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Westmount EXAMINER

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Making all of Westmount

Examiner photo, Peter Ford



Church CHAT

Benoit Cardin, the diocesan accountant at the Archdiocese of Montreal, said Westmount churches are sitting on a gold mine of unrealized property value and are on solid financial ground, unlike many churches across the province. See Stephanie Alcaraz Robinson's story on page 3.

Westmount launches sound-wall feasibility study

4



Bouchard climbs higher than ever

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Rich in religion, rich in assets

stephanie.alcaraz-robinson@tc.tc

While some boroughs and cities in Montreal struggle to keep their churches open – some even closing or being sold off in the past years – Westmount Catholic churches have nothing to fear. Not only are they amongst the most valuable on the island, they also benefit from high attendance, said a high-ranking church official recently.

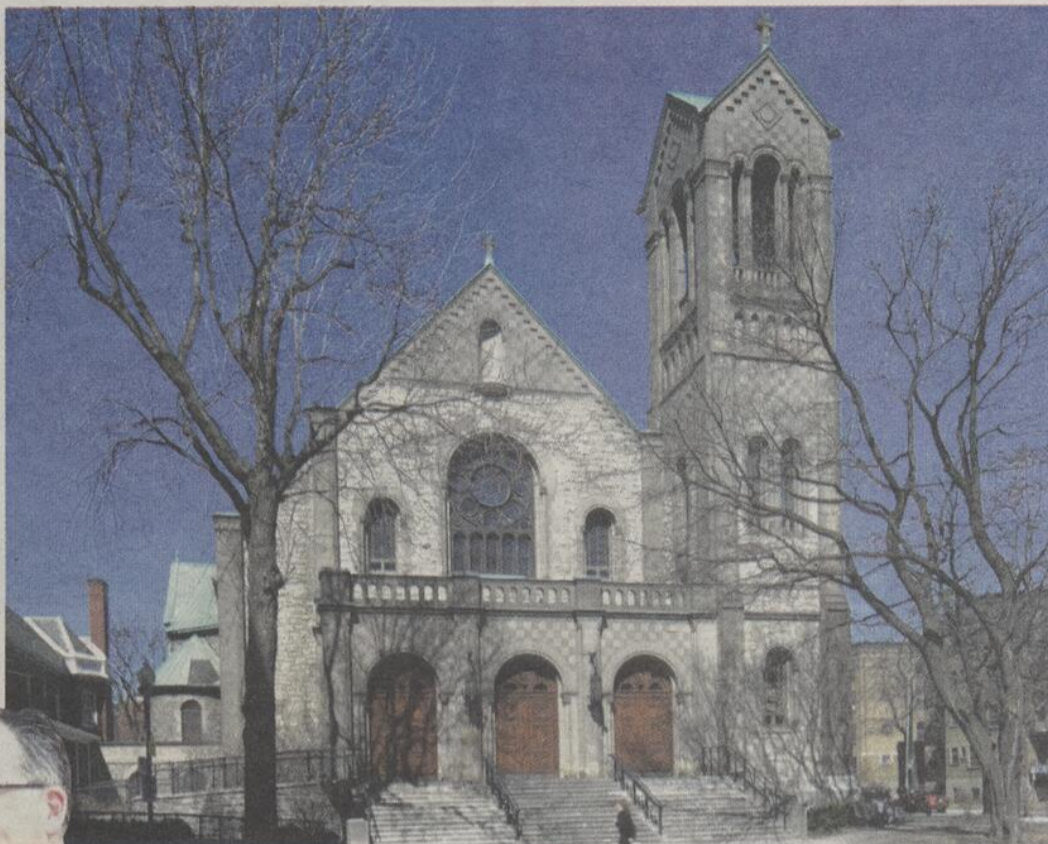
Benoit Cardin, diocesan accountant at the Catholic Archdiocese of Montreal, does not think that the future of their churches in Westmount – the Ascension of our Lords and St. Leon of Westmount – are in any jeopardy, as so many churches across the province already are. “The financial situation in Westmount is less fragile than elsewhere. It’s not so much in attendance, but especially people who live there – they are people a little better off (financially), able to donate and contribute more generously.”

Helping push the value of the churches’ properties greatly is the land on which they sit. Cardin said the 2013 property valuation was \$4.6 million for Ascension of our Lords and \$2.8 million for St. Leon. Both churches ended the fiscal year with a surplus – \$37,000 and \$31,000, respectively.

