the range of prices narrowed significantly.

The top price in the month involved 4299 Montrose Avenue, which sold for \$4.4 million, the third-highest price registered this year, but below that all of the sales were in a range between \$947,500 (for 4836 de Maisonneuve Boulevard) and \$1,420,000 (for 6 Braeside Place).

The average volume for September is 19.6 transfers, so this year's number is less than half of that. In September 2005 only six sales were registered but other than that, this is the lowest number for the month in at least the past 30 years. So far this year 153 one- and two-family sales have been registered, well above the 117 in the same time period last year and about the same as in 2008.

The average markup over the 2007 valuations — still in force until the end of the year — dropped from 137 percent in August to 123 percent in September, but in

fact the average has hovered between 122 and 144 percent throughout the year, so though the prices are about 12 percent higher than last year, it is hard to say there has been any significant price movement in 2010.

Three condominium sales — all in former duplexes — boosted the third-quarter total to 13, with an average price of \$606,785 and an average markup over valuation of 21.5 percent, basically the same as the month's average markup among one-

"Only seven single-family homes and one duplex changed hands in September."

and two-family dwellings. At the same time three more duplexes experienced share-sales, the latest trend in the division of dwellings and apartment buildings.

The only nonresidential building to sell in September was the Old Post Office, 1302-04 Greene Avenue, which changed hands between corporations for \$4 million. The previous owners had picked it up in 2004 for \$3,100,000.

NOTE: The preceding article relates to the registration of deeds of sale for Westmount property in September, 2010, provided by city officials. A list of sales can be found on Page 8.

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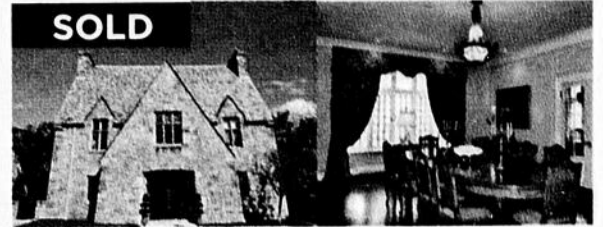
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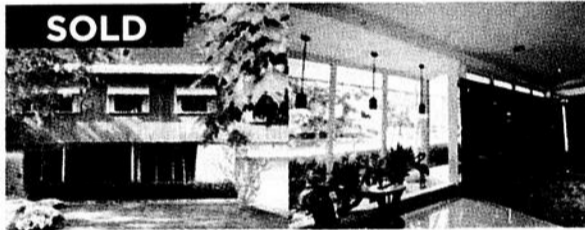
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Westmount Real Estate Section

