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 Volume 3 No. 3  
 January 21, 2011  
**50¢**

# The Review

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## Quick Hits

Sometimes here in Hamtramck we forget about nature's magnificent creatures. But sometimes, a touch of where the wild things are comes to visit.

Street Life columnist Walter Wasacz came eyeball to eyeball with a hawk recently. You can read all about it in this week's column on page 6.

In the meantime, spend a few moments each day and take a close look at your surroundings. You'll be surprised to find the secret world of nature right in front of your nose!

## Quote of the week ...

**Who said this, and what is it about?** You can find the quote and the story it belongs to somewhere in the pages of this issue.

**"Bo Karpinsky saved the district \$800,000."**



### — HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

# Boxing coach has an eye for picking Olympic contenders

**By Ian Perrotta**

Note to all the kids who like to fight after school – there's a time and a place for everything. In your case, it's every weekday at 4 p.m. at the Hamtramck Boxing Club, located in the upstairs of the G-Mart Co. clothing store at 10012 Jos. Campau.

The club, operated by local resident Ted Palac, has been training the next generation of Olympic fighters – literally – for the last 14 years. A former boxer for the Polish national team who left the country after he fought a match in Sweden in 1966 and never came back, Palac is a five-time Level 4 coach for Team USA.

Throughout his career, Palac has traveled with his fighters all over the United States and to 23 countries. He is a four-time coach of world champion boxers, and, before plans were canceled

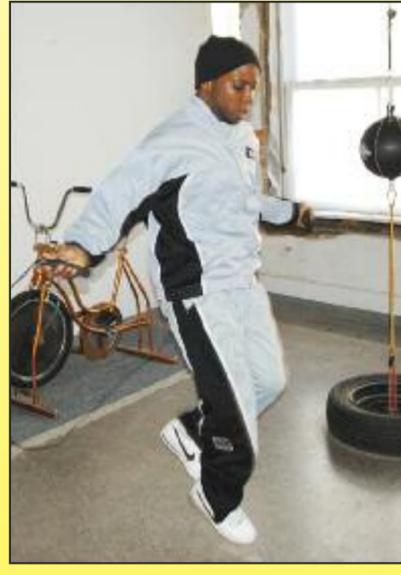
due to the eruption of a volcano that wreaked havoc on international air travel, was slated to be the US Team Manager for the 2010 Youth World Championships in Azerbaijan. The contest is held every two years and is the most prestigious tournaments in the world for youth boxers.

On any given day you can find about a dozen fighters – from age 7 to 29 – jumping rope, hitting speed bags and sparring in the old-school gymnasium's regulation-size ring. Palac's fighting technique combines the elements of both Cuban and Russian fighting styles, and after 52 years in-and-around the ring, he shows no signs of slowing down.

Currently, Palac is training a few boxers that he believes could be future Olympians. In May of last year 132-pound



Ted Palac, standing in the center of the bottom-left picture, has been training the next generation of Olympic fighters in his Hamtramck gym for the last 14 years.



# Councilmember tries one more time for loan

**Charles Sercombe**

It's back. The issue of whether the city should apply for an emergency state loan may have been shot down last week by a majority of councilmembers, but that doesn't mean it's dead.

City Councilmember Catrina Stackpoole, who was one of two councilmembers who voted for the loan, is reintroducing the subject at this Tuesday's (Jan. 25) council meeting.

Stackpoole said she is hoping some on the council have recon-

sidered their vote. "I just hope somebody has come to their senses," Stackpoole said.

Although the loan was rejected by a 4-2 vote, there have been rumors in town that one or more of those who voted against it have had a change of mind.

"There's always hope," Stackpoole said. "It's worth discussing some more. I believe in local control."

City Manager Bill Cooper said the city will be broke by March and unable to pay its bills or

meet employee payroll without a state loan. He has proposed applying for a \$2.5 million loan from the state because not only will the city be broke, it will also have a \$3.5 million budget deficit.

Those voting against said the city needs to first cut more from the budget before asking the state for a loan.

Councilmember Tom Jankowski is also insisting that the city unions agree to contact concessions before he agrees to a state loan.

Cooper warned that if the council does not apply for a loan, and the city goes broke, the state will step in and appoint an emergency financial manager (EFM) to take over.

Stackpoole said if an EFM takes over, that person will do what the council should do: accept the state loan, raise the property tax level to its legal limit and seek contract concessions.

An EFM can also recommend to the state that the city file for bankruptcy, which will allow unions contracts to be torn up

# Councilman to bar: 'Let them die'

**By Charles Sercombe**

When it comes to the patrons of the Shadow Bar who get into fights and shootings, City Councilmember Mohammed Hassan has this solution for police officers called to respond: "Let them die. Let them die."