In terms of buildings, Ascension of our Lords, the only gothic-style church in

Benoit Cardin is an accountant for the Archdiocese of Montreal. Cardin reports that although many churches across Quebec are struggling financially, Westmount Catholic churches are in relatively good financial shape. Do you make donations to any religious movement? Write us at examiner@tc.tc

(Examiner photo Peter Ford)



Montreal, according to Cardin, was valued at \$2.7 million, while St. Leon is valued at \$2.8 million. “The Ascension of our Lords church is much older. That’s why it cost less. I don’t have the date though. It’s a church with a gothic style – those who like gothic (architecture) and Harry Potter will really love this one,” the accountant joked.

Although the churches – and their buildings – are in good financial shape, they aren’t getting any younger. Costs for renovations and building maintenance could potentially be astronomical, although both churches were lucky in 2013. St. Leon only had to spend a measly \$12,000 on renovations last year, though those costs could rise as the buildings continue to age.

St. Leon Church, building and property included, is worth \$4.5 million.

(Examiner photo Peter Ford)

Insurance is also costly for the congregations.

“We have to insure the building and also for liability,” Cardin said, in 2013, St. Leon paid \$15,000 in insurance fees, while Ascension of

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Our Lords paid \$14,500. On the other hand, churches are exempt from taxes of any kind.

He is also surprised to see that attendance is higher than other parishes. They surveyed 700 Catholic families in the parishes’ territory last year, with 80 adults reporting they attend dominical mass for St. Leon and 150 at Ascension of our Lords.

“Usually, on average, we evaluate a 2 to 3 per cent attendance in parishes,” Cardin said. “There are different factors that favour worship in Westmount. First, the proximity. It’s in the middle of (the city), it’s easier to get there, it’s near a subway, etc. There are more than 180 churches on our territory. Some are in more remote areas, some are in disadvantaged areas.”

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Westmount, ministry of transport to share costs of sound barrier study

City agrees to pay 50 per cent of a feasibility study, to be completed sometime in spring

● anthony.abbondanza@tc.tc

Westmount has agreed to pay half the cost associated with a feasibility study for the construction of a comprehensive sound barrier along part of the city's southern border facing both the Canadian Pacific (CP) railway as well as the Ville-Marie Expressway during an April 8 city-council meeting.

Conducted by engineering firm, Dessau, the study will cost \$84,000 – half of which will be paid by Westmount.

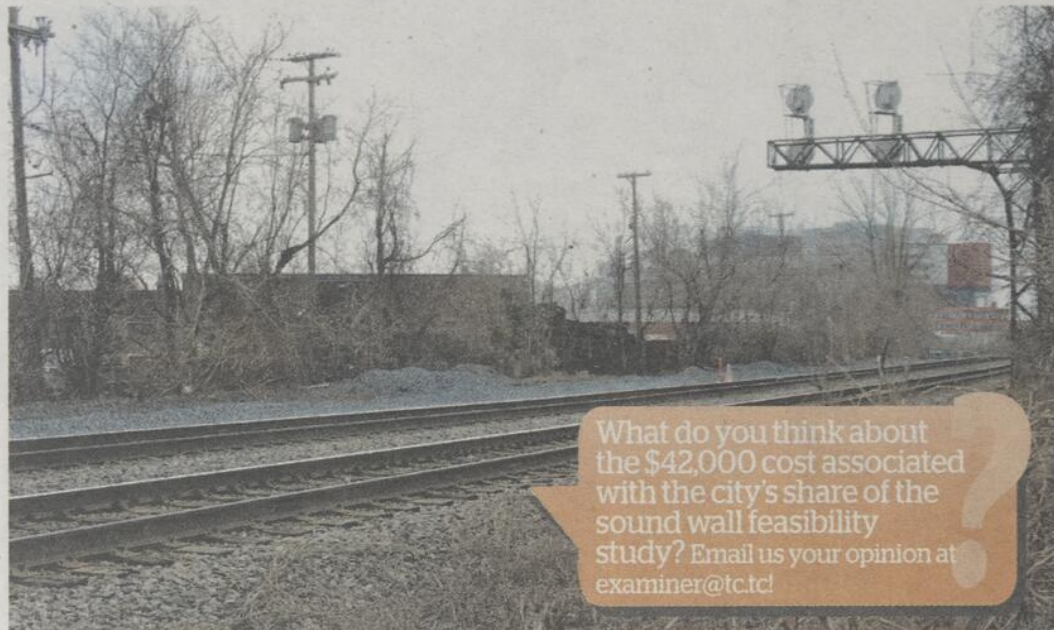
"The message I got from residents was that they want to see designs," said city councillor Theodora Samiotis, charged with the sound barrier dossier. "It's an investment that needs to be made if we're going to understand everything."