HOME TRANSFERS IN AUGUST 2010

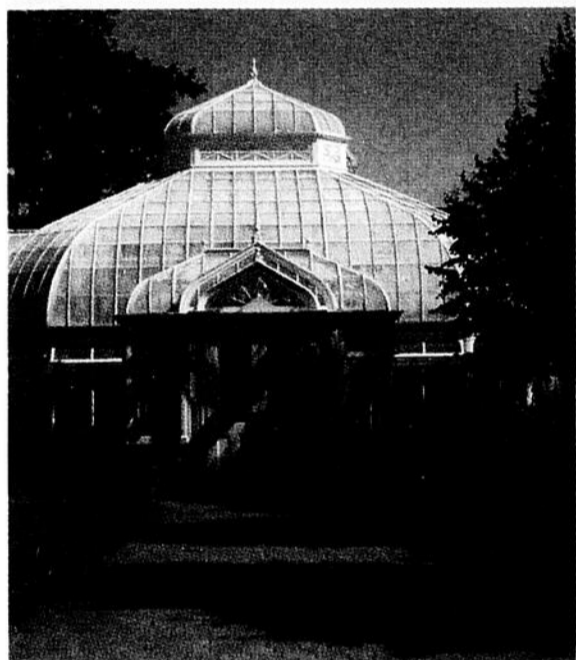
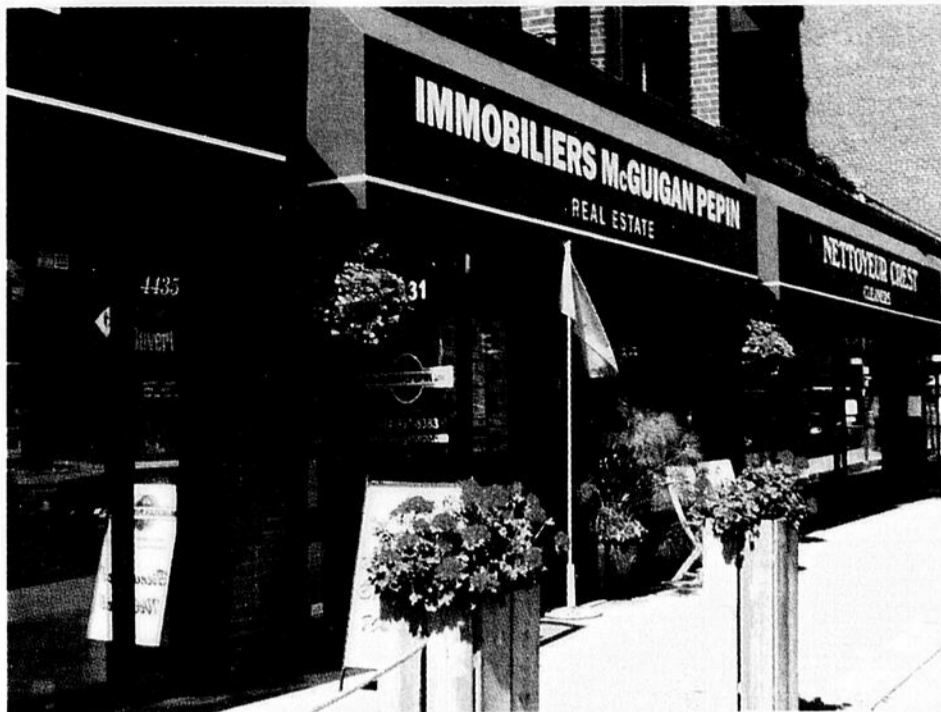
ADDRESS	FROM	TO	PRICE	2007 VALUATION
128 Arlington 667 Belmont 3243 The Boulevard 3778 The Boulevard 6 Burton 37 Burton 35 Church Hill	Beverly Poisson Naomi Lyon Julie Charbonneau & estate George Grivakis estate Claire Jacqueline Fichaud Joë Harvey & François Blouin Eleanore McNaughton Olymbec Development (2004) Inc. & Olymbec Construction Inc. 4435036 Canada Inc. Cynthia Jane Owens Vivianne Ory Susan Blanchard Michal P. Kuzmicki & Angele Martineau Marc Coulombe & Petra Carlsson Susan Boland	Stuart Lubarsky & Renée Schiff Henia El Mamouni David Michael Alter & Robyn Beth Cohen Mojtaba Youssefi & Nino Salehabadi Violaine Gomar & Laurent Bensussan Patrick Houston & Stine Linden-Anderson Nancy Cummings Hartley Stern Virginia E. Mylander & David Shane Swift Nicole Small & Charles Porteous David Douek Maurice Roger Aucoin & Chantal Pitre-Aucoin Alain Elbaz Joëlle Dorais	\$1,650,000 \$1,090,579 \$3,200,000 \$783,000 \$512,500 \$610,000 \$1,270,000 \$1,339,000 \$774,000 \$835,000 \$919,000 \$1,110,000 \$1,685,000 \$849,000	\$1,167,300 \$1,056,200 \$1,877,200 \$741,000 \$444,700 \$502,200 \$1,490,100 \$966,500 \$650,200 \$432,300 \$649,400 \$708,800 \$1,025,000 \$470,000
DUPLEXES 158-60 Côte St. Antoine	Fernande Benoit	William Trihey	\$660,000	\$461,500
CONDOMINIUMS 23 Burton 399 Clarke, #5E 436 Grosvenor 200 Lansdowne, #504 3169 St. Antoine 41 Windsor	Anne Russell-Senior Marie-Louise Laroche-Gardère Terrance Rigelhof & Ann Johnson Barbara Meadowcroft Alejandro Rosales Nicole Small & Charles Porteous	Tommy Jo St. John & Alexandra Howard Judith Levine Yong Tao Wang Anne McCracken-Fitzpatrick Erik Vanin Kelig Glorennec & Hubert Cachat	\$458,000 \$430,000 \$350,000 \$510,000 \$270,000 \$510,000	\$235,400 \$380,600 \$305,000 \$464,800 \$241,000 \$410,000
SHARE SALES 506-08 Prince Albert, 55% 442-46 Claremont, 33%	Mojtaba Youssefi & Nino Salehabadi Elizabeth Ann Bastin	Norma d'Alesio Eleanore McNaughton	\$559,000 \$375,000	\$288,7501 \$196,2332

1Right of use of 506 Prince Albert (ground floor). Valuation is 55% of \$525,000.
2Exclusive use of 442 Claremont. Valuation is 1/3 of \$588,700.