That's what Hassan said in a recording made by police officers responding to a home break-in that occurred on the night of Jan. 1.



City Councilmember Mohammed Hassan found himself in the media spotlight for comments he made about police and fire service, and what he had to say about the patrons at the Shadow Bar.

Hassan was apparently upset over how long it took officers to come to the house. Officers told Hassan that the city's four police

Continued on page 2

# City keeping tabs on troubled bar

**By Charles Sercombe**

With news that Hamtramck police are sometimes tied up at the Shadow Bar, it begs the question: What's up with the bar's promise to do away with hip-hop nights?

Recently, Councilmember Mohammed Hassan complained about the response time it took for police to come to the scene of a house break-in. Officers said they were running late because they were tied up at Shadow Bar.

The bar has been a problem for the city in the past. Fights have occurred there as well as shootings, muggings and to cap it off, a murder.

City officials threatened to have the bar's license pulled, but the bar owners agreed to change their format from urban-contemporary to catering to a gay clientele.

In exchange for the format change, the city agreed to allow the bar to stay open until 4 a.m.

Continued on page 6

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# Councilman to bar: 'Let them die'

Continued from front page

officers on duty were tied up at the bar because of a disturbance there.

His comment was picked up by local media outlets.

That quote and his complaints in a recent council meeting about the quality of service from the police and fire departments raises a series of questions:

Does Hassan really think that human life is worth less than stolen property?

Does Hassan understand that the police staffing level is limited by contract and the city's budget?

Does he understand that non-emergency police overtime has been eliminated per council directive – a directive he voted for?

Just where exactly does Hassan live?

Why would he insist on having his wife transported by ambulance to a Macomb County hospital when several Detroit hospitals are just minutes away?

Hassan's entry into the media spotlight started with comments he made at last Tuesdays' council meeting. In a lengthy discussion about whether to apply for a state loan to stave off the city going financially broke, Hassan criticized the service of the police and fire departments and their costs.

He argued against applying for a state loan because the money would end up in the pockets of police officers and firefighters. He added that they have "luxurious" contracts the city can't afford.

In what could be described as a rant, Hassan spoke of two separate incidents. The first involved a call he made recently for an ambulance. He said his wife was feeling dis-

comfort and asked for an ambulance, but the Fire Department's ambulance was tied up in a call.

Three private ambulance service companies were also tied up in calls. The Fire Department, however, sent firefighters in a fire truck to Hassan's house. Hassan said firefighters examined his wife and determined that she was not in a life-threatening condition.

Hassan had also insisted that an ambulance take his wife to St. John's Hospital in Macomb County, but he did not explain why in telling this story. Eventually, an ambulance crew arrived and upon examining Hassan's wife, found her to have dangerously low blood pressure and possibly suffering from a stroke, he said.

According to Fire Chief Steve Paruk, the private ambulance that responded took Hassan's wife to a Detroit hospital, not to St. John's in Macomb County. Paruk said that firefighters offered to assist Hassan's wife into Hassan's car prior to the ambulance's arrival if Hassan thought she needed immediate attention, but he declined.

The house that the ambulance was called to was across the street from the house Hassan has listed with the city as his official residence. It's unclear if Hassan had moved since being elected to office.

As for the break-in incident, things become less clear.

At the council meeting, Hassan said a break-in happened at a house at Mackay and Carpenter. Police say the complainant in the incident is not Hassan, but Hassan was the one who talked with officers

responding.

As soon as the officers arrived, Hassan demanded to know why it took them so long to respond and how many officers were working the shift.

He was told more than once that there were only four officers in two patrol cars on duty and that they were tied up at the Shadow Bar. He also questioned why officers could not take fingerprints.

An unidentified officer can be heard in the recording telling Hassan that he and his partner are not trained to take finger prints and that officers who are trained to do so could not be called to the scene because non-emergency overtime had been cancelled. The officer told Hassan to take up the matter with the City Council.

Hassan sarcastically commented at the council meeting that the officers were unaware that he was a councilmember.

Hassan voted with a majority of the council to cancel all non-emergency overtime a few weeks ago in an attempt to stem the city's deficit spending.

The officer talking with Hassan advised him to collect any items that he thought might contain fingerprints and to bring them to the station.

Hassan again questioned where the officers had been, and when he was told officers have been having problems at the Shadow Bar with fights and shootings, he said, in a calm voice, about the bar patrons: "Let them die. Let them die."

As an aside during his talk at the council meeting, Hassan said he owns a house in Warren, but he prefers to live in Hamtramck.

The union president of the

Hamtramck police officers' union, Jon Bondra, said Hassan's comment raises a question about his ethics. He said the council's ethics rules demand that elected and appointed officials "shall maintain the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty and fairness in carrying out their public duties; avoid any improprieties in their roles as public servants including the appearance of impropriety..."