The announcement comes after several years of negotiating costs, associated with the study, with the Quebec government.

Both Westmount and the Quebec Ministry of Transport (MTQ) conducted separate studies in the past, indicating current highway noise levels exceed the permissible level of 65 decibels.

The problem, however, is that past designs involved, in part, the construction of a sound barrier on CP-owned property. According to Samiotis, CP doesn't want a sound barrier on its land.

Beginning in the end of April, Dessau will try to determine the optimal location, length



A sound wall is needed along Westmount's southern border, from the Westmount Athletic Grounds to Clondeboye Avenue, said city councillor Theodora Samiotis. The city will spend \$42,000 – half the total cost – on a feasibility study to examine the possibility. Examiner photo Peter Ford.

and height, and cost for the sound barrier. The feasibility study should be completed by the end of spring, said Samiotis.

"I'm looking forward to the results of the study. I want to hear what residents have to say

once we finalize the study," said the commissioner of urban planning.

As such, the new study will include a design of the noise barrier built solely on Westmount property.

The areas affected by excessive noise caused by the nearby railway and highway include homes from Hallowell to Clondeboye avenues. The question remains as to what type of sound barrier is needed, Samiotis said.

Indeed, the concrete sound walls are less expensive. But they're not without problems.

"You can't have a closed, brick wall next to a house," said Samiotis, noting Prospect Street residents are worried they will lose natural light.

As such, the future sound wall must be composed by a mix of concrete, brick, and glass.

Westmount originally asked the MTQ to pay 75 per cent of the costs associated with the feasibility study and the eventual construction – without success.

The MTQ always shares the costs of studies equally with Quebec municipalities.

Although aware, via public consultations, of the city's desire for a feasibility study and the future construction of a sound barrier, residents weren't made aware of the \$42,000 price tag that was required to move the project forward.

According to Samiotis, however, the need is greater than the cost.

"More residents tell me about noise they have to deal with versus those that say otherwise. My role as a councillor is to bring this to its conclusion," she said.

City, YMCA cement 'Teen' partnership

Westmount approves one-year agreement for local Y to operate Teen Centre

● anthony.abbondanza@tc.tc

The city and its local YMCA have come to terms to a one-year agreement of the Teen Centre's operation in the Westmount Recreation Centre.

The motion to award the Westmount YMCA \$49,984 to operate the centre passed during the April 8 Westmount city-council meeting.

According to Westmount YMCA director Gary White, "the city allocated more money to us than they had in recent years to this municipal program. It really is a great partnership," he said, adding "the YMCAs of Quebec brings a level of expertise to their network of teen centres. I think we have a lot to offer and it'll

make for a strong partnership."

The YMCA requested a larger, yet unconfirmed amount, but settled at \$49,984.

With a full-time coordinator and two part-time intervention workers, the Teen Centre's yearly expenses amount to \$66,794, giving a shortfall of \$16,750 just to stay afloat.

As a result, the Westmount YMCA has arranged for bridge financing with the YMCAs of Quebec for 2014. It will also, in collaboration with the city, fundraise to close the gap.

According to White, the YMCA will hold a "silent auction-type" event sometime next October.

Since early March, the centre has acted as a drop-in zone from 3:30 to 9 p.m., better



Youth workers facilitate a game of pool Monday evening at the Westmount Recreation Centre's Teen Centre, currently known as 'Teen Zone.' Photo Peter Ford.

Continued on page 11 ►►

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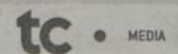
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Blue for autism

Westmount jewellery store, Giant Steps school collaborate for Autism Awareness Month campaign

● anthony.abbondanza@tc.tc

As part of the seventh annual World Autism Awareness Day on April 2, uniquely-crafted art, painted by students at Giant Steps School in Montreal, was exhibited at a local Westmount store.

Students, parents, and passers-by stopped by Lydia Mamane's Joolz Bar on Sherbrooke Street last Wednesday evening to take part in the 'Light it Blue' campaign.