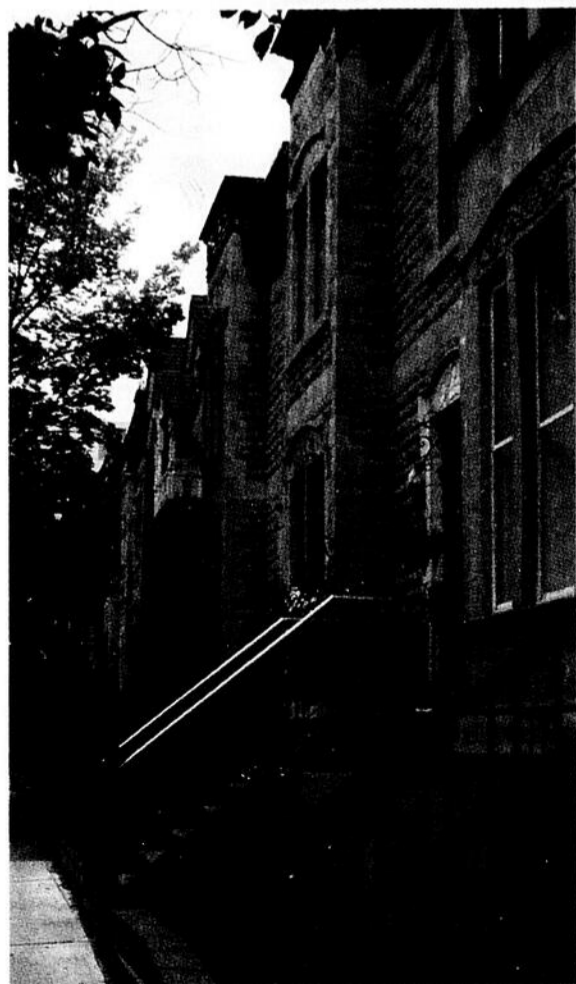
HOME TRANSFERS IN SEPTEMBER 2010

ADDRESS	FROM	TO	PRICE	2007 VALUATION
1 Belvedere 6 Braeside 409 Clarke 5 de Casson 4836 de Maisonneuve 4299 Montrose 656 Victoria	Peter Frederick Christoffersen & Susan Elizabeth Kerr Kathleen Goulding Wilson Alan Belkin & Réal Rainville Suzanne Thibault Frederick C.C. Andrews & Carole Summers 9140-4186 Québec Inc. Sherrill Christmas	Olymbec Development (2004) Inc. & Olymbec Construction Inc Amal Amarouch & Philippe Roy Bing Tang & Jiao Yu Magali Cournoyer-Proulx & Denis Boucher Alexandre Patte & Ève Riopel François and Isabelle de Gaspé Beaubien Eric Ouaknine & Julia Brownstein	\$1,000,000 \$1,420,000 \$1,100,000 \$1,290,000 \$947,500 \$4,400,000 \$963,000	\$919,000 \$1,138,300 \$995,000 \$753,6001 \$831,800 \$3,850,000 \$694,600
DUPLEXES 27-29 Church Hill	Mary Anne Ferguson	Nadia and Franco Niro & John Anthony Luzio	\$1,225,000	\$845,300
CONDOMINIUMS 554 Grosvenor 81 Hallowell 247 Melville	Daphne Houston McClelland Sharad Goel & Shobhita Garg Irene Jednak	Andrea de Mori Bajolin Susan Sweatman Michelle Harper	\$730,000 \$351,200 \$510,000	\$459,500 \$312,100 \$380,000
COMMERCIAL PROPERTY 1302-04 Greene	Westmount Heritage Properties Ltd.	Corporation Financière Phildan Inc.	\$4,000,000	\$3,075,000
SHARE SALES 509B Claremont, 60% 450-52 Grosvenor, 60% 231-33 Melville, 55%	Joan Besner & Judith Besner Amie Jane Starkey Hayes 9187-1442 Québec Inc.	Robert Besner & Sophie Vlahovich Philippe Castaigne & Marilyn Drouin Lauren Teblum	\$450,000 \$595,000 \$465,000	\$385,6202 \$318,0003 \$290,9504

1Some land (63.10 square metres) in Montreal (Ville Marie) with a valuation of \$56,800 included in total.
2Valuation is 60% of \$642,700.
3Valuation is 60% of \$530,000.
4Occupancy of 231 Melville. Valuation is 55% of \$529,000.



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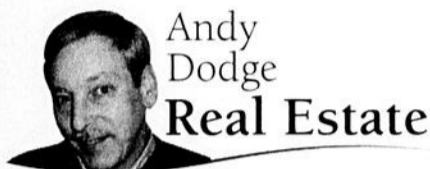
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Westmount Real Estate Section

Sales eased off in November



Andy Dodge
Real Estate

Volume stayed high but prices eased off in the Westmount real estate market in November, with a dozen sales negotiated in the month, only three for less than \$1 million.

