

# Montreal should follow Vancouver's path for pro baseball



**Mike Cohen**

VANCOUVER- When I visited British Columbia five years ago, former Dollard des Ormeaux and Hampstead resident **Jason Takefman** was the head of ticket sales for the short season rookie "A" level Vancouver Canadians

(www.canadiansbaseball.com). Only 30 years of age, he has since moved up the ladder as general manager and would be the ideal guy to help bring professional baseball back to Montreal.

With no disrespect intended towards the Montreal Baseball Project and ExposNation, I do not believe we will get a major league squad again anytime soon. However, the CanAM "A" Ball League is looking at Montreal for expansion and from what I saw again in Vancouver last month we should embrace this opportunity. Vancouver has one of the prettiest little ballparks in North America, Scotiabank Field at Nat Bailey Stadium. There are 5,187 seats here, every one of them dandy. The Canadians are an affiliate of the Toronto Blue Jays, having switched over two years ago from the Oakland Athletics.

Montreal has no minor league calibre baseball park to speak of, but I am sure an existing one somewhere on the island could be retrofitted. "We all grew up with the Habs in our DNA," Takefman told me between innings of a recent mid-week July game. "But look how well the Impact and the Alouettes do as well. Baseball can still work there. I think the Can AM League would be a good fit."

Would Takefman return home if he were given the opportunity to start up such an operation? See his response in my video interview at <http://www.thesuburban.com/videos.php>.

The Canadians are a real hit in Vancouver. They have had a number of sellouts this season while averaging more than 4,800 fans per game. It is a 76 game season, from June to September. At one time

Vancouver had an AAA team, but that ended in 1999 and they returned at a lower tier.

"Vancouver is a great baseball city," Takefman says.

As for his current role as GM, Takefman said: "I am not a title guy, but I guess being GM is pretty cool. When the job became vacant I approached our team president and told him I really wanted the job. A month later it was mine."

Being the GM of a minor league club is not like the big leagues, where trades are made. "I oversee day to day operations of the club," he said. "This includes immigration issues with our roster, legal matters. From the time I joined the organization in 2006 I have worked a great deal on community relations. It is so important for us to con-

See COHEN, page 14

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**COHEN**

Cont'd from page 4

next with the people and promoting the product."

As a Blue Jays minor league affiliate, Takefman has had some contact with **Alex Anthopoulos**, the Blue Jays GM and also a native of the Town of Mount Royal.

**COHEN CHATTER:** The president of the Canadians is **Andy Dunn**, a former Expos staffer...At Joe Fortes Seafood & Chop House ([www.joefortes.ca](http://www.joefortes.ca)), among the finest restaurants in Vancouver; we were shown to our table by a charming young lady named **Tori Simons**. This is a summer job for Tori. She will soon return to Montreal where she is a second year McGill University student in

Anatomy and Cell Biology...First CJAD had Montreal mayoral candidate **Richard Deschamps** and their newscaster of the same name. In B.C., Vancouver businessman **Rick Peterson** is seeking the leadership of the Progressive Conservative Party. Perhaps CJAD's **Ric Peterson** will interview him.

Have you got something to share? E-mail [mcohen@thesuburban.com](mailto:mcohen@thesuburban.com) or call 514-484-

9203, ext. 307. Follow me on Twitter @mike-cohencs1 and at <http://blog.thesuburban.com/>

**APPROVAL**

Cont'd from page 7

September 3.

Côte-des-Neiges—Notre-Dame-de-Grâce plans to approve the conversion of 4624-4626, avenue Marcil and 5592-5594, avenue McLynn at their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 3 at 7 p.m.

Verdun plans to discuss the conversion of 4829 à 4833, boulevard Lasalle at a council meeting in room 205 on Tuesday, September 3 at 6 p.m.

Villeray-Saint-Michel-Parc-Extension plans to approve the conversion of 7974 to 7978, rue Saint-Denis, lot 3 454 127 at their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 3 at 7 p.m.

**POLICE**

Cont'd from page 10

"Things bode well." ■

...

Mazzone also said the town's long-term debt has been reduced by 11.9 percent from 2011 to 2012.

"This is a very healthy sign for a town. From the top down, the leadership of Beny Masella to people on the ground who are helping us, and our residents, thank you very much. It's because of your combined efforts and our stewardship here that we can talk about maybe spending money in ways that make sense and paying down some of our debt - being very prudent about it all." ■

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# Former West Islander maintains Proudfoot legacy in Vancouver



**Mike Cohen**

**VANCOUVER-** Growing up in Dorval, **Jim Miller** was the kind of kid who liked to be involved in the community. While attending Courtland Park Elementary School he served as a paper boy for the local weekly newspaper, was a troop leader for the St. Mark's Sea Scouts and even earned membership in the Pointe

Claire Yacht Club.

At the age of 17, after graduating from Lower Canada College, Miller moved to Peterborough, Ontario for three years and attended Trenton University, graduating with a B.A. in Economics. He spent the next decade working in the hotel industry, had five year stint with McDonald's in Western Canada and then moved to Vancouver, where he has been ever since. He landed at the then brand new Rosedale on Robson Suite Hotel ([www.rosedaleonrobson.com](http://www.rosedaleonrobson.com)) in 1994,

was initially the director of operations and later rising to his present post as general manager in 2006.

That is where another Montreal connection began. The story of former Pointe Claire resident **Tony Proudfoot** is well known to many of us. Proudfoot played for the Montreal Alouettes, went on to become a physical education teacher at Dawson College and was a genuine hero in 2006 when an armed sniper went inside and started shooting people. He risked his life to save another at risk. Not long after that incident Proudfoot, then a colour commentator for Alouettes games, learned that he had ALS, a.k.a. Lou Gehrig's disease. He bravely fought this fatal disease, chronicling his challenge in the local media and sadly passed away in December 2010.

During Proudfoot's campaign to bring more awareness about the disease, the Rosedale on Robson welcomed him to their hotel and began fundraising for the ALS Society, something they continue to do today. Proudfoot's sister lives in Vancouver and has maintained the connection with the hotel. "They are great people," ALS Society of Quebec executive director **Claudine Cook** says of the hotel. Adds Proudfoot's former broadcast partner, CJAD's **Rick Moffat** from West Island Lachine: "It's a caring place. The community relations person **Jodi Sprackman** and

the general manager Mr. Miller happen to be ex-Montrealers and fans of CJAD. The hotel has specials for BC Lions fans so the football connection is there. It turned that two of Tony's former teammates were also in Vancouver, **Wally Buono** and **Wayne Conrad**. They offered their support to the cause as well. Tony was very appreciative."

Conrad actually owns a uniform company and serves as a supplier for the Rosedale on Robson.

**COHEN CHATTER:** Former Dollard des Ormeaux resident **Jason Takefman** is now the general manager of the professional "A" ball Vancouver Canadians. See my video interview with him: <http://www.thesuburban.com/videos.php>.

...Beaconsfield resident **Kevin Gillespie** is now in his fifth years as general manager of the Sheraton Montreal Airport Hotel, a logical spot for you to park your car for a day, a week or longer rather than the airport itself. It is more secure, there is a convenient shuttle and you can even check in the night before your flight and not have to worry about that mad rush for your flight. The free shuttle, by the way, gives you a nice chance to speak to folks from the Air Canada flight crews.

Have you got something to share? E-mail [mcohen@thesuburban.com](mailto:mcohen@thesuburban.com) or call 514-484-9203, ext. 307. Follow me on Twitter @mikecohencl and at <http://blog.thesuburban.com/>

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