

The Westmount Examiner



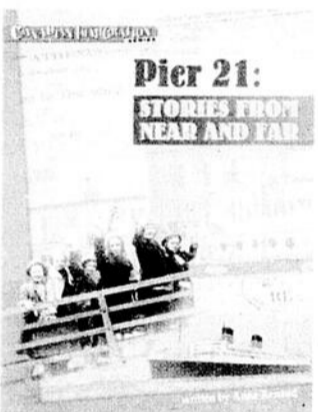
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Vol 73, no 13 • Thursday, March 27th 2008 • www.westmountexaminer.com • 9,800 copies • MAKING ALL OF WESTMOUNT YOUR HOME



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After one of the harshest winters Montreal has seen in years, the Westmount Conservatory was the place to be over the Easter weekend. Pictured here is Bob Skinner, a staff photographer with *La Presse*. Like many other media people who descended on the Conservatory, he was there to capture images of the City's annual Spring Flower Show, which continues until April 13. See 'Around Westmount' on page 7 for more. (Photo: Martin C. Barry)

City dishes out grants to local non-profit groups

Nav Pall
The City of Westmount has a long tradition of supporting local non-profit organizations, and this year is no exception. City council recently announced a total of \$95,000 in grants will be given to nine community groups to help them continue serving Westmount residents.

The largest sum — \$36,000 — was awarded to Contactivity, the seniors' community centre that operates out of Westmount Park Church. These funds will help uphold the standard of services the centre has been building over the past 36 years.

"Our membership has been going up, and so has our need for volunteers," said Contactivity Director Mary Stark. "We offer many services and activities, like door-to-door check-ups for those who want us to come by daily, game nights, and arts-and-crafts. The money will go towards accomplishing our mission to offer activities to our seniors."

However, Contactivity cannot rely just on the City for financial support. They also receive support from Centraide, the Régie de la santé et des services sociaux, and individual donations.

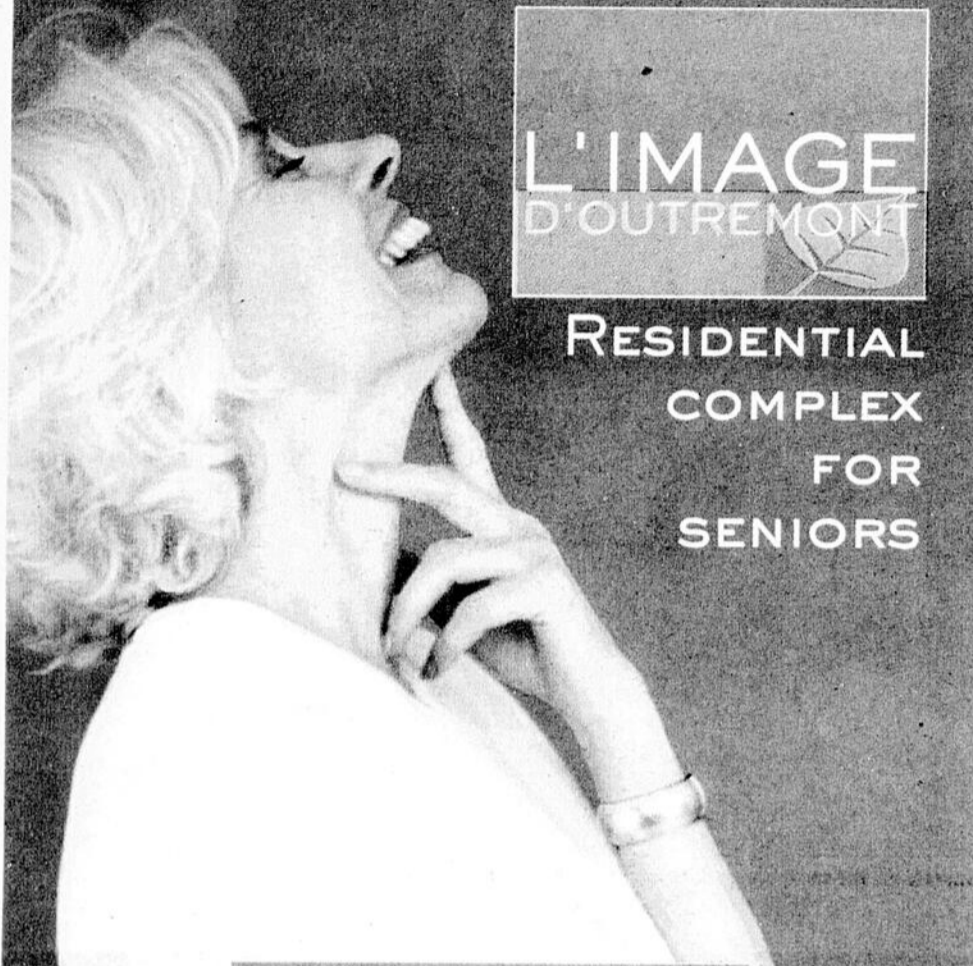
Not all non-profit groups ended up receiving such a large amount. The Westmount Youth Orchestra (WYO) received \$2,500 — but that amount is misleading.

Continued on page 2

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Continued from page 1

According to Sylvie Mercier, the orchestra's president, the WYO gets plenty of help from the City and relies on donations as their primary source of income.

"For many years the City has been giving us this subvention to help us operate," said Mercier. "But what is more, the City lets us use Victoria Hall for rehearsals, which saves us so much on renting costs, and we are extremely grateful for it."

The orchestra has been extremely busy since their inaugural year in 1997. Two years ago they embarked on their first European tour, visiting Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic. And before Christmas, they held a

high-profile fundraiser that brought in \$175,000.

Next year, the orchestra is planning on touring yet again, this time around Quebec and Ontario.

"It costs a lot to keep an orchestra alive," said Mercier. "We have to rent certain instruments, move around, and have a paid staff. All this adds up. Our annual budget is between \$60,000 and \$70,000, with around 100 musicians. That \$2,500 may not be much, but it accumulates — and that's how we earn money."

Other City grant recipients include the Westmount YMCA, Repercussion Theatre, the Atwater Library, Montreal Children's Library, the Open Door Mission, the Visual Arts Centre, and Centre Greene.



The Westmount Youth Orchestra, under the musical direction of Scott Gabriel, receives more than just monetary support from the City of Westmount. (Photo: Nav Pall)

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Snow blown on front lawn angers Aberdeen Avenue homeowner

Martin C. Barry

A decision by Westmount, faced with a snow-removal crisis, to blow snow onto some residential properties, has at least one resident fuming. Caroline Gillespie of Aberdeen Avenue was angered after assessing damage done in the front yard of her family's home, where large snow banks were piled by Public Works crews.