The highest price among sales posted last month was \$1.7 million, and though there is still plenty of inventory available in the \$2 million category, it is hard to find buyers for Westmount's more distinguished properties. That may be why volume so far this year is only 134 sales, the lowest year-to-date figure since 1995, the year of the provincial sovereignty referendum. Certainly this year, the height to which prices have risen makes the number of potential buyers much smaller.

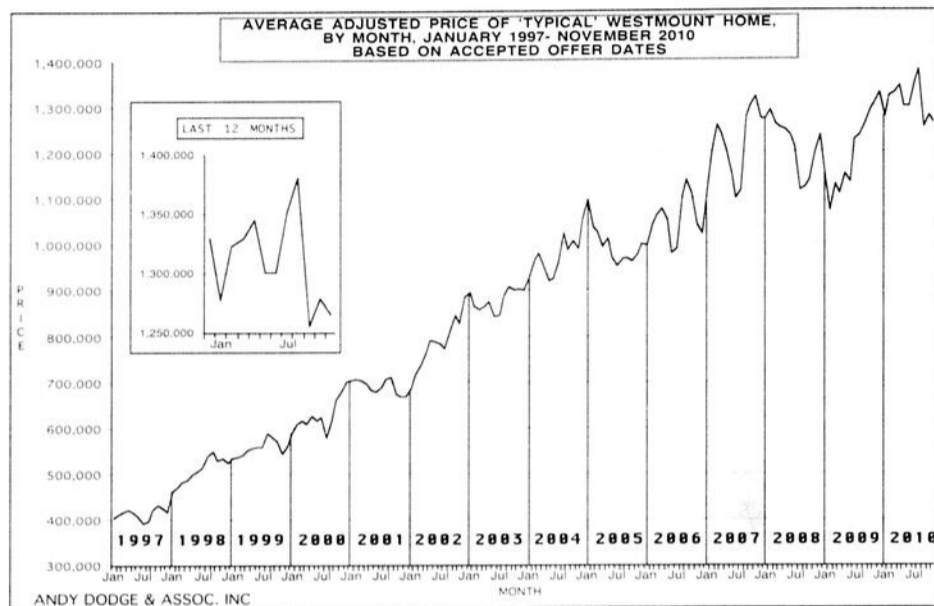
On the low side, two sales were posted for \$600,000 and \$640,000, helping hold the average price in November at \$1,210,000, well below the \$1,338,786 average for October, but in fact the average

markup over (2007) valuation rose to 136 percent compared with 123 percent in October. In comparing to the new (2011) valuations, only two of the 12 sales were for less than the city assessment, while in October a stunning eight of 14 were mark-downs.

There were no new condominium sales in November and only one in October, an indication that those who are buying at this time of year are ready to put up the cash required to make a substantial investment in Westmount real estate, and they expect a good return down the line. The slight reduction in prices means that they are safer than they would have been investing last spring.

Two houses sold in adjacent-Westmount areas, one in the Circle Road area and one in Shaughnessy Village, along with two apartments at Fort de la Montagne, 3577 Atwater Avenue. This is another indication that buyers are more intent on investing their money in the lucrative Westmount market.

Agents have indicated that there is still plenty of interest and the market may not be interested in settling back for the

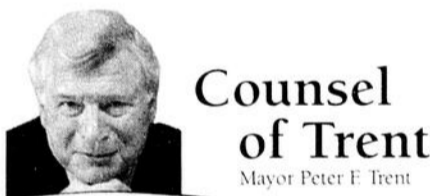


holidays. But while the pulse continues, let me take this opportunity to wish all my readers a very pleasant holiday season.

NOTE: The preceding article relates to offers to purchase Westmount residential dwellings which were reported by the local real estate agents as having been accepted in

November, 2010. Because they are not final registered sales, the addresses and prices cannot be made public, but give a good idea of current trends in local real estate activity. The graph on this page offers a picture of these trends over time.

Property tax burden must be reduced



Counsel of Trent
Mayor Peter F. Trent

(Warning: the following contains a graphic description of a new tax. It could induce somnolence in some, virulence in others.)

It was December 1990. Your faithful scribe was Westmount's Commissioner of Finance; Mayor Gérald Tremblay was then a Liberal cabinet minister; and Tremblay's colleague Claude Ryan was Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Ryan suddenly announced that the Quebec government, in a savage measure unique in North America, was wiping out

all operating subsidies for mass transit. Up until then, the cost of running buses and the metro had been shared roughly equally among Quebec, the riders, and property taxpayers.

Not to worry, said Ryan to the Montreal Island cities left to carry the empty can: we'll increase the ceiling on the welcome tax, we'll let you charge a commercial surtax, and we'll give you \$30 per car registration to help pay for busses and the metro.