That requirement, Bondra said, seems to have been violated by Hassan.

"How can you be ethical if you want our officers to allow them to die at the Shadow Bar?" Bondra said.

A Review reporter went to Hassan's house at 3423 Neibel for a comment. No one answered the door, and the house appeared to be vacant, with advertising circulars stuffed into the fence and strewn on the walk leading to the door.

However, Hassan pulled up near the house, and immediately asked what business The Review reporter had. Asked about the break-in, Hassan ordered the reporter to stop asking questions and that he would not comment.

After more discussion, Hassan turned back to his vehicle, parked on Mackay, and retrieved a plastic bag filled with items. He appeared to be

walking to a house across the street from the house he has listed as his residence with the city.

He confronted the same reporter over why he was being photographed.

"Do you have a problem?" he asked the reporter.

The reporter: "No, do you?" Hassan then walked over to the reporter, stood silent, then made a brief phone call and returned to his vehicle. But on returning to his vehicle, he turned around and claimed the reporter made a threat.

In a WXYZ Channel 7 interview, Hassan apologized for his comment about the Shadow Bar.

## Fire chief gives his account of Hassan's emergency call for an ambulance

In response to City Councilmember Mohammed Hassan's criticism of the service he received from the Hamtramck Fire Department when he requested an ambulance, Fire Chief Steve Paruk submitted the following account of what happened to Mayor Karen Majewski.

Mayor Majewski forwarded Paruk's report to the City Council, city manager and The Review newspaper. Here is what Paruk had to say about the incident:

"The Fire Department received a call reporting a woman with a severe headache. Since R1 (our ambulance) was on a call at that time, a fire engine was dispatched at 0835 (8:35 a.m.), arriving on the scene at 0838 (8:38 a.m.).

"The engine was sent as we only have one ambulance on duty at any given time, and we could not get a private ambulance to respond at that time. The Fire Department had contacted Universal, Medic One and Community Ambulance, but none of them were available. During the mornings this is often a problem as the private ambulance companies are often committed to transporting individuals to appointments, not responding to emergency calls.

"At 0844 (8:44 a.m.), Universal Ambulance notified us that they had an ambulance available, which was immediately dispatched to the residence. Universal arrived at

0901 (9:01 a.m.). Our ambulance arrived back in the city at 0859, but was not dispatched as Universal was already in route. Our engine remained on scene until Universal arrived.

"The primary reason that our ambulance was not dispatched when it returned to the city, was that the family had requested that the patient be transported to St. John – Macomb hospital. Since the patient was not in immediate distress and was stable, we attempted to honor the request.

We do not transport patients this distance due to the need to keep our fire fighters close by in case of a serious fire or emergency. Ambulance staff are also fire fighters who are needed on major fires. Our policy for the past 20+ years has been that we transport to Detroit Receiving, Henry Ford, Hutzel or Children's Hospitals, always the closest hospital depending on the emergency.

All are located within 7 minutes of Hamtramck, allowing quick access to the hospitals, and a quick return to Hamtramck if necessary. If a patient requests another hospital, a private ambulance is called to transport.

The exception, if the patient is in distress and/or appears to need immediate attention for any reason, the patient is transported to the closest hospital regardless of their request.

"It should be noted that the

fire fighters on scene offered to help the patient into the family's vehicle so that she could be transported to their hospital of choice. The family refused, opting to wait for the ambulance. It should also be noted that Universal transported the patient to Detroit Receiving, the closest hospital. The family did not request that she be transported to St. Johns – Macomb at that time.

"Council Member Hassan was informed several times as to the delay in getting a private ambulance, and why our ambulance was not available.

While he continually asked why there was no ambulance, and he was continually informed that the Fire Department was doing everything it could to locate an ambulance to transport his wife, the fact remains that she was stable, did not appear to be in distress, and we were attempting to honor the family's request to transport her far outside of our response area.

"While Council Member Hassan was not satisfied with our service, everything that could be done was done as quickly as possible, and in a professional manner.

Patient safety was the primary consideration at all times, and as long as the patient was stable and was not in distress, we attempted to honor the family's request to transport her to a location well outside of our area."

## This week at the library...

**Town Hall Meeting Video** - Both parts of the Town Hall Meeting of January 6 are posted on the Hamtramck Public Library Website for public viewing.

**ESL Class for Beginners** - Saturday, January 22 at 10:30 a.m. Christine Templin is the instructor for the ESL class for beginners. Everyone is invited. Free to the public.

**Storytime for Children** - Saturday, January 22 at noon. All children are invited to storytime featuring, "Wild About Books" by Judy Sierra. Afterwards, we will show you how to be an author too.