According to Gillespie, the workers blew the snow without regard for a pair of young trees, which were buried up to their branches. They also may have damaged sets of Christmas lights, which were blown out of the branches and left dangling.

"The trees are a wreck," she told the *Examiner*. "I stood out there and asked them not to do it and they went right ahead." After contacting Director General Bruce St. Louis, Gillespie says he told her someone from the City would go to her home in the spring after the snow melted to evaluate the loss.

Gillespie doesn't believe the City was faced with an emergency situation. "It wasn't," she said. "They just ran out of steam. I mean, they could have left that snow there. There was no more snow coming."

Gillespie also complained that snow removal personnel cleaned the eastern part of Aberdeen thoroughly, but not her side of the street. In addition, she does not agree with the list of streets chosen by the City for snowblowing onto private properties. "If they're going to do this, they have to rotate it," she said. "They've picked designated streets and they're just dumping it on those streets ... They could have cleaned our side, which has parking, and left the other side uncleared. They took the snow away on the other side the day before and then they left all the snow on our side and blew it up on Friday."

"But the other side was absolutely pristine clean on Thursday, where there's no parking. Now what sense does that make?" Gillespie said she may bring the problem up at city council's next public meeting, which will take place at 8 p.m. on March 31.



Aberdeen Avenue resident Caroline Gillespie claims the snow blown onto her property has damaged her trees. (Photo Martin C. Barry)

"When you look at the magnitude of the problem that we had, and the fact that for Monday and Tuesday (two weeks ago), which were the two heaviest loading days, we had virtually no access to the dumps, we had to get that snow out of there," St. Louis said in an interview.

He said Public Works has been "casting" snow only on streets where the homes have large front lawns. "Believe me, we do not do this as a practice. We do this when we have to clear the streets and make them safe." St. Louis said most of the properties in question are north of Sherbrooke Street. "But even then, we only did it where we absolutely had to."

"I consider this an emergency situation that we had," he added. "Yes, there was extra

snow on the front lawns." But at the same time he noted, citing two recent house fires that

occurred immediately after heavy snowfalls, that, "I'm glad we had both sides cleared."

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Westmount Page



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HÔTEL DE VILLE

Heure de la terre

Westmount soulignera le 29 mars prochain à l'Heure de la terre en éteignant les lumières de la plupart de ses édifices municipaux entre 20 h et 21 h à l'exception des bâtiments offrant des activités et programmes de la Ville depuis longtemps planifiés (tel que l'Aréna).

Cette initiative mondiale a été créée dans le but de sensibiliser la population aux changements climatiques.



TRAVAUX PUBLICS

Nid-de-poule? Avisez-nous!

Le Service des travaux publics de Westmount a besoin de la collaboration de tous les résidents et automobilistes pour s'attaquer aux nids-de-poule, un problème qui refait surface à chaque printemps. Si vous voyez un nid-de-poule dans n'importe quelle rue à Westmount, veuillez aviser la Ville immédiatement afin que le personnel des Travaux publics puisse le réparer.

La ligne d'urgence des Travaux publics - 514 989-5311 - est accessible 24 heures sur 24, sept jours par semaine. Vous pouvez aussi communiquer avec la Ville à partir de notre site Web, ou par courriel à assistance@westmount.org.

Floralies du printemps

Venez visiter la 76^e exposition de fleurs printanières. Le Conservatoire sera ouvert de 10 h à 19 h 45 sur semaine et de 10 h à 16 h 45 la fin de semaine et les jours fériés.

Distribution d'arbres

Dans son budget 2008, la Ville de Westmount a prévu un montant de 5 000 \$ pour la distribution d'arbres aux résidents. Vous pouvez obtenir sans frais un arbre de votre choix, à savoir un sorbier *Cardinal Royal*, un lilas *Ivory Silk* ou un orme *Accolade*. Les bons de commande à cet effet sont disponibles à l'hôtel de ville ainsi qu'à la Bibliothèque jusqu'au 16 avril. Vous pouvez également télécharger le bon de commande de notre site Web. Info : 514 989-5213.



SPORTS ET LOISIRS

Inscriptions printemps-été

Veuillez noter qu'à compter du 28 mars, toute inscription devra s'effectuer à l'Aréna, 4675, rue Ste-Catherine O. de 8 h 30 à 16 h 30. Veuillez consulter le Répertoire des activités ou notre site Web pour de

DATES À RETENIR

Du 28 mars au 19 avril

Exposition : Œuvres de Mary Landry, Brian Merrett et Frederic Smith
La galerie du Victoria Hall

Le 27 mars - 18 h à 20 h

Période d'inscription
Activités de loisirs printemps/été 2008
Victoria Hall

Le 31 mars - 20 h

Séance générale du conseil
Hôtel de ville

Le 9 avril - 14 h

Atelier de poésie
Bibliothèque

Le 9 avril - 19 h

Shelley Pomerance Investigates
Poetry Without Borders
Bibliothèque

plus amples renseignements. Info : 514 989-5353.



ÉVÉNEMENTS COMMUNAUTAIRES

Galerie : appel de propositions

Rappel aux artistes : la date limite pour soumettre sa candidature pour la saison d'exposition 2008-2009 de la galerie du Victoria Hall est le lundi 31 mars 2008. Pour de plus amples renseignements, consultez notre site Web ou procurez-vous le dépliant à l'hôtel de ville ou au Victoria Hall. Info : 514 989-5226.



BIBLIOTHÈQUE

Club d'échecs et de Scrabble

Aimez-vous jouer aux échecs ou au Scrabble? La prochaine rencontre du club aura lieu le vendredi 28 mars à 14 h à la Bibliothèque. Info : 514 989-5386.

Riding the Underground Railway

Joignez-vous à nous pour une conférence par l'enseignante et conceptrice de courtpointes Nancy Trowbridge le mercredi 2 avril à 19 h 30. Cette conférence fait état du cheminement de la présentatrice dans l'étude de la période historique de l'*Underground Railway*. Info : 514 989-5386.



CITY HALL

Earth Hour

Westmount will commemorate Earth Hour by turning the lights off in many municipal buildings on March 29 from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m., except for those buildings that must be occupied during this time (such as the Arena).

This worldwide initiative was created to inspire people to take action on climate change.



PUBLIC WORKS

See a pothole...Let us know!

Public Works is counting on the help of all residents and drivers in the City to battle that annual spring problem...the pothole. If you find a pothole on any street in Westmount, contact the City immediately so that Public Works personnel can repair it as quickly as possible.

The Public Works emergency phone line - 514 989-5311 - is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also contact us through our Web site, or by e-mail at assistance@westmount.org.

Spring Flower Show

The 76th Annual Spring Flower Show is now open to the public. Conservatory hours are 10 a.m. to 7:45 p.m. on weekdays, 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on weekends and holidays.

