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MON-TUES-WED: 9:30am-6:00pm
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 SATURDAY: 9:00am-5:00pm
 SUNDAY: 10:00am-5:00pm

Hereditary Hemochromatosis: raising awareness about a crippling condition



Mike Cohen

Pointe Claire's **Sharyn Robillard** is on a mission, urging everyone to take blood tests at least once a year to check their iron levels. Six years ago she was diagnosed with hemochromatosis, a crippling, potentially fatal condition caused by a defect of iron metabolism that leads to iron overload in vital organs, joints and tissues. The complications caused by the disorder are preventable if a diagnosis is made before the excess iron causes irreversible damage and effective treatment exists.

Robillard was referred to **Dr. Max Katz** at the Lakeshore General Hospital and underwent de-ironing through phlebotomies (blood-letting) every two weeks for a few months until her iron was reduced to normal levels. "For most folks, this process can go on for months and months," she says. "I am lucky for being unlucky. Afterwards, instead of hospital visits, I began to donate blood at convenient Hema-Quebec blood drives three times a year to maintain normal iron levels. Iron build up in organs can bring on heart attacks in otherwise healthy people, cirrhosis in non-drinkers and fused joints from iron deposits. This disorder is hereditary, so you can't 'give' it to anyone, and our blood can be put into the normal blood bank system. And as it turned out, I was recruited at a blood drive to become a Hema-Quebec volunteer which is a satisfying way of giving back to the community and meeting so many interesting people."

The Canadian Hemochromatosis Society will present a free evening seminar on Thursday, October 24 (7:30 p.m) at the Royal Victoria Hospital (687 Pine Avenue West, JSL Browne Amphitheatre, M.3.01). Experts will be making their presentations, including a question and answer period, to which the public and professionals are invited.

Those interested in attending the event must RSVP in advance via email to montreal@toomuchiron.ca or by calling regional organizer **Juliana Pavelka-Johnston** at 514-945-3210.

MILE END MAGIC: Former World Boxing Champ and West Island resident **Otis "Magic" Grant**, who is well known to community and school outreach programs, will be the Mile End Community Mission's keynote speaker on Thursday, October 24 (6 p.m.) at the Le Crystal (5285 Henri-Bourassa West) in Saint-Laurent where he grew up. This is all part of a special post-Thanksgiving entertainment benefit which

is expected to bring in \$35,000 for an ever-growing number of disadvantaged people in the Mile End and adjacent areas.

HEFTER ON CAMPUS: Longtime Montreal sportscaster **Abe Hefter** has assumed a limited role on local Bell Media radio stations in order to devote most of his energy to teaching. The Dollard des Ormeaux resident, for years a fixture with CJAD Sports, recently accepted a full-time appointment at Concordia University in the Department of Journalism as a lecturer and undergraduate program director. Please see my blog for much more.



Giuseppe and Elina Borsellino

LAKESHORE BALL: The Lakeshore General Hospital (LGH) Foundation raised 700,000 at the 13th Annual Lakeshore Ball, held recently at the Château Vaudreuil. Over 320 glittering guests enjoyed superb dining and dancing to the music of the **Paul Chacra** and 1945 Orchestra, as well as magnificent live and silent auctions. **Giuseppe and Elina Borsellino** of Groupe Petra were the honorary chairs and donated over \$300,000 on their own. All funds raised will go directly to purchase much-needed medical equipment, which will help to elevate the quality of care at our community hospital. The elegant event was attended by many of the community's most influential and well-known citizens, including Mayor **Bill McMurchie** of Pointe-Claire, Mayor **John Meaney** of Kirkland, **Catherine C. Talbot** and **Dimitrios Beis**, Councillors of Pierrefonds-Roxboro, **Peter Fletcher**, president of the Lac St. Louis Conservative party, and hockey broadcasting legend **Dick Irvin Jr.**, **Lori Graham** of CTV Montreal brought humour and elegance to the stage as emcee

Have something to share? Email me at mcohen@thesuburban.com or leave a message at 514-484-9203, ext. 307. Follow me on Twitter @mikecohencsl and at <http://blog.thesuburban.com>.

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