"It was just amazing to see the outpouring support coming from the special needs community," said Mamane.



Lydia Mamane and the special needs community gather for an artful and very inspiring 'Light it Blue' autism awareness event April 2 at Joolz Bar in Westmount. Photo Peter Ford

Autism organizations around the world celebrate the day, as well the blue-inspired month with unique fundraising and awareness-raising events.

Throughout April, also known as Autism

Awareness Month, the Westmount store owner will donate 10 per cent of Joolz Bar sales to Giant Steps.

For Mamane, the cause is one with a very personal undertone.

Her son, Aaron, was diagnosed with autism at the tender age of 5. He has since attended Giant Steps, an NDC-based school devoted to educating children, and young adults, with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

Aaron, now 18, and students from Becky Marsland's Grade 4 class at Giant Steps painted a variety of colourful art masterpieces to honour the month. "His painting is wonderful and very abstract. He's a creative individual," said the proud mom.

The paintings will be auctioned off at an autism gala set for May 6 at the Windsor Ballroom in Downtown, Montreal.

With the local special needs community heightened support, Mamane said she'd like to facilitate the event again next April.

The support is, now more than ever, crucial to research into an incurable cognitive disorder.

When Aaron was born 18 years ago, said the Hampstead resident, only 1 in 350 children were diagnosed with ASD.

Today, 1 in 68 children (1 in 42 boys and 1 in 189 girls) were identified as having (ASD) in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study released in late March.

For more information on Joolz Bar's autism awareness campaign, visit the Westmount store's Facebook page. For more information on autism, visit autismspeaks.ca.



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Heartbleed bug not affecting city, Hydro Westmount

Westmount websites remain free of bug that could compromise data

● anthony.abbondanza@tc.tc

A security-compromising Internet bug has not affected the city of Westmount and its day-to-day operations, according to a city official.

"We're not affected internally by the bug," said director general Duncan Campbell.

Hydro Westmount, too, has not been affected by the Heartbleed bug, which has compromised two-thirds of active websites on the internet. Director Benoit Hurtubise told The Examiner that Hydro Westmount uses an IBM mainframe that "doesn't communicate with the rest of the world outside of Westmount."

"We're not affected by that situation... We have a really old system. Sometimes I wish I had that problem," Hurtubise said jokingly.

Discovered last week by the firm Codenomicon and Neel Mehta, a Google Security researcher, the Heartbleed bug is a flaw in OpenSSL software, commonly used to provide security and privacy on the internet. According to internet security pundits, the bug is affecting global IT systems with the potential to expose private data.

On Monday, the Canada Revenue Agency said it was temporarily affected as it announced 900 Canadians had their social insurance numbers stolen from its website over a six-hour period due to the bug.

Heartbleed is not a virus, but a bug-affected code easily exploited by cybercriminals, exposing the keys needed to decode and read sensitive data.

Sensitive information like user names, passwords, instant messages, emails, business documents have been affected according to Codenomicon. As such, and to be safe, password changes are needed - but only once the flaw in OpenSSL is remedied by users of the security software.

According to LastPass, a Heartbleed bug site checker, westmount.org has not been affected. Sites like Yahoo and Amazon were affected by the security threat.

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Decorating Easter eggs

Decorating eggs for Easter is a tradition in many countries around the globe. As it is an activity that all the family can enjoy, it should come as no surprise that decorating eggs is as popular as it ever was, at this time of year.

The traditional Easter egg

Gather the children around the kitchen table for a creative session with lots of different coloured gouache and felt pens. Be warned: it's very easy to break the shells if they're not handled with care. Creative spirits will no doubt want to experiment; try using foods such as

beets and onion skins to colour the eggs naturally. No need for toxic products here! Just a couple of pots and a bit of hot water is enough.

Creating characters

Transforming eggs into different characters is also great fun. Use a whole egg to make your own roundy chick: just cut out a beak and two little feet from a piece of orange card stock and stick them on the shell. Gluing on a few feathers makes for a perfect finishing touch. Or, a half of an empty eggshell can quickly be turned into a

nest for a fluffy pipe-cleaner baby chick.