Special Tree Distribution

Westmount has allocated \$ 5 000 in its 2008 budget for the distribution of trees to its residents. Residents may obtain one tree free of charge from the following selection: *Cardinal Royal* Mountain Ash, *Ivory Silk* Lilac and *Accolade* Elm. Order forms are available until April 16 at City Hall, Westmount Library and on our Web site. Info: 514 989-5213.



SPORTS AND RECREATION

Spring/Summer Registration

Beginning Friday, March 28, if you would still like to register, please visit the Westmount Arena (4675 St. Catherine W.) between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. For complete details, consult the Recreation Activities Guide, or log on to our Web site. Info: 514 989-5353.

DATEBOOK

From March 28 to April 19

Exhibition: Works of Mary Landry, Brian Merrett et Frederic Smith
Gallery at Victoria Hall

March 27 - 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Registration Period
Spring/Summer 2008 Recreation Activities
Victoria Hall

March 31 - 8 p.m.

General Council Meeting
City Hall

April 9 - 2 p.m.

Poetry Workshop
Library

April 9 - 7 p.m.

Shelley Pomerance Investigates
Poetry Without Borders
Library



COMMUNITY EVENTS

Gallery Call for Submissions

Reminder to artists: the deadline for applications for the 2008-2009 exhibition season of the Gallery at Victoria Hall is Monday, March 31, 2008. Check the City's Web site for complete details or pick up a brochure at City Hall or Victoria Hall. Info: 514 989-5226.



LIBRARY

Chess and Scrabble Club

Do you enjoy playing chess and/or Scrabble? Our new club will meet on Friday, March 29 at 2 p.m. Drop by for a friendly game as we look forward to meeting new players. Info: 514 989-5386.

Riding the Underground Railway

This lecture on Wednesday, April 2 at 7:30 p.m. by teacher and quilt designer Nancy Trowbridge chronicles the presenter's journey in the learning of the underground railway and the events that personalized this journey. Info: 514 989-5386.

Marianopolis organization looking for playmates

Leadership Development Day planned for Saturday

Elyse Amend

Getting CEGEP students to school on a weekend might not be the easiest task in the world, but 19-year-old Anna Chif promises Marianopolis College's Leadership Development Day this Saturday will be an event not to be missed.

"It's about taking a dream or an idea – whether it's a business idea or even becoming a great dancer – and following it through and making it happen," said Chif, a second-year commerce student at the college.

Chif is the founder of the Marianopolis Youth Leadership Organization (MYLO), a group of students who participate in case-study competitions, which require participants to find solutions to the real-life decision-making situations they are given, and then present their resolutions to the competition judges. The idea for the Leadership Development Day came to Chif after she and the 17-member competitive team took part in the 29th Annual DECA Ontario Provincial Competition in Toronto last month. As the only Quebec team participating in the case-study competition, they did very well, placing in the top 10 in every category.

But when they got back to Montreal, it quickly became apparent there were no local teams they could compete with.

"We wanted to organize events for Quebec students, instead of us going to Ontario," Chif said.

The mission of this Saturday's Leadership Development Day is twofold: to get other colleges interested in creating their own case-study competition groups, and to give students the opportunity to meet and mingle with like-minded students and experienced entrepreneurs. Well-known entrepreneurs and public speakers Jim Booth and Jade Bourelle will deliver speeches. Marianopolis professors will also hold workshops, while representatives from the Young Chartered Accountants of Quebec will give participants career advice and speak as well.



The Marianopolis Youth Leadership Organization (MYLO) participated in case-study competitions in Ontario. They now hope to get other CEGEPs interested in case-studies, so local groups can compete against each other in Quebec.

"Personally, from teaching business, there's this grand fear of failure. Most successful people have fallen on their faces a few times, and in order to be successful, you have to be open-minded enough to learn from your mistakes," said Marianopolis marketing professor Peter Elenakis of some of the lessons students may learn from the event. "It will provide students

an opportunity to hear speakers and be exposed to successful people."

Both Elenakis and Chif pointed out the event and case-study competitions are not just reserved for business or commerce students: the 17 members of Marianopolis' competition team are from all different programs and backgrounds.

"The day is for anyone who has some sort of dream or goal. And I think everyone does," said Chif.

The Leadership Development Day is open to everyone and will take place at Marianopolis College, 4873 Westmount Ave., this Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tickets are \$15. For more, e-mail deca.marianopolis@gmail.com.

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 The Westmount Examiner
 Thursday, March 27, 2008

Signs of spring

Easter Monday offered many of us a pleasant day off from work and school, with bright sun and decent temperatures warming the ground and starting to melt the monstrous mounds of snow most people would say they are sick and tired of. Yes, spring is on its way.

With about five months of winter and over 350 centimetres of snow behind us, this may be welcome news for many. However, along with plenty of puddles to dodge, the hint of spring at the beginning of this week also started to reveal something not so pleasant.

It's the same thing every year: as the white snow blanket is slowly pulled away, everything from fast food wrappers, coffee cups, and newspaper pages dated from November 2007 to plastic water bottles, soggy cigarette butts, and doggy poop some irresponsible dog owners didn't bother to pick up are revealed. These leftovers hidden in the winter landscapes' layers until now can quickly turn a pleasant walk into a disgusting game of sidewalk-sidestepping. Not to mention, trees adorned with plastic grocery bags and pavement bedecked in old paper, chewed gum, and all sorts of other garbage are not exactly forms of urban decoration.

Westmounters have many opportunities to give the environment a hand through recycling, disposing electronic and hazardous waste appropriately, not idling your car, taking public transportation — the list goes on and on.

This Saturday, Westmount will also be among numerous other cities around the world taking part in Earth Hour. This initiative will see all essential lighting switched off between 8 and 9 p.m. to raise awareness about energy consumption and climate change. Along with participating cities, residents are encouraged to mark Earth Hour as well.

While events like this may help remind people about the importance of having an environmental conscience, taking care of the planet should play a role in the decisions we make every day — including reducing the amount of litter rolling, blowing, and just sitting around.

Westmount — with its impressive architecture, attractive parks and green-spaces, urban areas whose restaurants and shops attract people from all over — is a charming place to live. While the litter throughout town is not the work of all Westmounters — but of a few careless bad apples — it is up to everyone to fix the problem. Pick up your garbage, recycle and reuse what you can, and keep Westmount beautiful.



EMSB schools evade closures

Snow accumulation on roofs limits some activities

Elyse Amend

While concerns regarding snow accumulation on roofs have lead a number of school boards to close their facilities for inspection over the past two weeks, it's been business as usual at the English Montreal School Board (EMSB).

