

LETTERS

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ite pastimes (cycling, jogging, swimming, skiing, entertainment etc.) and to party with family and friends; many cannot afford the time or money to do so daily in the fresh air of the Laurentians or Eastern Townships.

It reminds me of my parent's beautiful living room in which I was not permitted to sit on the plastic covered sofa for fear I may "stain" it. Trees however can be replaced and the grass will always be green next spring.

My plan to give the mountain back to the people would include the following:

1. Continue to permit hundreds to play and relax on its eastern slope bordered by Park Ave in the shadow of the Richler gazebo and Cartier monument. Give this area a passionate name "Democracy Park" where large groups of demonstrators (10,000 and more) can protest the issues of the day and publicize their message with less police surveillance than on the street where they inconvenience many.

2. Turn "Beaver Lake" into a public swimming and wading pool to replace its present "stagnant water, duck feather and dead fish" appearance; provide a floating stage to facilitate live entertainment or watch a movie under the stars; and supply portable soccer nets for the wide open spaces now used by few.

I urge Montrealers to read the proposed UNESCO mandate to fully understand its restrictive nature for the sake of its environmental name only. It may soon be signed under cover of the usual non-transparency and non-public consultation. Say "No" loudly and "Protest in the Park"!

Michael Shafter, Montreal

Shameful that Vimy is excluded from provincial history courses

A year or so back, the Outremont council made a decision to replace the name of the borough's Vimy Park with Park Jacques Parizeau. I suspect no insult was intended to those who had died, although there is the profound irony of changing a name from an event which helped forge the country's identity to that of a man who had tried to destroy it. The decision reflects the ignorance of too many Quebecers whose knowledge of WWI has forever been focused on the conscription crisis and not the global implications and events of the war itself. The reason for this lack of knowledge is not difficult to find. Teachers and students are keenly aware that graduation from high school requires a pass in the high school history course. The course itself is provincially mandated, the text books and the final examination are dictated by the province, and as teachers are often judged by their success rate, they feel obliged to teach 'to the exam'. Consequently, the knowledge of history is based on a course written, and an exam set, by those whose views are sympathetic to the inward looking political establishment in Quebec City. Students leave high school with a myopic Quebec centred view of history. The possibility of widening the lens is limited. There is a World History course, which is only offered as an option, and for scheduling reasons, impossible for many students to choose.

The new history course, amended this year, is much a repetition of the old one. If it is the

responsibility of the National Assembly to take full responsibility for its contents, the school commissioners have been woefully complicit in permitting its implementation without significant protest. When I asked the Pearson School board commissioners, a simple question 'do you favour or oppose the new history programme?' the answer I received was so incoherent that it was impossible to decipher. Since then Chairperson Stein-Day indicated that the Pearson teachers were in favour of the new course, unlike those history teachers at the EMSB. So how did Stein arrive at her conclusion? One always doubts the legitimacy of her remarks; the board has set such a low ethical bar that even an expert limbo dancer would find it difficult to descend that far. Contrast that to the work of the EMSB's Joe Lalla, who had spearheaded a formal consultation of EMSB's history teachers, whose responses helped legitimize the demand for a course review.

One doubts whether this year's provincial history exam will change, and pose questions surrounding the military conflict of a century ago. The hallmark of a good curriculum is one which makes students aware of both current and past events, and the commemorative ceremony taking place at Vimy is indeed one that fits both categories. Unfortunately, topics not taught or stressed in a course, suggest those who set the exam wish to diminish their importance. Maybe we can hope that students in our Quebec schools start asking the reasons why this epochal event at Vimy is not included in the history course and why should it be excluded from a final exam. These are questions that our provincial government representatives and all school boards com-

missioners should be prepared to answer.

Jim Wilson, NDG

Mr. Wilson is former teachers union president at the LBPSB

Hydro is not "in it together with us!"