A giant egg

A truly ambitious project would be to make a giant paper mache Easter egg. The first step is to buy a large balloon, which will have an oval shape once it's inflated. Then use a mixture of flour and water to glue three or four layers of newspaper strips on to the balloon. Hang the balloon up for at least 12 hours so that the paper mache has time to dry. It can then be painted or decorated as desired. Once that is



Decorating eggs for Easter is still a tradition in many countries around the world. PHOTO: jupiterimages / THINKSTOCK

What's on your agenda for *Easter weekend?*



Easter celebrations coincide with a long weekend, making it an ideal occasion to relax before the long run up to summer. This is also the time to take advantage of the fresh air and the first warm weather of the year.

Easter petting zoo

Children are thrilled at the thought of seeing rabbits, chickens, lambs, goats, and ponies at the Easter petting zoo held in your local shopping centre. Take advantage of this opportunity to see these cute animals up close and even get to feed them!

Activities for the children

You could also find out what's going on in your neighbourhood or municipality, as activities are often organized for children. Keep an eye out for special shows, entertainment, inflatable games, and Easter egg hunts.

done, the top end of the egg can be cut off in order to fill it with candies. The kids will love this decorative centerpiece!




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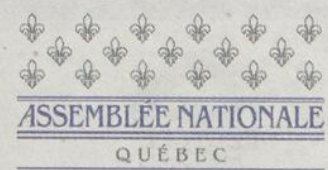
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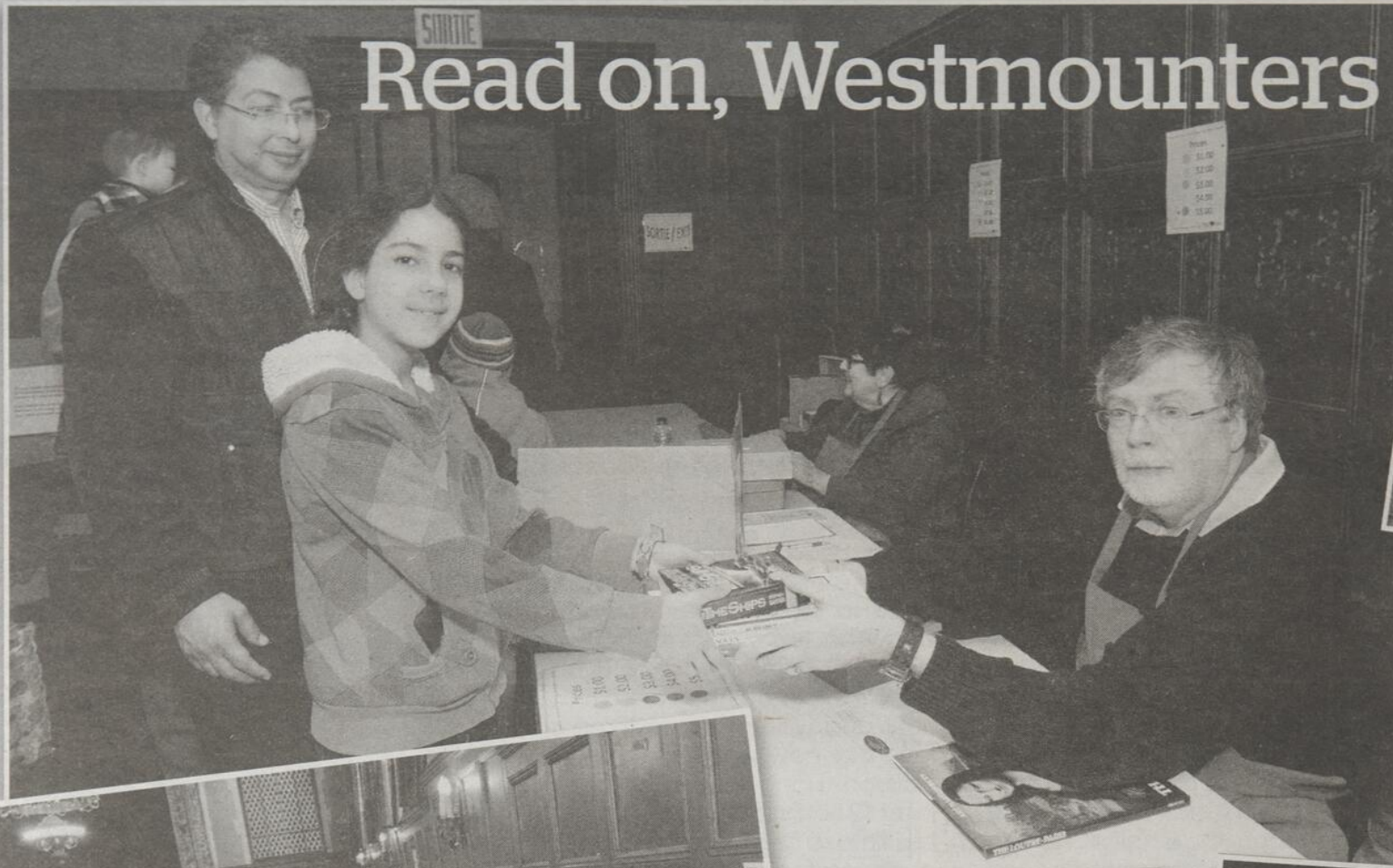
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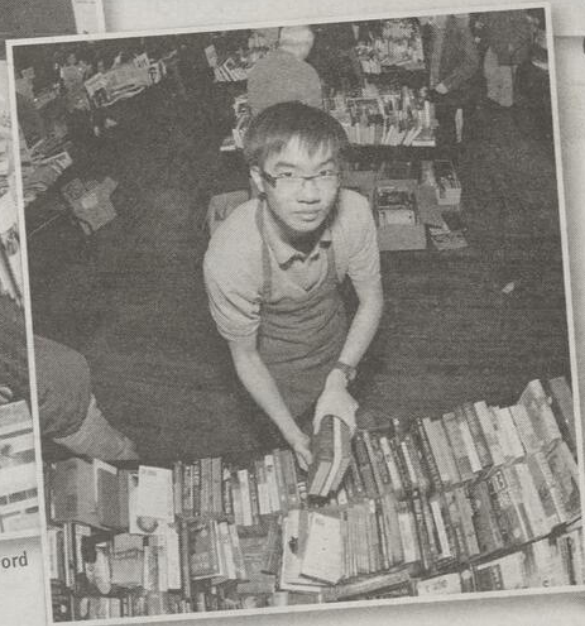
Read on, Westmounters