According to EMSB communications director Michael Cohen, none of the board's schools have been closed due to snow accumulation atop roofs. Last Thursday, he told the *Westmount Examiner* inspectors set out at 3 a.m. that morning to check the board's 65 facilities. While the buildings seemed to be in good shape, Cohen said the EMSB decided to relocate or postpone activities in open areas, like gymnasiums, as a precautionary measure. As a result, the multi-cultural celebration at Westmount High School had to be cancelled last Thursday and postponed to April.

Things have also gotten back on track at Roslyn School since large icicles hanging from the roof of the 100-year-old building forced the closure of a section of the schoolyard two weeks ago. According to Cohen, the board's maintenance crews removed the icicles on March 12, the same day it became apparent warmer temperatures could loosen them and cause them to fall.

Last week, the Lester B. Pearson School Board — which stretches between St. Lazare



Large icicles hanging from the roof at Roslyn School have been removed since they forced part of the schoolyard to close for safety measures on March 12. (Photo: Martin C. Barry)

and Verdun — closed all of its elementary and high schools, centres, and offices following recommendations from its engineers, but have reopened this week. The Commission scolaire de Montréal also evacuated its schools and centres on March 14 as a precaution. Five of those facilities remained closed until this

past Tuesday for snow removal on their roofs. None of the boards' school closures affected any facilities in Westmount.

"It's business as usual (at the EMSB)," said Cohen. "We're prepared for this. We have experts in the field who are prepared for it, and we expect it."

The Westmount Examiner

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OLD NEWS from the archives

1935-2008

Ten Years Ago
March 26, 1998

SUMMIT DONATION: "Last Tuesday, 70 people gathered at a house on Summit Circle to celebrate success. The gathering was not unusual, but the reason to celebrate was. The Westmount Dog Owners Association, among others, came to present a \$5,856 cheque to the City of Westmount - money to be used for the repair and restoration of Summit Park. Like most of Westmount, the park suffered from the infamous Ice Storm of '98. According to City horticulturalist Claudette Savaria, some 75 per cent of trees within the park were damaged, many badly. The WDOA has long considered Summit Park a Westmount treasure, not only because it is a superb run for dogs, but also because it is a wonderful oasis in the heart of a major metropolitan centre."

Fifteen Years Ago
March 25, 1993

HEROIC ACTION: "Westmount firefighter Lt. Tony Testa is a hero to the parents of two-year-old Jessica Amesse. He brought the little girl back to life after she stopped breathing in a restaurant in LaSalle Feb. 20 while he was off duty, according to parents Lise and Gaetan Amesse of St. Louis de Gonzague. Their daughter suddenly collapsed in her high chair, they wrote in a letter to the city. 'She had no signs of life, she turned all blue and limp,' the letter said. 'It was very stressful, worse than a nightmare. Fortunately and thank God, this man, this stranger was on the scene and without hesitation, and with incredible calm, provided first aid until the ambulance arrived.'"

Twenty Years Ago
March 31, 1988

VALUATION ADJUSTMENTS: "The final count is in. All property valuations that Westmount had submitted for MUC review have been looked at and 52 per cent will not be adjusted. The news was obtained from the MUC evaluation committee yesterday afternoon by city treasurer Jean-Luc Emond, who said he believes the latest tally to be final. Of 728 assessments submitted for review, 380 will remain uncorrected and 348 will be reduced, Mr. Emond told The Examiner. 'We don't expect anything else.' Of the 380 uncorrected assessments, only 138 were believed to have been increased less than 100 per cent over the last year. The others were all in excess."

Historical Association reveals Riverview

Doreen Lindsay

Sixty-five people eager to learn more about one of the area's most magnificent older homes filled the Westmount Room of the Westmount Library on Thursday evening to delight in a dramatic reading by our own Westmount Community Theatre, *Dramatis Personae*. Five thespians gave voice to the people who owned and lived in Riverview, 513-515 Côte Saint Antoine Rd., from 1847 to 1988.

Ellen Rubin emotionally portrayed Justine-Solomée, the eldest daughter of Pierre-Jeremie Hurtubise, who married Ephrem Hudon, a very successful Ville-Marie merchant in 1836.

Ephrem Hudon, we learned, was the man who built the original one-and-a-half storey red brick house in 1847. Hudon was solidly played by André Gagné. As they took us through the 40 years the Hudon family lived in Justine-Solomée's house, slides of Montreal history events were projected behind them.

The next owner, William Simpson, who purchased the house in 1876, moved in with his wife Caroline Mackenzie and their four children. Simpson, who was born in Montreal to Scottish parents, was played by Malcolm McRae. His wife, Caroline was played by Ann Elbourne. Both vividly brought to life the next few years with an emphasis on the renovations made by Simpson in 1879, when he had the half storey raised to create a full second floor, added a third floor for storage, and updated the basement. The wonderful decorative central turret was also added by Simpson to make the house more fashionable. Of particular interest to the audience made up of Westmounters was the projected floor plan of the house showing a stream still running through the basement.

Ann Elbourne and Ellen Rubin, co-ordinators of *Dramatis Personae*, collaborated with Doreen Lindsay in writing the text. They identified the characters and brought them to life as individuals. Amy Shulman played the lovable long-time resident Anne Elliot. Complementary slide images describing the development of Montreal continued to accompany the actors as they took on the personalities of the owners in the following years: Mr. M. Languirand from 1972 to 1985 then Pauline and Philip Ronchetti from 1985 to 1988.

The *Dramatis Personae* group was invited by Westmount Historical Association president Doreen Lindsay to dramatise the history of Riverview based on an illustrated album researched by Pauline and Philip Ronchetti after they completed an exemplary preservation of the house and gardens in 1987. Riverview has a 1A classification in Westmount and received a Montreal Heritage Emeritus Award in 2005.



Westmount Community Theatre group *Dramatis Personae* brought the history of Riverview to life during a Westmount Historical Association presentation last Thursday at the Westmount Library.

view has a 1A classification in Westmount and received a Montreal Heritage Emeritus Award in 2005.

- Doreen Lindsay is president of the Westmount Historical Association.

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Award winning landscapes



This garden, located in Westmount, won Stuart Webster a first-place award at the APPQ award ceremony last month.

Westmount resident Stuart Webster, owner of Stuart Webster Design and Daccord Webster Landscape, recently was recognized by the Association of Professional Landscape Contractors of Quebec (APPQ). At their 29th Annual Award Ceremony, which was held in Trois Rivières last month, Webster won three prestigious landscape awards, including two first-place prizes — one for a beautiful garden he designed for a Westmount resident. Along with landscaping, Webster also has a passion for giving back to the community and is involved with numerous charitable organizations, including the Montreal Association for the Blind/Mackay Rehabilitation Centre Foundation.

For more on Stuart Webster Design and Daccord Webster Landscape, visit www.swdla.com.



