



Westmount Dogs and Their Owners

Description

Meet some local canines (and their mistresses)

By **Michael Walsh**

A dog will teach you unconditional love. If you can have that in your life, things won't be too bad.

Robert Wagner

Much has been written about the quality of life enjoyed by the citizens of Westmount; however, little has been said about their favourite companions: dogs.

The City of Westmount is, without a doubt, a dog-friendly place. Comprising three dog runs, the summit of Mount Royal, veterinary services, pet grooming parlors, pet sitting services and a pet store, bowls of water placed outside city stores – Westmount's pooches enjoy a quality of life unequaled in a city of this size. In fact, the taxi service will drive you, and your dog, to your destination. (Don't worry about dog fur – they use specific cars for this purpose!)

Several years ago, the Editor of the former Westmount Examiner, Wayne Larsen, published a list of "Westmountisms" including "Where it is not impossible, but certainly unlikely, to be able to stand on any intersection between 7 and 8:30 am and, looking in all directions, not spot at least one person walking their dog." This makes one wonder: who are some of these dogs we see during our walks through the park or along the sidewalks?

What follows is my not-so-random survey of dogs that you have probably seen, but never met, through your walk throughout the various green spaces and city sidewalks. Westmount dogs appear in all shapes and sizes and each with a separate story.

Lulu and Marie



Older dogs are wonderful. They tend to be calm and content, loving and loyal – and when they find nice homes and kind treatment in their later years, they give back much more than they get.

Laura T. Coffey, My Old Dog: Rescued Pets with Remarkable Second Acts

Allow me to introduce Lulu and Marie. Lulu is a six-year-old Chihuahua and is very fortunate to have Marie as her owner.

Sitting on a park bench, on a sunny Sunday afternoon we had a long talk that enlightened me about her love for dogs. Marie, a 21-year resident of Westmount, is passionate about rescuing senior dogs. In fact, she has owned more than half a dozen and given them an excellent quality of life in their final years.



Lulu and Marie

“I discovered Westmount through dogs” she says, “at the time I was working in the financial sector and my life was comprised of going to work and going out with friends in the evenings.” It wasn’t until she owned her first dog that she became aware of an entirely new dimension of the city.

When asked why she prefers senior dogs, she replied, “nobody wants a senior dog... I know people that are retired looked for a small puppy – what are they thinking – they don’t have the energy to look after a very young dog.” She added, “senior dogs are calm and owning one is a wonderful experience.”

Finally, she believes that dog ownership, “keeps seniors alive”, giving them a sense of purpose and fulfilling a companionship role – which is also true for those living alone.



Conrad and Krista

Saving one dog will not change the world, but surely for that one dog, the world will change forever.

Karen Davison



Conrad and Krista

Meet Conrad – a rescue dog found abandoned in Kahnawá:ke territory and brought to the SPCA de Montréal. Part Labrador Retriever, German Sheppard and Burmese Mountain – his temperament makes him a “gentle giant”. His weekdays consist of an early morning walk through Westmount Park, followed by late morning and afternoon strolls along the footpaths in Westmount Summit.

Krista, is a registered nurse working in the MUHC’s Glen site ICU unit. Her twelve-hour shifts require additional assistance in looking after Conrad. Luckily, she has a wonderful dog walker, who has become an extended part of the family, who has watched Conrad grow into the beautiful dog that he is today!

Bud and Nancy

No one appreciates the very special genius of your conversation as a dog does.

Christopher Morley

Meet Bud and Nancy. Bud is a five-year-old miniature dachshund from Peterborough Ontario. Nancy is a practicing Lawyer. Bud’s story shows how the power of a dog can relieve a person’s sense of loss.



Bud and Nancy

Nancy was working in the Toronto area when her first dog, Molly, started to develop serious health problems. This led to the inevitable round of endless and expensive veterinarian visits that, unfortunately, didn't provide any relief. Luckily, she came across another veterinarian, who charged her a one-time consultation fee and made sure that Molly had a good quality of life – under his care, she lived for another two years.

Shortly afterwards, Nancy found Bud at a breeder in Peterborough – the largest, and calmest, of the litter, without hesitation she took him home.

“When we got home, the first thing he did was jump into my arms and kissed me – from that point, I knew he was a keeper!”

There are times when Nancy still thinks about Molly, when she does, Bud nudges her as if to say “Don't worry, I am here!”

Cian and Belinda

The bond with a true dog is as lasting as the best ties of this earth will ever be.

Konrad Lorenz



Those of us walking our dogs through Westmount Park have seen Belinda, in all kinds of weather, walking her dog.



Cian and Belinda

This is Cian (Celtic for “warrior”). Interestingly, Belinda mentioned that dog’s names containing a “hard c” results in paying more attention to their names. Cian is two years old and part golden Labrador and Australian Sheppard.

Belinda, a Westmount resident since 1976, works at Concordia University as an advisor for new and returning students.

Cian’s story starts when he was found lying on the side of a road, with a broken leg, after being run over by a vehicle in Mexico. Eventually, he was placed with the Ottawa based organization “Freedom Dog Rescue” who cared for him and eventually found a temporary adoptive family. Finally, during a winter snowstorm that took 10 hours to drive from Montreal to Ottawa – the pair were finally united.

Today, Cian lives happily in Westmount in the company of a 14-year-old cat – whom he bosses!

If you don’t own a dog, at least one, there is not necessarily anything wrong with you, but there may be something wrong with your life.



Roger Caras

Lindsay and Danielle



Lindsay and Danielle

Meet Lindsay – a nine-year-old miniature Australian Labradoodle. Lindsay hails from Kelowna, in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia.

Danielle is a geological consultant and has lived in Westmount since 2001. Lindsay's story from B.C. to Montreal reads like a mystery novel. Their family always wanted a Labradoodle and eventually found one available in Kelowna. To collect their new family member they flew from Montreal to Vancouver and then drove to the Okanagan region. During a brief stop, on the way back, Lindsay ran off and couldn't be found. Eventually, the dogcatchers in the area found her calmly sitting by the bank of the Fraser River, near Hope.

Finally, Lindsay is settled into her new Westmount home and enjoys her peaceful walks through Westmount Park.

Images: Michael Walsh




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Michael Walsh is a long-time Westmount resident. He is happily retired from nearly four decades in the field of higher education technology. A “professional student” by nature, his academic training, and publishing, include statistical methodology, mycology and animal psychology. During this period, he was also an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces. Prior to moving to Montreal, he was contracted by the Ontario Ministry of Education evaluating bilingual primary and secondary school programs. Today, he enjoys spending time with his (huge) Saint Bernard while discovering the city’s past and sharing stories of the majestic trees that grace the parks and streets. He can be contacted at michaeld2003@hotmail.com or through his blog [Westmount Overlooked](#)



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