Last Saturday and Sunday, the annual Friends of the Westmount Public Library book sale took place in the Concert Hall of Victoria Hall, attracting book lovers and readers. For a fraction of the cost, customers could take home their favorite classics – or discover new literary worlds. The proceeds of the sale go towards purchasing new books for the library. (S.A.R.)



Examiner photos Peter Ford



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Career-high ranking for Bouchard

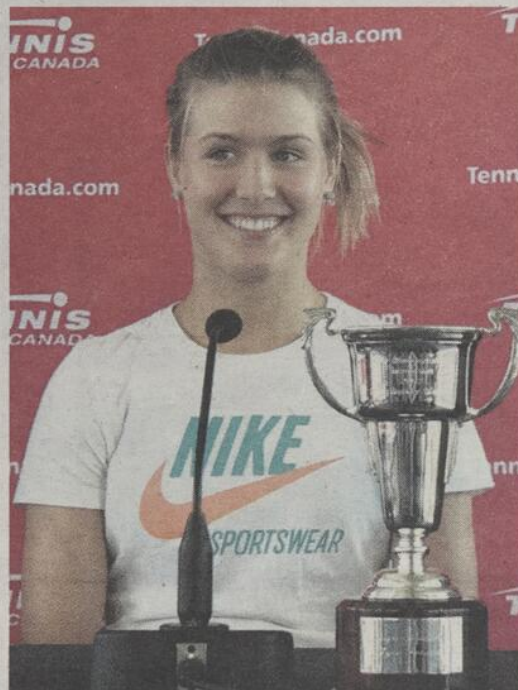
Westmount's Eugenie Bouchard climbs to 18th in world rankings

● stephanie.alcaraz-robinson@tc.tc

The 2013 Canadian athlete of the year, Westmounter Eugenie Bouchard, has climbed higher than ever before in international rankings, going from 19th to the 18th in the World Tennis Association (WTA) rankings released Monday.

Dubbed Canada's biggest women's tennis star by Yahoo Sports and named WTA Newcomer of the Year in 2013, the 20-year-old athlete is making heads turn. In 2012, she became the first Canadian to win a junior Grand Slam singles title at Wimbledon, and earlier this year, Bouchard reached the semifinals of the Australian Open, which she dropped in straight sets to China's Li Na.