Pictured here are (from left to right) APPQ judge Nathalie Blanchette, Stuart Webster Design landscape architect Nathalie Desjean, project manager Carlos Perez, and Stuart Webster.

Car theft averted

Jessica Murphy

Westmount public security helped prevent a car robbery last Thursday. Public security officers Robert Forbes and Sergeant Kim Colquhoun were patrolling the Western periphery of Westmount when they noticed three suspicious young men near a car at the Sherbrooke Street and Decarie Boulevard intersection at 3:28 a.m. They called Station 12 police, who arrested the men on suspicion of car theft.

"We prevented a car robbery," noted public security Captain Richard Bourdon.

Colquhoun and Forbes were featured in this column last month as well, when they nabbed three teenage pot smokers at the Summit lookout.

Park and parking patrols to increase

Public security has hired five new parking inspectors. Two start this week, two next week, and one the following week. "First of all, we lost three parking inspectors to the police academy and we have to replace them," said Bourdon, who is tem-

porarily replacing Director Richard Blondin. "Also, we need more parking inspectors for the summer."

Public security is also in the process of hiring eight cadets to patrol parks. This is in continuation with last summer's park patrols, as public security wants to increase their presence in Westmount's parks and to continue to enforce new park curfew regulations to curb underage drinking and graffiti.

The police tech cadets will be in the parks from late May until Labour Day.

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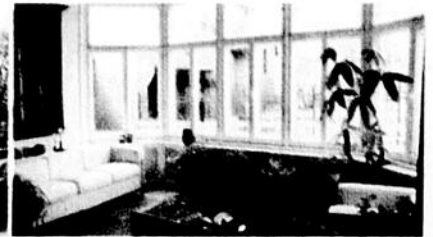
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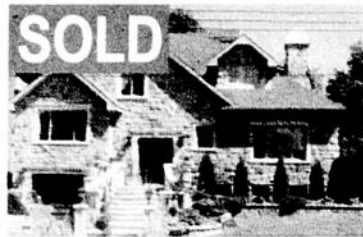
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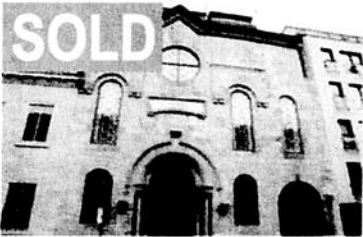
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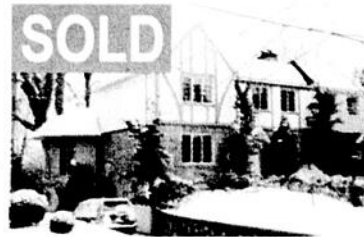
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Notre-Dame-de-Grâce



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SOLD

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Notre-Dame-de-Grâce



SOLD

Grey av \$825,000
Notre-Dame-de-Grâce



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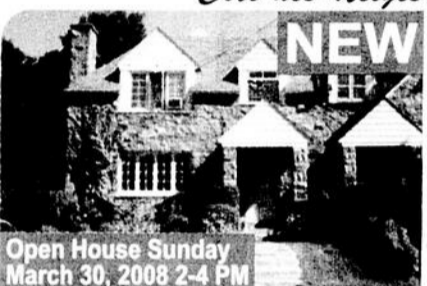
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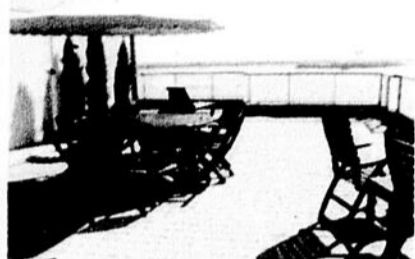
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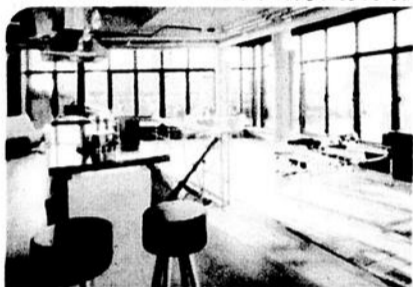
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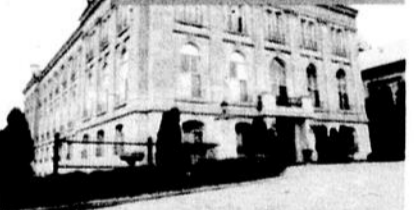
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Conservatory provides winter refuge

Around Westmount

If this year's long winter is getting you down, the Westmount Conservatory at 4626 Sherbrooke St. West is offering a little taste of spring. The annual spring flowers display is back, and features narcissus, tulips, lilies and many other blossoms to brighten up a cold day. There is even a miniature house and a family of rabbits at the south end of the Conservatory.

And if you've wanted to fly away all winter, but never had the chance, there are also plenty of tropical plants, like palm trees, banana trees, and birds of paradise on display to get visitors thinking about warmer days.

The floral display, which was arranged by Mélanie Bänninger and Hélène Bazinet of the Greenhouse with help from horticulturalist Claudette Savaria and other Public Works personnel, is expected to last until April 13. Conservatory hours are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 7:45 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. For

more information, call the Public Works Department at 514 989-5213.

Westmount in the dark

Remember Westmount: things are going to get dark this Saturday evening. The city will shut its non-essential lighting off between 8 and 9 p.m. as part of Earth Hour, an initiative aiming to raise awareness about energy consumption. Residents are encouraged to participate as well.

Westmount will be among numerous international cities, like Sydney, Chicago, Copenhagen, Tel Aviv, and Toronto, to go dark on Saturday. Earth Hour started in Sydney, Australia on March 31 last year, when 2.2 million residents, 2,100 business and even national monuments like the Sydney Opera House and the Harbour Bridge, turned their lights off for one hour. As a result, Sydney's energy consumption was lowered by just over 10 per cent, which, according to Earth Hour's

official website, is the equivalent to taking 48,000 cars off the road for 60 minutes. For more information on Earth Hour and how to participate, visit www.earthhour.org.

WMA looking for great volunteers

The Westmount Municipal Association (WMA) is once again seeking nominations from the community for the Derek Walker Award for Volunteer Citizen of the Year.

People living in Westmount who have made a special contribution to the community can be nominated. WMA directors and Westmount City employees are not eligible.

Nominations should be made in writing with details of the nominees' volunteering. Entries should be mailed to the WMA at CP 653, Succ. Victoria, Westmount, H3Z 2Y7 (Attention: Francie Montgomery) or e-mailed to volunteer.award@wma-amw.org by April 14.

"This is the 100th anniversary of the WMA founding, so we thought we should make a special effort to find someone of the same age who would qualify," said WMA President, Dr. Henry Olders. "We have so far been unable to locate a centenarian candidate. Of course, our job is to find one of those 'unsung heroes' of whatever age."