Today, one-half of that \$30 subsidizes suburban trains, which also gobble up one-half of a 3 cents-per-litre gas tax. (Far-flung suburban train services, such as the new one to Mascouche, cost a fortune and actually encourage urban sprawl.)

Today, the riders of the STM (the Montreal Island bus and metro system) pay one-half of its costs. A monthly pass, \$32.75 in 1990, costs \$72.75

today: a 50% growth after inflation.

You think that's bad? Well, Montreal Island property taxpayers fork over roughly \$400 million to the STM, double what they paid in 1990 after inflation.

Property taxes, which started off life as a way to pay for local municipal services, have been turned into a cash cow for mass transit, a strictly regional service.

And, while improved public transit increases property values (and therefore taxes!), it also de-clogs roads for drivers, yet they contribute a small fraction of what property owners pay. And the amount of property tax you pay has absolutely nothing to do with your use of public transit.

Currently, the City of Montreal has the power to institute a car registration tax, but the rest of the region hasn't. Mayor Tremblay and I have been working to get the government to allow Montreal Island (and, ultimately, the whole metropolitan

region) the same power, in order to reduce the property tax burden.

This would be a tax earmarked for public transit exclusively.

Two weeks ago, I managed to get all the cities on the Island to rally to this idea: a very difficult job, as there are more cars per household on the West Island than in, say, Westmount.

Still, while the demerged cities pay 19% of the Agglomeration shared costs via property taxes, they have 16% of the Island's cars.

With a \$45 car tax, Westmounters would contribute about \$425,000 a year, yet save a lot more in property taxes going to the Agglomeration.

So the goal is not more tax revenue, but to spread the tax burden by reducing our dependency on property taxes.

And if you don't like the idea, just try and get Quebec to restore mass transit subsidies. Just try.

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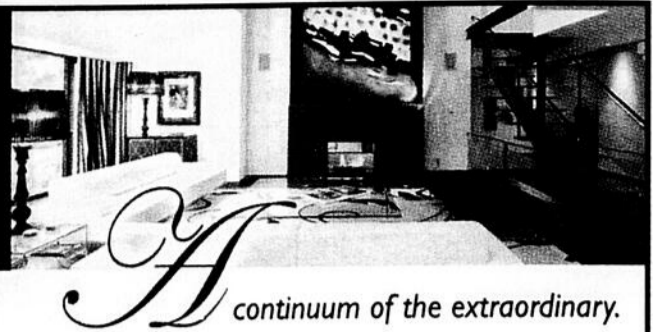
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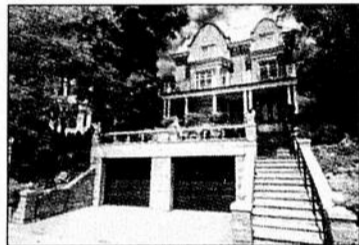
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LOCAL NEWS

Continued from page 3

29 years of candid conversations

Imagine hosting a party in your home for between 20 and 50 guests every week for a year. If that sounds a bit daunting, multiply that by nearly 29 years and you get some idea of what the Nicholsons have accomplished with their weekly discussion sessions, which have been held without fail every Wednesday night since February 1982.

Once described as a modern Canadian version of the Algonquin Round Table, the

Wednesday Night salon has attracted everyone from professors and politicians to captains of industry, often creating some interesting dynamics with journalists and economists rubbing elbows with cabinet ministers and ambassadors in an informal, off-the-record atmosphere where candid conversations not only flourish, but are encouraged.

Over the years, more than 3,000 guests have accepted the Nicholsons' invitation to offer their views on a wide variety of current events, especially in the areas of economics and politics.

The tried-and-true format has changed very little over the past 1,500 weeks. Discussion topics are planned in advance and relevant guests are invited by email. Upon arriving, they help themselves to a glass of wine and mingle in the foyer until 9 p.m., when the sharp clang of a ship's bell summons everyone into the dining room, where David has prepared a video montage of current events and other tidbits to serve as fodder for discussion.

Traditionally, these discussions have been held in the Nicholsons' home at 33 Rosemount Ave., but the couple recently

sold the house and downsized to an elegant Sherbrooke Street apartment just outside Westmount. They continue to host their Wednesday Night salons at their new abode — this week marks their 1,501st week — and both David and Diana are looking forward to continuing the Wednesday Night tradition indefinitely, albeit on a slightly smaller scale. This, they emphasize, does not mean they intend to stop their weekly discussion group anytime soon.

"We're constantly worrying about what we'll be doing next week," said Diana.