**Computer Classes for Beginners** - Wednesday, January 26 at 11 a.m. Basic instructions on computer use for beginners will be held on Tuesdays. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

**Reading and Conversation for ESL Students** - Tuesday, January 25 at 5:30 p.m. Jide Aje is the instructor for the reading and conversation ESL classes.

**Math Club Meeting** - Tuesday, January 25 at 4 p.m. Mr. Nuo is the instructor for the math club and math tutoring.

**Movie Wednesday** - Wednesday, January 26 at 3:30 p.m. Every Wednesday is movie day at the library. Come and enjoy our feature pres-

entation, which includes free popcorn and snacks.

**Winter Teen Club** - Thursday, January 27 at 5 p.m. Members of the Teen Club will be making their own photo memory boxes to save all the good memories from 2010. Everyone is invited to join.

**Jeopardy at the Library** - Thursday, January 27 at 4 p.m. Sign up and participate in Jeopardy games held on Thursdays at the library. Compete against friends, win prizes and have fun developing your knowledge skills.

**Computer Classes for Advanced Users** - Monday, January 24 at 11 a.m. Adults with basic computer skills can enhance their computer literacy each Monday at the library. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

**Meeting of the Library Board** - Thursday, February 10 at 6 p.m. Regular meeting of the Library Board will be held in the auditorium. Open to the public.

**Friends of the Library Meeting** - Thursday, February 17 at 6:30 p.m. FHPL President Kathy Kristy and Treasurer George Gorday, invite all members and volunteers to participate in the regular monthly meeting and election meeting of the FHPL.

**For more information about events at the library call (313) 365-7050, or visit our website at <http://hamtramck.lib.mi.us> where you can also access our online catalog.**



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# Second Front Page

## Police union president dispels some rumors among the force

By Charles Sercombe

It's no secret that Hamtramck City Manager Bill Cooper is asking for the police and fire unions to agree to contract concessions to ease the city's budget deficit.

But for the past few weeks, police officers have questioned some financial decisions made by Cooper.

Officers say several months ago Cooper offered them a new health insurance plan that eliminated co-pays. They say if the city is so broke, why did Cooper offer them a better health plan.

So, what's the deal?

Cooper has flat out denied

he made such an offer, saying that the health insurance plan in question was signed by former City Manager Don Crawford a month before Cooper took over.

We asked the police officers' union president, Jon Bondra, what went down.

Bondra confirmed that it was indeed Crawford who made the change, a change that Crawford undertook without the union's permission. The union subsequently filed an unfair labor practice grievance.

When Cooper came on board, he wanted to settle the grievance, and pointed out to the union that the new health

plan was actually better than the previous one, while at the same time saving the city money.

Bondra said the union did take a closer look, agreed it was a better plan and withdrew the grievance.

However, it turned out that the city got some bum advice on the plan and that it actually ended up costing more money. The union is now being asked to agree to a less expensive health plan.

Officers also question Cooper's ongoing change in the time frame of when the city will go broke. Cooper has said in the past that it would be this

January, and lately he is saying it will be in March.

"What's going on? Why does it keep changing?" Bondra said.

Cooper told The Review that the financial picture for the city is fluid and that it's hard to pinpoint an exact deadline.

Lastly, officers say that despite Cooper's claims of asking to meet with the union, he has not made a formal request to the union. Bondra acknowledged, however, that Cooper has met with the union twice.

Bondra said the union was asked to agree to cuts but he said that was turned down.

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## Have a creative idea, sit down and enjoy a bowl of soup

By Ian Perrotta

There's a new project being stirred up in Hamtramck. It's called Diverse(soup)city and it's looking to fund your idea.

Diverse(soup)city is the brainchild of about a dozen Hamtramckians – all under the age of 30 – who are interested in helping develop creative projects within the city. Essentially, it is a monthly dinner group that will vote on how to divide the money raised by each night's \$7 entrance fee. Diverse(soup)city is modeled after a similar venture called Detroit Soup.

The first meeting of Diverse(soup)city – named so because of the diversity found within Hamtramck – will be held at Maria's Comida on Sunday, Feb. 20 from 6 to 9

p.m., and regular meetings will be held every third Sunday thereafter.

In addition to offering a hearty meal of soup, salad, bread and dessert, the goal is to provide a forum for people to meet and network with other residents, business owners and anyone from outside the community in attendance who is interested in supporting the city. And feel free to speak easy with your fellow diners – it's a bring-your-own-beer event.

For anyone interested in proposing an idea, the parameters are pretty wide-open. To qualify, all a project must do is to benefit the city in some way. Funding for the first micro-grant has already been secured by a generous business owner who has

donated money to not only pay for the project, but also to help cover the cost of marketing the idea and spreading the word.