The Derek Walker Award will be presented at the WMA's Centenary Annual General Meeting, which will be held on May 5 at Victoria Hall.

City to distribute free trees

The City of Westmount is currently taking orders for their 2008 tree distribution. Residents can choose from three different types of trees available free of charge – a "Cardinal Royal" mountain ash, an "Ivory Silk" lilac, or an "Accolade" elm – that they can plant on their properties.

According to City Public Works horticulturalist Claudette Savaria, households are allowed one tree each. It must also be planted behind the property line, and not on City property.

Westmount allocated \$5,000 in its 2008 budget for the tree distribution. "It's simply to make the city greener," Savaria said. "It's to help the environment."

Tree order forms are available at City Hall, the Westmount Library, and online at www.westmount.org. They must be returned to the attention of Claudette Savaria before April 16 by mail at Public Works, 1 Bethune St., Westmount, H3Z 2L2, or by fax at 514-989-5488. The trees, which are available on a first come, first

served basis, will be distributed during the first week of May.

Join the club and make some new check-mates

The Westmount Library is starting a new chess club in April and is looking for players. Anyone interested in a friendly game and meeting other players should head to the library – either in a straight line, diagonally, or by an L-shaped path – at 2 p.m. on April 5 for the new club's first meeting. There will also be meetings on April 11 and 18 at the same time.

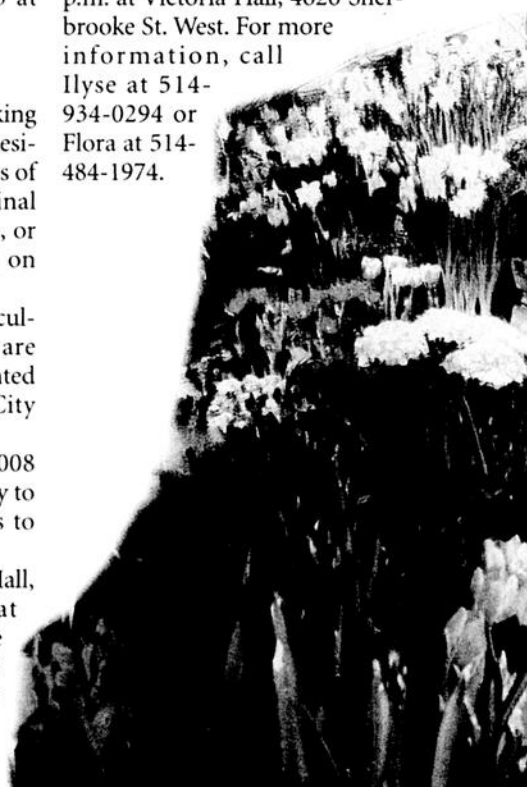
The library is located at 4574 Sherbrooke St. West. For more information, call 514-989-5386.

Calling all artisans

In preparation for their festival on Nov. 8 and 9, the Westmount Artisans are looking for Westmount residents who want to display their talents. Local artisans can bring three to four completed examples of their work to a selection committee in May. The works will be juried, and must be utilitarian rather than solely decorative, and must be produced exclusively by the artisans. Items produced mainly with kits or glue guns, as well as mass produced items, will not be accepted. Artisans must present actual items, as photographs in place of the works will not be accepted.

Mark your calendars: the selection committee will take place on May 14 from 2 to 6 p.m. at Victoria Hall, 4626 Sherbrooke St. West. For more information, call

Ilyse at 514-934-0294 or Flora at 514-484-1974.



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Fact is sometimes better than fiction

Westmount's Renaud releases new book

Elyse Amend

With so many television shows, video games, and other technological wonders out there, it can be hard to capture a child's imagination when it comes to learning about Canadian history.

"When I was a kid, I remember sitting through some pretty mind-numbing history classes," said long-time Westmount resident and children's author Anne Renaud. "I think what it came down to was I just couldn't relate ... That's what I try to do. I try to make it engaging for kids so they'll want to keep on reading."

Renaud's latest book, 'Pier 21: Stories from Near and Far,' takes a look at the stories of immigrants, refugees, soldiers, war brides, wartime evacuees, and children who passed through Pier 21 in the port of Halifax, Nova Scotia from 1928 to 1971.

This isn't the first time Renaud has written a children's book about historical events. Her first book, 'A Bloom of Friendship: The Story of the Canadian Tulip Festival,' was inspired by a story her uncle, a Second World War veteran, told her. He was part of the liberating troops in Holland in 1945 and hid in a barn after being injured. There, he found a family with a young daughter, who were also hiding from the Nazis. In 1995, Renaud's uncle went back to Holland for the Liberation Day 50th anniversary and was able to find the barn, and even reconnected with the daughter he hid with, now a woman in her 60s.

"When he came back and told me that, I thought, 'what an amazing story.' I find non-fiction can be more compelling than fiction, sometimes," Renaud said. Wanting to preserve her uncle's story, she set out to do some research and found there were no children's books out there on the topic. "And that's how I come to choose the topics for all of my books. I find I have to fill a void when I choose my topics."

'Pier 21' is the second in Renaud's 'Canadian Immigration' series. The first, 'Island of Hope and Sorrow: The Story of Grosse Ile,' looked at the quarantine station located 50 kilometres

from the port of Quebec that, between 1832 and 1937, served to prevent immigrants from spreading diseases to the mainland.

With her books geared towards children between eight and 12 years old, explaining some of the historical concepts and telling difficult stories can be a tricky task.

"It can be a challenge. Trying to define 'communism,' I thought was a challenge," Renaud said of writing 'Pier 21.' "I try to make it as comprehensive as possible. I just want to give them an idea of what it is, so if they're interested enough, they'll go and research it a bit more." She also makes sure to run everything she writes by a friend of hers who works in an elementary school, as well as staff at the Westmount Library "to make sure the voice is right."

Like 'Island of Hope and Sorrow,' 'Pier 21' mixes historical notes and true stories about the people Renaud spoke to for the book with illustrations done by Aries Cheung, historical photographs, and newspaper clippings.

"When I do research, I'm constantly on the lookout for stuff that can be used in the illustrations," Renaud said, adding she believes the elements give her books a certain timeline.

While 'Pier 21: Stories from Near and Far' is not available in stores just yet, it has already received a fair share of praise, including a nomination for the Hackmatack Children's Choice Book Award.

With more projects and ideas in the works, Renaud hopes to continue sparking children's imaginations while teaching them about our country's history.

"I find Canada has so many wonderful layers to its history, and a lot of it just goes unreported, or unlearned, so to speak," Renaud said. "What I tell kids when I give talks in schools is, we all have a story. And I play a sort of detective to find those stories."