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Renaud launches Into the Mist this Saturday

Marilynn Vanderstaay

Westmount children's book author Anne Renaud and Babar en Ville invite the public — especially children age 7 to 12 — to join in the fun at the launch of Renaud's latest book, *Into the Mist: The Story of the Empress of Ireland*, this Saturday afternoon, Dec. 11.

Known to many Westmounters through her day job as Mayor Peter Trent's assistant at City Hall, Renaud has written several successful books for young readers, and this time she has decided to write about one of Canada's worst maritime disasters.

The RMS Empress of Ireland, a 14,191-ton vessel, was built near Glasgow, Scotland in 1905. Along with her sister ship, the Empress of Britain, she had been commis-

sioned by Canadian Pacific for the northern trans-Atlantic route between Quebec and England. The transcontinental CPR and its fleet of ocean liners were part of the company's self-proclaimed World's Greatest Transportation System. On May 28, 1914 the ship departed Quebec City with 1,477 passengers and crew. Early the next morning the ship was proceeding down the St. Lawrence River in heavy fog. Around 2 a.m., the Norwegian ship SS Storstad crashed into the side of the Empress of Ireland. The Storstad did not sink, but the Empress of Ireland, with severe damage to her starboard side, listed rapidly, and sank in 14 minutes.

In her book, Renaud tells the story of the Empress of Ireland in such a way it enthralls the reader in such a way she not only is riveted to the story but also learns about an important part of Canadian history.

During her presentation at Babar, Renaud will introduce visitors to some of the people who sailed on the Empress of Ireland and will discuss the ill-fated ship's role in helping to build the country of Canada.

The launch takes place this Saturday, Dec. 11, at 2 p.m. at Babar en Ville, 1235A Greene Ave. For more information, call 514.931.0606.



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(Family Division)
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ROCHEL NANTON
Applicant
vs
VONDELL EDWARDS
Defendant

SUMMONS

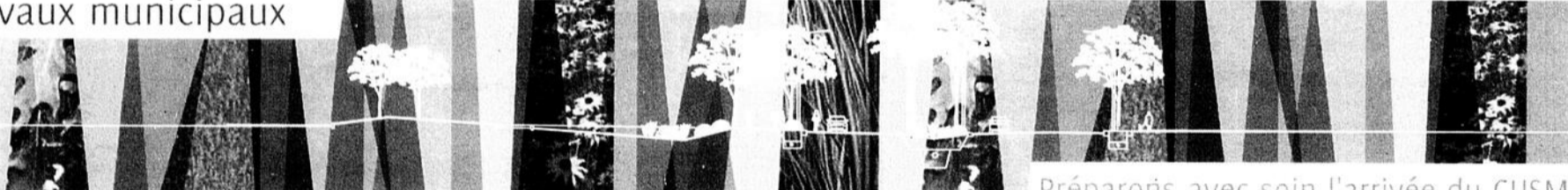
IT IS ORDERED to VONDELL EDWARDS, to appear at the Montreal Court House, located at 1, East, Notre-Dame Street, Montreal, Province of Quebec, to the office of this court, room 1.120, within 30 days of the publication of the summons in the journal «The Westmount Examiner». A copy of the Motion for custody, child support, authorization to travel and authorization to obtain passport has been filed to the office of this Court to the attention of VONDELL EDWARDS.

The Motion for custody, child support, authorization to travel and authorization to obtain passport will be presented before the Court on **January 19th, 2011 at 9h00 room 2.17.**