"The community is really coming together already for this great event," says Marie Pronko, co-owner of Maria's Comida and a founding organizer of Diverse(soup)city. "It has definitely created a lot more buzz than we anticipated

and we are just getting started."

For more information check out [www.diversesoupcity.com](http://www.diversesoupcity.com). Anyone interested in submitting project proposals for micro-grant funding can submit them to [Diversesoupcity@gmail.com](mailto:Diversesoupcity@gmail.com) by the Friday before each Diverse(soup) city dinner or in person at Maria's Comida.

### What is Diverse(soup)city?

SOUP is...  
a collaborative situation  
a public dinner  
a theatrical environment  
a platform for performance  
a local experiment in micro-funding  
a relational hub connecting various creative communities  
a forum for critical discussion  
an opportunity to support creative people in Hamtramck

## School Board elects new president and faces year of challenges

By Charles Sercombe

Hamtramck's School Board has elected to go into a new direction.

The board has changed leaders by deciding not to elect Titus Walters as president of the board. Instead, longtime boardmember Bettie Zwolak will now serve in that position.

Walters was the board's first African-American to serve as president. He held that position for four years.

It's not immediately clear why a majority of the board changed direction, but the

swing vote appeared to be Dennis Puchalski, who in the past voted for Walters as president.

Puchalski said he has not had a falling out with Walters.

"I want to give somebody else a chance to be president," Puchalski said. "They are all qualified."

As for Walters, he said "I'd go to the wall for him."

Walters said he has no hard feelings.

"I can't be upset because where I'm at, god wants me to

Continued on page 6

## Boxing coach has an eye for picking Olympic contenders

Continued from front page

boxer Paul Tchupyk was crowned Silver Gloves Champion, and he's got high hopes for 106-pound fighter Bilal Ahmed. But even those who aren't trained by Palac can benefit from his expertise, as was the case last year when he volunteered his skills as corner man for two fighters whose own corner men failed to show up.

"If you're a good boxer, you can get scholarships and be

paid good money. And besides, you can travel," says Palac. "You can even have a chance to go to the Olympics and see the world."

Think you've got what it takes to fight for Palac? If you're interested in learning more about the Hamtramck Boxing Club stop by 10012 Jos. Campau at 4 p.m. during the week. Training sessions are open to the public and cost just \$5.

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# Soup kitchen opens its doors to the community

By Charles Sercombe

Every second Saturday of the month, the good folks at Holy Cross Polish National Catholic Church open their doors to the needy.

It's soup kitchen day, and on a recent Saturday they were serving up a heaping bowl of turkey soup, salad, hot dogs, milk and coffee. And if you needed a fresh pair of warm socks, those were also free for the taking.

Surprisingly, on this especially cold January Saturday, not as many people as usual showed up. You'd think on frigid day like this folks would like a belly of warm food to fight off the cold.

But that's how it goes. You never know who or how many

will show up.

Holy Cross is a unique church in an area with dozens of churches and mosques. Their history is colorful to say the least.

Starting in the 1890s, a movement of Roman Catholics decided to break away from the Vatican and form their own version of Catholicism. Needless to say, they faced persecution here from the Vatican faithful.

Besides putting parish matters directly into the hands of the parishioners, the Polish National Catholic Church offers another even more radical departure: their priests can marry.

There is interesting history here at this parish.



The Holy Cross Polish National Catholic Church opens its doors to the community by holding a soup kitchen every second Saturday of the month.

# President of teachers' union says he has no info to share

By Charles Sercombe

The president of the Hamtramck Federation of Teachers union, Bo Karpinsky, recently left a telephone message for The Review, questioning why the paper is reporting "lies."

Lies? This newspaper has left numerous calls for comment by Karpinsky regarding the public school district's attempt to win contract concessions, but Karpinsky never returned a call.

However, this time around he was willing to talk. And the question we asked: "What lies, Bo?"

He questioned where the paper got the information that some of his union members were concerned that he and the union leadership were not reporting back to them what the district administration wants in terms of concessions. Karpinsky said he has not told his membership what the terms were because there had been no offers by the district.

The school district is facing a \$4 million deficit, and is attempting to avoid layoffs by winning contract concessions.

School Superintendent Tom Niczay said he has asked the union for wage freezes and to agree to a less expensive health insurance plan.

Niczay said Karpinsky told him the union's "executive board" rejected the proposals. Karpinsky insisted that noth-

ing in writing was given to him. Niczay said that was not true.

Karpinsky also credited himself, speaking in the third person, for saving the district money in the last year by agreeing to changes in the co-pay of the union's health insurance plan.

"Bo Karpinsky saved the district \$800,000," he said.

Niczay said the union indeed agreed to co-pays, but that was last year. He said deeper cuts in the health insurance costs are needed because those costs keep escalating.