The recent interview with Michael Penner, Chairman of Hydro Quebec (April 12, 2017), concluded with Mr. Penner stating that he "wants everyone to know that Hydro Quebec is not against them – but that we (as Quebecers) are all in it together." For over two years, the citizen group Build it Underground DDO (BIUDDO) has opposed the aerial installation of a 315kV transmission line through the heart of DDO for numerous reasons including environmental impact, noise, health concerns, and property value depreciation. BIUDDO is one of four citizen groups locked in contentious battles with Hydro Quebec over aerial transmission line installations throughout Quebec. All of these groups, in different regions of province, are facing the same obstacles – a clear lack of government support and stone walling from Hydro Quebec. Each of these projects has been approved solely based on cost with no regard for human or environmental concerns. Meanwhile, Hydro Quebec has overbilled customers by \$1.4 billion, is recording record profits, and is prepared to offset the cost of underground construction of the Northern Pass transmission line in New Hampshire through subsidized transport credits. In no way does it seem that Hydro Quebec is working to protect Quebec citizens and the environment. Mr. Penner, we are certainly NOT all in it together.

Lynette Gilbeau

Build it Underground DDO

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Cummings Centre's Wellness Centre offers state of the art equipment and programming

By Mike Cohen

The Suburban

The Cummings Centre, a membership-based, non-profit community organization that offers a full continuum of life-long learning and fitness programs to the 50 plus community in Montreal, has had a Wellness Centre dating back to 1992. However, in recent years, this jewel of a spot housed within the Westbury Avenue facility has significantly expanded its offerings to members, from state-of-the-art equipment to extensive fitness programs and classes.

Program Manager Annette Vezina notes that the Wellness Centre is uniquely designed for the 50-plus generation, keeping in mind that overall health and well-being is physical as well as mental.

Small classes, personal attention and monitoring set this place apart. Individual programs developed by the Centre's professionals emphasize brain health, physical movement, strength, balance, posture and flexibility. The focus is on empowerment and maintaining general health and enhanced quality of life as well as prevention and rehabilitation of injuries, back and joint problems and fall prevention. "Exercise is the key to staying strong, energetic, independent and healthy as you age," says Vezina. "You must keep your body fit if you want to be able to enjoy other aspects of your busy life. Our members range from their 50's to 80's, we have classes for every level of fitness."



The Wellness Centre has a wide array of classes and specialized gym programs that will help you attain your fitness goals. A fitness assessment is required, at a nominal fee of \$20, so that the Centre's wellness professionals can work with you to find the best class to fit your needs and interests.

Some of the activities include move and groove aerobic dance classes, Zumba, chair aerobics, cardio dance and cardio mix, morning energy, swimming and aqua fitness next door at the Sylvan Adams YM-YWHA,

boxing at the Cummings Centre as well as the Claude Robillard Centre (transportation provided), traditional and chair yoga, pilates, meditation for brain health, balance and mobility training, bone strengthening, posture and balancing training.

"Our ever-popular Boxing program is excellent exercise for people with Parkinson's disease and programs such as Drum & Dance and 'Move to Music for Mobility' improve a variety of physical functions such as coordination, agility, flexibility, balance and spatial

awareness," notes Vezina.

For outdoor enthusiasts, there is a hiking club that travels to various regional parks (such as Mont St-Bruno, Mont St-Hilaire, Val David / Far Hills, Doncaster and Ste-Agathe). Trails vary in level of difficulty. "It is amazing how popular this is. We get over 30 people per trip and in the winter we switch to cross country skiing and snow shoeing."

A retired registered nurse is on duty Tuesday mornings (10:30 am to noon) to take your blood pressure and answer your questions. There is no cost, nor is an appointment necessary.

And check out the newly updated functional circuit training workout studio which enables you to improve overall cardiovascular health, muscle strength, balance, posture and agility by working through a series of functional training stations. By performing these functional exercises, you will be mimicking movement that you do, out in the real world, therefore reaping full body benefits. 'One-on-One' training is also offered in the Workout Studio with a certified Kinesiologist for participants who may need more support during their workout.

The Cummings Centre is located at 5700 Westbury Avenue. For more information and to learn about membership fees and fitness programs costs, call 514-342-1234 local 7305 or log on to www.cummingscentre.org