Montreal, December 3rd, 2010
Annie Ouellette, greffier adjoint

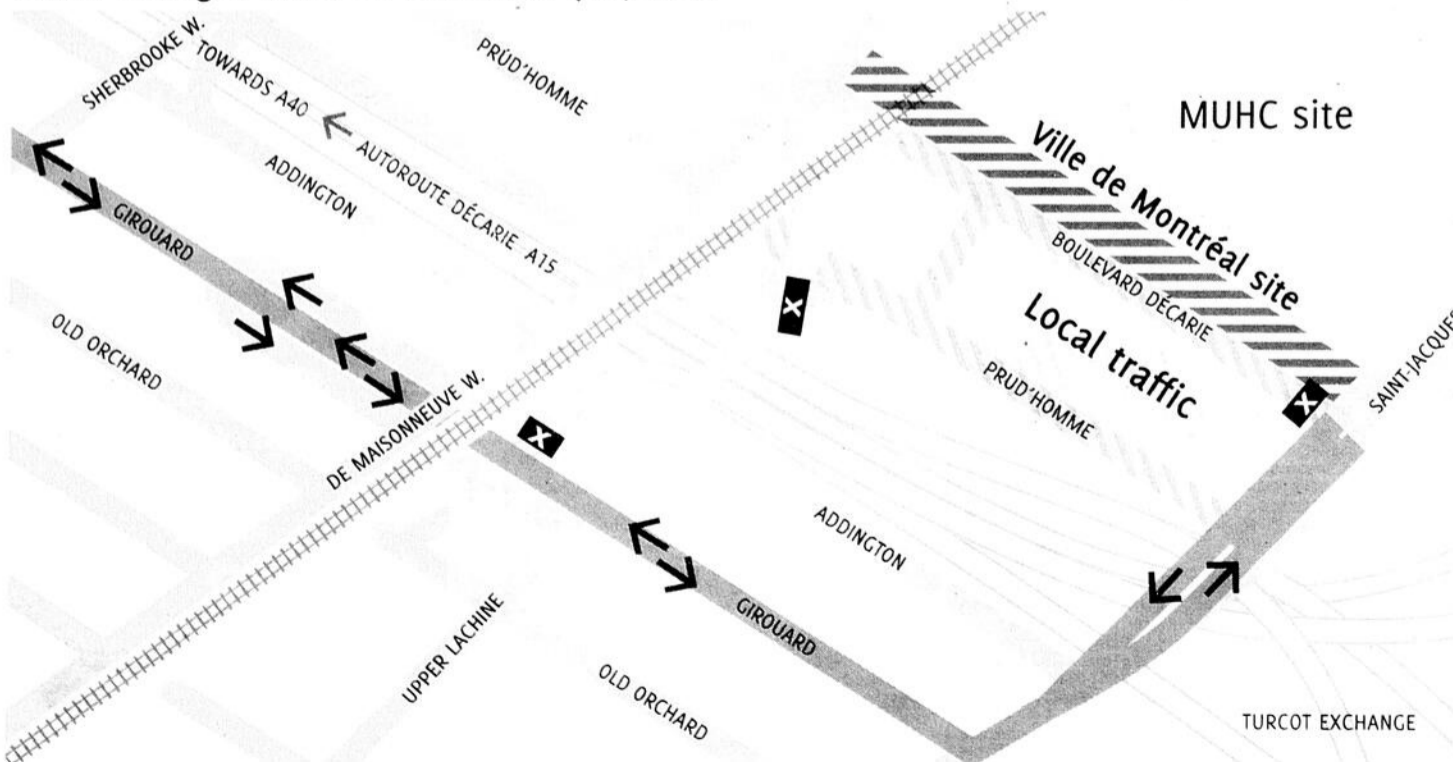
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Historic Marianopolis College building undergoes brick restoration



Marianopolis College on Westmount Avenue

Anyone passing by Marianopolis College in the near future will be sure to notice some major construction work going on, as school officials have announced a major renovation project involving the exterior of the historic building on Westmount Avenue.

Beginning last week, the brickwork and masonry on the 85-year-old building will be carefully restored in an extensive project that is expected to last through the rest of this academic year.

Despite the initial inconvenience, as some entrances to the building will be temporarily closed while scaffolding and fences are erected, school officials are saying that the final product will be well worth the effort.

"This work is part of the College's commitment to have Marianopolis be Quebec's safest campus," Director General Len Even said this week. "What's more, it is part of the care we take as stewards of one of Montreal's architectural jewels."

The Marianopolis College building boasts a wealth of architectural features, particularly from the Art Deco period of the 1920s. The architect was J.O. Marchand, who also designed the municipal court building of Montreal and the current Dawson College site, among other architecturally significant buildings on the island of Montreal. Marchand was also responsible for making several modifications to Montreal's City Hall, Collège de Montréal and the Place d'Armes Hotel.