"The way things are, with the economy, we need more concessions," Niczay said.

Karpinsky also questioned where \$2 million of the projected \$4 million deficit went.

The district's finance director, Glenn Pasternak, said the loss of students has led to a huge loss of state revenue. He also said that the district's cost for retirements has more than doubled in the last nine years.

Add in skyrocketing increases for health insurance, and the district finds itself bleeding money.

Pasternak said a cost breakdown of the district's budget is available online. He said an even more detailed report will be available in the coming weeks.

Niczay said the district's cash flow will hold out until the end of the school year.

## Coming Events

**FEBRUARY 15, Tuesday, 7 p.m.** – Preserve Our Parks meets every third Tuesday of the month, at the Senior Plaza at 2620 Holbrook. For more information, call Dick Kaleski at (313) 874-2651.

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# Review: Opinion Page

## Time is running out for unions to save their jobs

The City of Port Huron is proposing to eliminate its Police Department and replace it with county sheriffs.

The City of Camden, New Jersey is going to lay off over 300 police officers and firefighters, about half of its total force.

Both cities are facing crushing financial problems.

Hamtramck is also facing a budget deficit, and is seeking contract concessions from the city's employee unions - which includes police and fire.

So far, only the firefighters have conceded to a minor wage freeze, which will expire soon.

If the city does not get concessions, it will likely face payless paydays and force the state to appoint an emer-

gency financial manager.

The clock is ticking.

If police officers and firefighters still refuse to change over to a less expensive health insurance plan and other concessions, who knows what will happen to those departments.

Newly elected Gov. Rick Snyder has already called for public employees to take cuts in wages and benefits.

It's not that we are in favor of these cuts, but the unfortunate truth is public safety costs are strangling the city. Hamtramck no longer receives as much state revenue sharing and tax collections as it did several years ago.

And health insurance costs keep jumping up each year.

Some police officers say

they don't believe the city because the city manager keeps changing the projected date when the city will become broke.

We understand there is a lack of trust here. But the clock keeps ticking. Time is running out. The fate of the police and firefighters jobs, are in their hands.

Again, it's not that we have it in for the cops and firefighters. We feel sorry they are faced with having to accept cuts. In a perfect world, we would pay police officers and firefighters huge salaries because of the inherent danger of their jobs.

But this is far from a perfect world.

And the clock is ticking.



## Letter from the Publisher

By John Ulaj

### The "No Spin" zone: My solution to the city's financial woes

Fear, fear and more fear - this has become the common feeling around town, and some of us are probably familiar with the old thought about the acronym of F.E.A.R. (False Evidence Appearing Real). Let's all face it, bankruptcy is not a word designed to enhance business, nor generate wealth. It's a word that causes uncertainty and, yes, fear in the minds of many.

It's important to remember that it was the city of Detroit who decided to withhold over three million dollars from Hamtramck. It wasn't our Mayor, our City Manager, or the City Council - it was a situation created outside of the city and, furthermore, one that caught everyone here off guard.

Before I present my solution, I would like to bring to light that town hall meetings, like the one held at the Peoples Community Center, never problem-solve, but instead tend to create confusion. They also can end up being a forum for finger pointing and blame. The meeting was rife with discord and, in my opinion, ineffective. I believe the City Council should keep a stiff upper lip and do the right thing: LEAD.

I have a solution that I believe will work. It is a three-part ap-

proach to solving the city's financial fiasco. The solution purposed here should see us through the next three years, which are needed time-wise to win the lawsuit against Detroit.

Point #1: In truth, time is our greatest enemy. Rest assured Detroit is well aware of time too, because, as we say in the real-estate world, "time is of the essence". The longer Detroit can push, the more vulnerable we are because of our limited resources to fight. Detroit also realizes that, if they can get the city and the unions fighting, this will cause division that will further weaken Hamtramck's civic infrastructure.

This should never be allowed to become the case. There is the analogy of a parable which was used by Christ in the book of Mark 3:25, where Jesus said, "And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand." Of course, if there is continued in-

fighting, we will go spiraling downward into the abyss. Now is the time that we must all unify as a city (the unions, the politicians and the residents) against Detroit, and work toward being victorious in court. If we concede to Detroit, rest assured it will lead to the cumulative effect of an escalation in

crime, and then to depreciating home values - not to mention that our history as a city will be compromised.

We can't afford this. This is why we must all reach a fair compromise between our city's own factions, and share this burden. I may seem to be the last person who would suggest raising property taxes, since I myself own multiple properties here in Hamtramck, but keep in mind (as I must, too) that the city should come first. This is why the City Council should increase the mills to their legal limit for the next three years - which would cost an average taxpayer only about a \$65 annual increase during that time - less than the cost of a cup of coffee a week! Then, after three years, it could be rescinded, if the lawsuit has been successful.