Anne Renaud's 'Pier 21: Stories from Near and Far' will be out on bookshelves in April. For more information or to pre-order a copy, visit www.utpshop.com/lobsterpress.



Westmount children's author Anne Renaud's new book, 'Pier 21: Stories from Near and Far,' focuses on the stories of those who passed through Pier 21 in the port of Halifax, Nova Scotia from 1928 to 1971.

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Know Your Wrights

Ted WRIGHT

We are fast approaching the final legal delay date to send a rent increase to a tenant. For all leases of one year's duration that begin on July 1 and end on June 30, the final day to send a rent increase notice for 2008-2009 is March 31.

To begin with, let me remind you of the 'suggested' rent increase rates, as emitted by the Régie du logement (rental board) on Jan. 28. Never forget that rent increases are not carved in stone.

For dwellings which are electrically heated, included with the rent, the suggested increase is 0.8 per cent. For dwellings which are heated with gas, included with the rent, the suggested increase is 0.5 per cent. For dwellings heated with oil, included with the rent, the suggested increase is 1.3 per cent.

For non-heated dwellings (tenants pays heat on top of rent), the suggested increase is 0.7 per cent.

Remember, the above rates do not include taxes, major repairs, or insurance cost increases. Their influence on any rent increase may be discovered by using the rental board's form, 'Calculation 2008,' available online in English or French, at www.rdl.gouv.qc.ca. It may also be picked up at their offices in the Olympic Village, or on the sixth floor of the old CBC building on René Lévesque Boulevard at Mackay Street.

The top 10 rent increase FAQs

1. The landlord has not done any work at all during the past year. How can he ask for any rent increase whatsoever?

Answer: A rent increase is not based solely on repairs. The building owner is entitled to recuperate from all tenants, their share of

energy costs, taxes, insurance cost increases, etc. Therefore, work done is not the only factor which goes into any rent increase.

2. The landlord sends the rent increase notice and only offers two choices of response — accept the rent increase as written or move out.

Answer: There are really three choices available to a tenant. If all three choices are not included in the notice of increase, and the increase letter is a systematized notice, then the landlord is being less than honest. Tenants have three choices:

Accept the rent increase and lease changes and renew the lease; refuse the rent increase and changes and renew the lease; or accept or refuse the rent increase or changes and renew the lease.

Or you can refuse all and notify the landlord you will move out, not renewing the lease.

So you see that any landlord who gives only two choices (accept the increase or move out) is being less than honest in the rent increase notice. Unfortunately, this technique is used by many landlords to either force the rent increase to be accepted or to get rid of older and/or long-term tenants.

3. Can a tenant and landlord negotiate their own mutually acceptable rent increase?

Answer: Absolutely. Every landlord and tenant have the legal right to sit down and negotiate among themselves an acceptable rent increase. This should be in writing, clearly spelled out.

4. Can a tenant legally ask the landlord to show his bills and any invoices which contribute to the rent increase, before agreeing to it?

Answer: Yes, a tenant can ask to see the bills, etc. But the landlord is not legally obligated to do so. However — and this is important — even if the landlord chooses to not show the bills in an attempt to negotiate a rent increase, to avoid court, he will be obligated to show all the bills to the Régie du logement. It makes more sense to make the bills available to tenants to look over.

5. What happens if a tenant gets the rent increase notice after March 31, 2008?

Answer: That depends. The notice either has to be postmarked no later than March 31, or received by the tenant no later than this date. If a landlord sends the notice on March 31 and the tenant picks it up in April, or later, it still is a valid legal notice of rent increase. What is important is that the postmark is no later than March 31.

6. As a non-legal person, how can I do my own calculation of any rent increase?

Answer: Very easily. The Régie du logement has its own website (www.rdl.gouv.qc.ca) and also has an electronic Calculation 2008 form right on the website which can be filled in. It is self-calculating, and can be printed out. Click on the English icon in the top-right corner. Next, under Quick Access, click on Calculation 2008.

You will then have three choices. Calculate using the electronic version right there online, print the short version of the form so you can fill it out manually, or print out an example of how you do the form itself. Pretty easy. My suggestion is that you do all three so you can have the document in front of you, refer to an example then enter the actual numbers and print that out for yourself.

7. Is there any other form I should know about which is used for rent increases?

Answer: Yes. There is one more form. It is called The RN Form. It is the form every landlord must complete with all the necessary information (Renseignements nécessaires) that is used to legally justify the particular rent increase. If the case goes to court, it must be filled out. Every tenant has the right to get a copy with all numbers entered by the landlord and look it over before your dossier is heard.

8. What happens if a tenant or landlord unreasonably refuses to either provide the necessary information for a fixation (rent increase case) or just will not look at it?

Answer: For the landlord, if he makes serious, documented efforts to prove in good faith to the tenant the legality of a rent increase amount and the tenant just completely and absolutely refuses any attempt to look at it or verify the figures, the landlord can ask the court, with appropriate proofs, to pay for the cost of filing the Demand for Rent Fixation. If the court decides that the tenant must pay costs, it can amount to an additional monthly rent increase of approximately \$6.

For the tenant, in his letter of response, he should clearly ask to see the bills and remain open to negotiate with the landlord. Should a landlord clearly refuse to do so, most likely the landlord will be forced by the court to pay all court costs as per the current guidelines.

9. As a landlord or a tenant, how do I know what bills can be used for rent increase?

Answer: Very easily. Three documents can be downloaded from the Régie website, picked up at its offices, or mailed to you and read. The 'Calculation Form 2008,' the 'Press Release 2008,' and the information pamphlet 'Renewing the Lease of a Dwelling.' These will provide to all parties an almost complete overview of the process of rent increase.

10. When does the new rent increase, asked for in the notice, apply?

Answer: Several different areas of response exist here. No rent increase must be paid until, and if, the court decides it to be so. A landlord does not have the legal right to force a tenant to pay the requested rent increase until it is negotiated or decided by a legal decision of the Régie. The tenant must then pay all arrears in rent owed, as soon as the Régie makes its decision. The tenant does not have the right to make the landlord wait for back rent owed as per the decision. The tenant should be putting aside additional rent money for eventual payment to the landlord so they will not be charged with non-payment of the rent.

There you have it. Cut this out and save it, for it can help resolve differences of opinion.

