

Former West Islander Jeff Rimer evolves into top NHL play-by-play man



Mike Cohen

It was if time stood still for me last week when I reunited with Jeff Rimer in the Bell Centre broadcast booth prior to the game between the Canadiens and the Columbus Blue Jackets. I cannot remember when we last saw each other face to face, but I have fond memories of the time he spent here in Montreal as the sports director for the old CFCF Radio.

I was a very young reporter at the time, working with my late father Larry covering the major sports teams. Rimer began his broadcasting career with CFAC-Radio in Calgary and then spent over four years working for the CBC, including serving as the network's gymnastics commentator during the 1976 Summer Olympic Games here in Montreal. He spent eight years at CFCF, hosted open line shows and did some TV as well. I was a great admirer. He left Montreal in 1984 and went on to call play-by-play action for baseball's Baltimore Orioles and the NHL's Washington Capitals, Florida Panthers and since 2004 the Blue Jackets on Fox Sports Ohio.

A native of Toronto, Rimer says he always looks forward to coming back to Montreal. "I still have a lot of friends here," he said. "When I was in Montreal, I developed personal connections with a lot of the athletes. We lived on the West Island and that time

so did most of the players from Montreal teams."

Rimer and his wife Ferrel became extremely close to former Expos catcher, the late Gary Carter, and his wife Sandy. "We lived right around the corner from them in Kirkland," he said. "We never lost touch. I saw Gary two weeks before he died from brain cancer in 2012. He wanted to see Ferrel and me. I was crushed and I still can't believe he is gone."

Rimer is actually an employee of the Blue Jackets organization and says he loves life in Columbus. "It's a great city starving for a winning hockey team," he said. "We've been in the playoffs twice and this year we look like we are headed there again. The city will go nuts."

As for controversial head coach John Tortorella, Rimer says, "I love the guy. He just wants to win and is nothing like the way some media portray him. John wants to win. He is a passionate and caring person."

While in Montreal, Rimer's biggest headline moment came when Pete Rose then of the Expos tried to grab him in a fit of anger in the dressing room. Rose was under the impression that Rimer had spoken negatively of him on the radio. "I actually was bringing him a cassette to show him that was not the case," Rimer recalls. "I have spoken to Pete since that incident. He claimed he was just trying to pump up his team."

Folks like Jim Hindley, a past president of the Cedars Cancer Institute, remember Rimer and Gary Carter for the work they did



MIKE COHEN PHOTO

Jeff Rimer (left) and Jim Hindley in the broadcast booth.

to help the charity's annual golf tournament come into its own. Beaconsfield resident Hindley and his grandson were guests of Rimer at last week's game. "Jeff is an amazing guy," Hindley told me. "We have never lost touch since the day he left Montreal. It is a special friendship."

Rimer's colour commentator is former NHL tough guy Jody Shelley, whom I enjoyed a friendly chat with before the game.

GALLO AND CAMPBELL: West Island natives Mitch Gallo and Sean Campbell do

an outstanding job covering the Canadiens for TSN 690 in so many capacities. I sat in for part of their Delmar Post Game show last week. See my blog for a more detailed piece.

Something to share? E-mail me at mcohen@thesuburban.com Follow me on Twitter @mikecohencsl and on our blog section at www.thesuburban.com

TRAIN

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technology that is more like a hybrid between a metro car and tram way. It will be rather quiet and dependable and people are going to be pleasantly surprised by its reliable service."

Lacroix explained that since the first round of public meetings held last spring, the project has held a BAPE (Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement) hearing and has been finalizing the environmental studies related to the major project to be completed by 2020.

It is estimated that the addition of the REM will reduce 16,800 tonnes of carbon dioxide and that the current \$5.5 billion price tag will not have to be augmented to complete the project in four years.

The REM will run every six to 12 minutes during rush hour and about four times an hour during non-peak hours, every day from 5 a.m. to 1 a.m.

"By respecting the established timeline, work should start on the project by the end of this year," said Coiteux. ■

Santé Sunnybrooke

Santé Sunnybrooke, a new medical clinic in Dollard-des-Ormeaux established to meet the specific healthcare needs of women, is pleased to announce that the following West Island obstetrician gynecologists have transferred their practices to its state-of-the-art premises.

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