Point #2: Accept the state loan for three million dollars, at the nominal interest rate of .05% for 20 years. Plainly stated, we need this money now in order to keep this city from going into receivership.

Point #3, and most importantly: I want to make something very clear here - that I truly believe we have among the best police and

Continued on page 8

## Odds & Ends

**Readers write ...** Frank Wallace responded to our inquiry about the late Stanley The Madhatter, who grew up in Hamtramck and recently died of prostate cancer at the age of 62. Stanley was well known in the Detroit-Ann Arbor rock and roll scene.

His real name is Stanley Zilifro, and we asked if anyone remembered him from his Hamtramck days. Frank had this to share about Stanley:

"I lived on St. Aubin (when there were still houses there) and directly behind me was Stanley Zilifro and his brother Ray, which was the very first house next to Metropolitan Baking Company, before they tore down most of the block to add on to their facilities.

"I have not seen him since

High School, and I was sorry to hear that Stan passed. Stan's house was on the same lot as their cousin's house, Elmer and Dennis Birkel. Yes, two homes on one 30-foot wide lot! Not many like that. One cousin, Elmer, is a retired Hamtramck detective.

"Stanley also has other cousins in Hamtramck: John, Janice and Michael Plevinski. They had one younger brother whose name I can't remember ... maybe Jeffery?"

Thanks for sharing, Frank. And for those who knew Stanley, remember there will be a memorial for him on Jan. 27 at the New Dodge Lounge.

**Remembering ...** The Concerned Women of Hamtramck once again hosted a moving

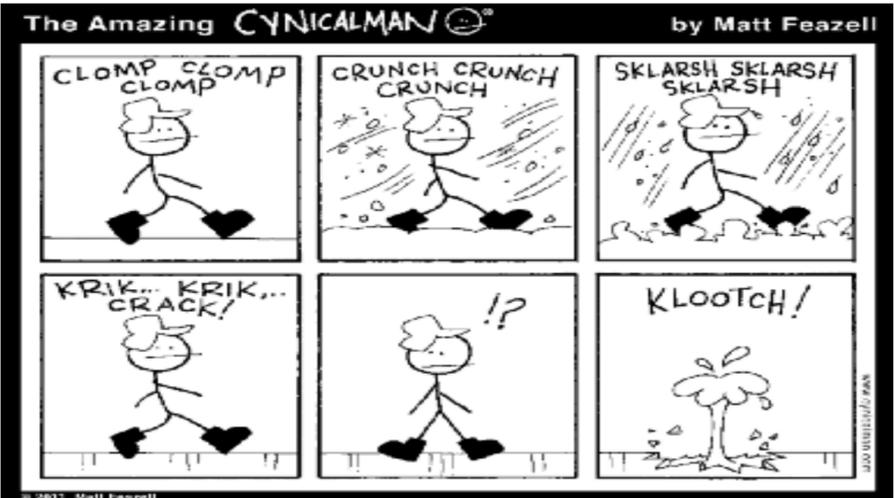
tribute to Martin Luther King, Jr. on MLK Day last Monday. Hamtramck High School students put on several performances.

Below is a photo from the event. And once again, thank you Concerned Women of Hamtramck.

**Raffle ...** Want to possibly see a Redwings game for a mere five bucks? If so, head on over to Celinas Sports Bar, at Jos. Campau and Pulaski, this Friday evening.

The bar is selling \$5 raffle tickets and the lucky winner will get to go to a Red Wings game.

Proceeds from the raffle go to Recycled Treasures. At 8 p.m., City Councilmember Catrina Stackpoole will pick the lucky winner.



## Obituaries

### KROL

John Leo Krol Jr., 88, died January 18, 2011.

Mr. Krol was a Hamtramck resident, and served in the Army during World War II in the Pacific Theatre. He was a decorated veteran.

Mr. Krol is survived by his daughters, Jennie (Douglas Ling) Chambers, Christine (William) O'Brien and Rosemary (David) Mann; six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were made by Krot Funeral Home, and funeral services will be held on January 21 at St. Ladislaus Church.

### SYLVESTER

Thomas Sylvester, 76, died January 15, 2011.

Mr. Sylvester was retired from the Maintenance Department in Joe Louis Arena, and he served in the Army and Navy.

He is survived by his daughters, Toni Sylvester, Kenny Rebecca Sylvester, Susan Silk and Evelyn Elits; sisters, Elaine Ray, Kathleen Zielinski, Irene Koss, Gail Naisierowski, Maryann Weaver and Dolores Skrzypinski; brothers, Kenny, Edward, Leonard, Robert, Dave, Gordy and Eugene; and 13 grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were made by Krot Funeral Home, and visitation will be January 21 at the funeral home with scripture service at 6 p.m. A veteran Honor Guard ritual will be held at 6:30 p.m.