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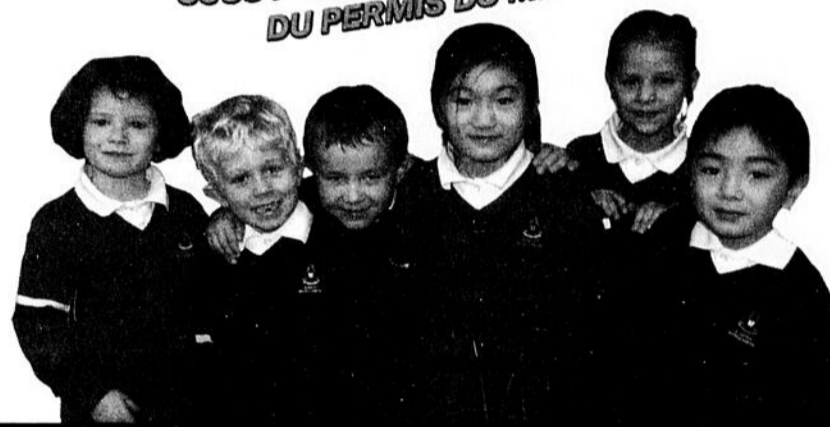
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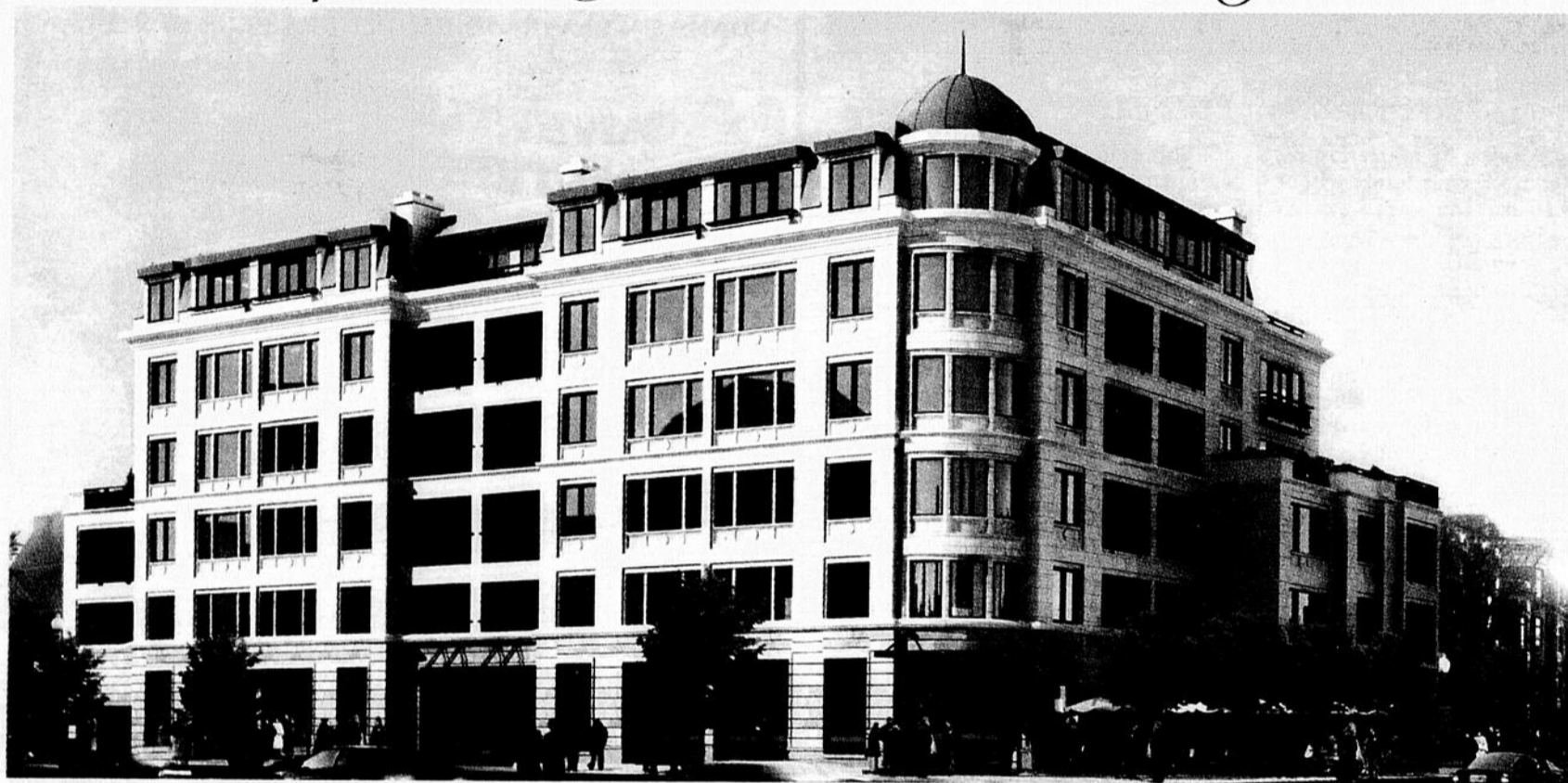
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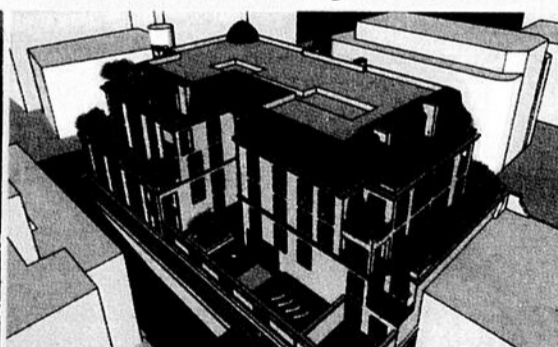
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