Although it is a great achievement for Bouchard, it's not a record for a Canadian woman — Carling Bassett is still the only woman to have ranked in the top 10 of the Women's Tennis Association world rankings. She was also Canada's top female athlete in 1983 and 1985.



Eugenie Bouchard is now ranked 18th in the world, according to the WTA rankings released Monday. (Photo courtesy Arturo Velazquez-Tennis Canada)



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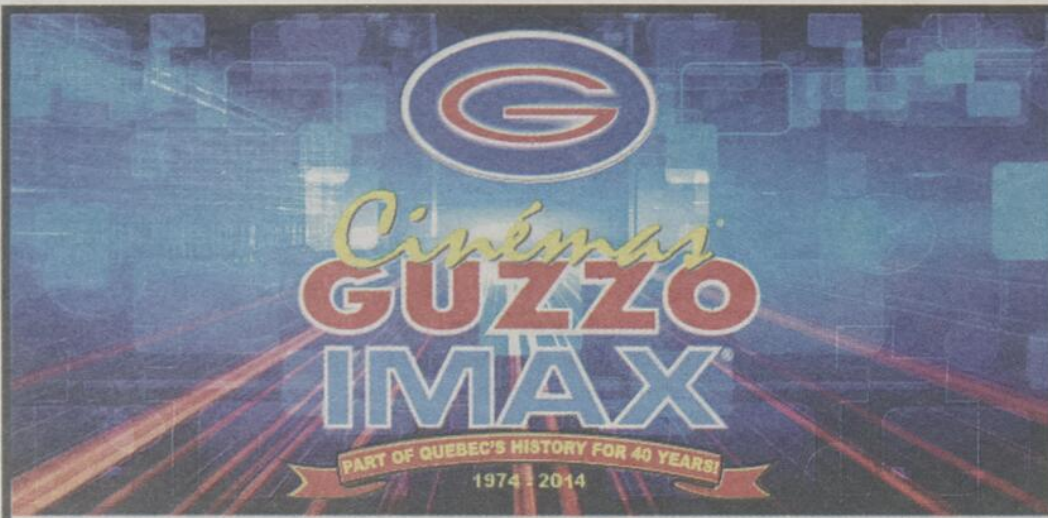


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Free trees on tap for Westmounters



Ironwoods will be distributed in Westmount April 30. Order forms for the trees are available at City Hall and at westmount.org.

The City of Westmount is organizing a special tree distribution. Residents can obtain one tree — free of charge — from the following selections: 'Green Gage' Plum, Downy Serviceberry and Ironwood. The latter two are native to Quebec.

Order forms are available at City Hall, Westmount Library and on the city's website.

The deadline for returning the completed order form is April 30.

Quantities are limited and the distribution will take place on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, dial 514 989-5213.

Are you ready to take on the challenge?

'Défi Cardio 25 heures' will benefit Opération Enfant Soleil

Buoyed by the success of the first four editions, which raised nearly \$2 million to give kids with a disability access to adapted physical activities, Défi Cardio 25 heures is back for a fifth consecutive year. Powered by the Énergie Cardio fitness centres network, the challenge for those who participate, in teams of five — in the form of a relay — is to complete 25 consecutive hours of cardiovascular exercise, from 9 a.m. May 24 to 10 a.m. the next day. All the profits from this event will be donated to Opération Enfant Soleil's Fonds Josée Lavigneur to support its mission, which is to prevent illness among children and youth through physical activity, as well as make it possible for disabled children to access physical activity. Thanks to the generosity of the many donors, the Défi Cardio 25 heures has donated close to \$2 million to Opération Enfant Soleil since its establishment in 2010.

The fifth edition was officially launched with a March 28 press conference at the Plateau Mont-Royal Énergie Cardio centre located on Papineau Avenue. Attending were



the ambassadors Énergie Cardio spokesperson and physical educator Josée Lavigneur, Musique Plus VJ Philo Lirette; NRJ Montréal radio personality Benoit Cossette (Ben K7) and TVA television personality Paul Rivard.

The entire Énergie Cardio team has been involved with Opération Enfant Soleil since 1999, and has been supporting the Fonds Josée Lavigneur since 2006. In 15 years, over \$2.7 million has been raised for Opération Enfant Soleil, through the participation of its 1,600 employees and the generosity of its 140,000 members.