This is a general overview only. Please seek legal counsel or come and see us. Ted Wright is coordinator of Westmount Legal Clinic, every Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. at the Westmount YMCA, 4585 Sherbrooke St. W. Send questions to tedquestions@yahoo.ca or via fax to 514-277-8403, or mail to P.O. Box 48101, Montréal, Qc., H2V 4S8. Please provide a phone number to verify identity. Your name will not be published without your permission. Mr. Wright contributes to various media in Canada, both print and electronic. Should you wish personal, more extensive assistance, professional fees may apply. He may also be heard on the Know Your Rights legal show every Saturday at 2:30 p.m. on CINQ 102.3 FM. Podcasts of shows are available for one week after original airing at www.radiocentreville.com. Ted Wright is a regular contributor to CJAD 800 News on rental issues and can also be heard every so often on 940NEWS Montreal's legal affairs programme Sidebar with Dino Mazzone, every Friday evening from 8 to 10 p.m. on 940 AM.

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The Westmount
Examiner

Spring weather brings softball — eventually

Michael Somma

A few years ago, the future of the Westmount Senior Softball League was in serious jeopardy. Down to just four teams from regularly having eight or nine in the early 1990s, squads that had been participating for years were folding due to a shortage of players.

Since then a revival of sorts has infused new life into the program. One of the main sources of stability has been Syd Garber, who has been playing in the league for the past 15 years. While he doesn't hold an official title, Garber has become the de facto commissioner, communicating with Westmount Recreation regarding sign-ups, schedules and concerns.

Recognizing the possibility of the league going under, he decided against sitting back idly and watching it sink. Instead, he sought out those in charge and offered his services in whatever capacity necessary.

"I'm just happy to give back to the city that has given us so much," Garber says, downplaying his efforts.

But in reality, someone needed to step up to keep the league from going the way of the Expos, and Garber has been one of the leaders. He and other members have done well to recruit fresh blood, some recently graduated

from local youth leagues and new arrivals to the Westmount community.

This season, six teams will compete, playing twice a week at the Westmount Athletic Grounds. While they could field a couple more squads, lack of time and space restricts the league from expanding any further. Down to just one ball-field, from three a mere decade ago, there simply isn't anywhere to play. And a lack of late-night lighting eliminates the possibility for nightcaps or double headers.

*I'm just happy
to give back
to the city
that has given
us so much.*

—Syd Garber

Hopefully these issues can be resolved in the future, but there won't be any complaining in the mean time. Most players are happy just to be able to continue to foster the friendships they have developed on the diamond.

Then again, while camaraderie and recreation may be emphasized before and after games, once the competitive juices start flowing, well, boys will be boys. Team pride and bragging rights will be on the line when the postseason gets

under way in mid August.

Of course, to get there we'll have to be rid of all this snow. Who knows what type of weather we'll be enjoying come May when the first pitch will be thrown.

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Marianopolis College, 4873 Westmount Ave., presents faculty member and saxophonist Claudia Schaetzle with her Frontier Saxophone Quartet at 8 p.m. in the college auditorium. Tickets are \$10 at the door starting at 7:15 p.m. Admission is free for students.

Saturday, March 29

Books Roadshow: Antiquarian booksellers Wilfrid de Freitas and Susan Ravdin will be in the Atwater Library Reading Room from 1 to 4 p.m. to give an expert opinion on the value of people's special books. Fee is \$2 per book for ALCC members, \$3 for others. All proceeds go to library improvements. 1200 Atwater Ave. Info: 514-935-7344.

Monday, March 31

Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, 425 Metcalfe Ave., presents 'The Paper Jungle' with Susan Portnoy, who will provide insight into eliminating paper build-up, at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$25. Info: 514-937-9471.

Tuesday, April 1

UTT/Herzliah's Third Annual BustagUTT Comedy Night and Silent Auction starts at 6:30 p.m. at Congregation Beth Ora, 2600 Badaux in St. Laurent. The event will get going with a silent auction and a cocktail reception, followed by comedy by Joey Elias and Cory Kahane. Tickets are \$50 each. Call Claudine at 514-739-2291.

Repercussion Theatre kicks off its 20th anniversary season tonight with the Montreal debut of Shakespeare Unplugged at the Atwater Library at 8 p.m. The show, which runs from April 1 to 12, will feature two actors per-

forming some of William Shakespeare's most intuitive and audacious texts in an intimate setting. For the complete show schedule and further information about Repercussion Theatre, visit www.repercussiontheatre.com. The box office can be reached at 514-931-2644.

Wednesday, April 2

The Westmount Library, 4574 Sherbrooke W., hosts a lecture called 'Riding the Underground Railway' at 7:30 p.m. Teacher and quilt designer Nancy Trowbridge chronicles her journey in the learning of the underground railway and the events that personalized this journey through the examination of a study quilt, a code and the involvement and meaning of quilts and quilt patterns. Info: 514-989-5386.

Books and Lunch at Congregation Shaar Hashomayim, 450 Kensington Ave., at noon. Join us at the Shaar's Sisterhood Book Club as we discuss 'Santa Evita' by Tomas Eloy Martinez. Moderated by Eva Echenberg. Cost is \$15 (includes lunch). Reservations required: 514-937-9471.

Thursday, April 3

The Contactivity Centre, 4695 Maison-neuve West, will host a lunch and talk by guest speaker Milenka Jonas at 1 p.m. The subject will be the health benefits of vitamins, herbs, and natural therapy techniques. Reservation two days in advance is necessary. Cost is \$40. For more information, call 514-932-2326.

The Loves of Shakespeare's Women, performed by Gabrielle Soskin, at Centre Greene, 1090 Greene Ave. Also on April 9 at Centre St. Ambroise, 5080 St. Ambroise, both performances at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$25. These are benefit performances supporting the young actors of Persephone Productions. Info: Phone 514-481-1327 or www.persephoneproductions.org.

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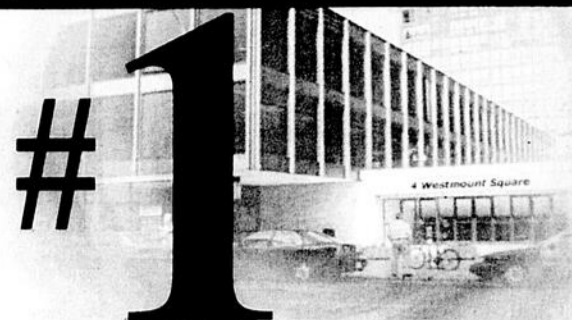
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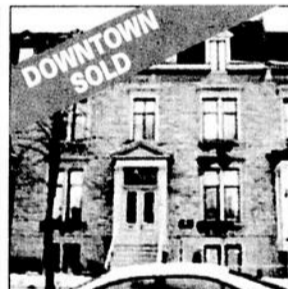
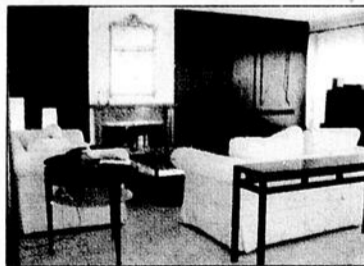
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