For more information on registration or donations, visit www.deficardio25heures.com, or any of the 70 Énergie Cardio centres across Québec.

Westmount Notes of Interest

HAPPENINGS

Westmount Science Camp registration for the summer camp is officially open at the Westmount Recreation Centre, Monday through Friday. Registration can be done in person from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesdays and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. throughout the weekdays. For more information, visit westmountscience.com. Westmount Recreation Centre is located at 4675 Ste. Catherine St. W.

Dance Session on April 27, 2 p.m., at Victoria Hall's Concert Hall. Westmount's community event's division invites residents to try social dance steps: swing, chachacha, rumba, and more. Tickets (\$5) sold at the door only. For more information, contact the event's division at 514-989-5226.

Dance: Swing into Spring with Ballroom Blitz is set for May 3, 7:30 p.m., at Victoria Hall. Westmount's community event's division invites residents for an evening of social dancing to music played by a 22-piece band in the Concert Hall. Ticket cost \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. Cash bar will be available. For more

information, contact the event's division at 514-989-5226.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection takes place May 3, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., in Westmount. The Public Works Department is asking residents to dispose of leftover paints, solvents, used batteries, pesticides and more in the parking lot of the Westmount Public Library. Used clothing and used electronics will be collected the same day on site.

The autumn HHW Collection will take place in Westmount on Oct. 11 at the same location and hours. For more information, please call 514-989-5390.

The Annual Spring Flower Show is set for April 3 to 30 at the Westmount Conservatory. Enjoy the annual display of spring flowers, like tulips and lilies, created by gardeners Melanie Banninger, Christophe Cote, and Annick Massarelli. The floral exhibition, which lasts approximately three weeks, will be open to the public: Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

▶▶▶ Continued from page 4

known as 'Teen Zone,' where teenagers, ages 12 to 17, can converse with youth coordinators, play a game of billiards, do homework, or just "hang out," said Westmount YMCA director of child development Maris Zunic.

According to Zunic, the Y is still "in the process of discovering and researching the things teens are interested in" as it finalizes programming for the Teen Centre come September.

"Right now we're testing the grounds. We're doing community assessments," said Zunic.

Movie nights and dance classes are just some of the events the Y is considering for its fall programming, Zunic added.

The Westmount YMCA is one of nine local organizations to receive an additional grant of \$18,400 for "contracted services," according to resolution passed at last week's council meeting. The city issued \$115,000 of grants across nine local organizations. Contactivity Centre received the most at \$40,000.

City councillor and commissioner of sports and recreation Rosalind Davis could not be reached for comment.



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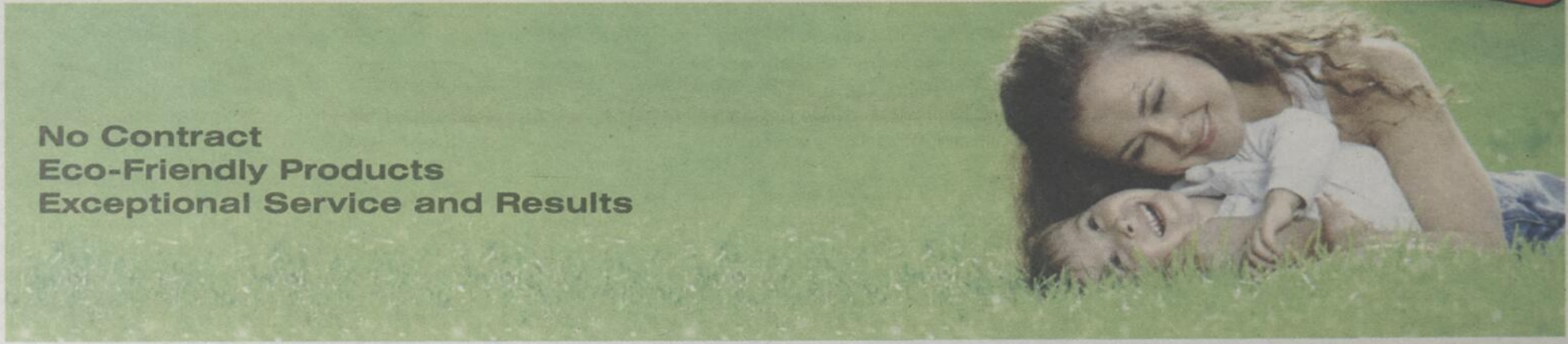
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