### WOZNIAK

Ann Wozniak, 89, died January 18, 2011.

Mrs. Wozniak was a Hamtramck resident and a retired waitress. She was preceded in death by her husband, Ted.

Mrs. Wozniak is survived by her daughters, Elaine A. (Richard) Gorecki, Patricia (Michael) Dekun and Dianne (Jim) Heugh; grandchildren, Michael, Daniel, Jake, Cameron and Zack; stepdaughter, Paula (Ken) Manasterski.

Funeral arrangements were made by Jurkiewicz & Wilk Funeral Home, with funeral services on January 22 at St. Florian Church. She will be in-state at 10:15 a.m. with a Mass at 11 a.m. Visitation will be January 21, 3-9 p.m. at the funeral home with prayers at 7:30 p.m.

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www.hamtramckreview.com • email news@thehamtramckreview.com  
Editor/Publisher: John Ulaj • Editor: Charles Sercombe • Copy Editor: Ian Perrotta  
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# Street Life

## Look, up in the sky, it's a ...

(Editor-at-Large) **Walter Wasacz** writes a weekly column on life in Hamtramck.

**By Walter Wasacz**

Recently, on a sunny late afternoon, I spotted a rare, fascinating scene midway down the alley between Edwin and Evaline streets, east of Gallagher.

It was large bird of prey of some kind, on the ground, giving something its full attention at its feet. Or talons, I should say. This I could see from the sidewalk. But I wanted to get closer. And since I had my camera, I wanted to capture what this big animal was up to.



I walked slowly toward the bird, snow crunching below me as I stepped. I was afraid I would startle it. But that was

not the case. It stayed put, occasionally glancing up at me, but eager to get back to its business. As I got closer I could tell it was a hawk, impressive in size, most likely an adult, clutching what remained of a pigeon with its talons. It made frequent stabbing motions with its beak, coming back up with bits of flesh and feathers.



Though not a sight for the squeamish, I found this magnificent predator naturally feeding a thrilling sight. Made all the more so by the fact that it was in the heart of this densely-built urban community. It didn't care that I was there. I crept closer, to within about 10 feet, and snapped away. I even got about a minute of video. The bird

never stopped feeding.

I've seen hawks in the city before. I've also seen what look like Peregrine falcons, but I've never actually confirmed that to my satisfaction. Owls must be here as well, but those quietly efficient nocturnal hunters are incredibly hard to spot. I'm convinced that with the population of eagles in the Great Lakes region on



the rise I'll spot one of those in my neighborhood one day. A friend says she's already seen them just outside the city.

Why are they here? Why not? Winged predators will eat mammals like moles, squirrels, mice and shrews. They can also eat raccoons, possum, rabbits, small birds, ducks, bats and fish, snakes, lizards, frogs and toads. And, of course, small unattended pets. Some fly through as they migrate to warmer climates; others remain the year round.

Keep your eyes open for wildlife in flight over our streets and alleys. You might get a glimpse of something remarkable, something you thought you'd never see in Hamtramck.



## City keeping tabs on troubled bar

Continued from front page

But in recent weeks, the bar has returned to a hip-hop format on Sunday nights. City Manager Bill Cooper said the bar owners informed him of the change, and that the city is "monitoring" the situation.

"They have kept us informed," Cooper said of the bar's owners.

Cooper said there has only been one night of trouble. He said the night of Hassan's in-

cident, officers were needed to keep any eye on a very large crowd waiting to get inside the bar.

Cooper said there were no reports of trouble that night.

He warned that if trouble arises, or if there is another shooting, "there's going to be a problem."

"The safety of residents comes first," Cooper said.

## School Board elects new president and faces year of challenges

Continued from page 3

be," he said.

Walters said he does not know why the board changed direction, but offered that it might have something to do with a past encounter he had with the president of the teachers' union, Bo Karpinsky.

Details of the incident have not been made public, but according to sources Walters made a non-physical threat to Karpinsky. The matter turned into a unfair labor practice grievance.

Details of the incident and the result of a grievance hearing are expected to be made public in the coming weeks.

Walters described himself and Karpinsky as "two alpha males," and that they have exchanged fighting words in the past. He said that in the exchange that lead to a grievance hearing, he would take back only one thing he had said.

He declined to say what it was that he said.

Karpinsky said he did not know what Walters was referring to, but also said the grievance is still "ongoing."

Walters said not serving as president will now free up his time and allow him to concentrate on opening a restaurant in Hamtramck. Walters is planning to open a soul food restaurant on the ground floor

of a four-story building on Jos. Campau and Belmont.

He said the restaurant, slated to be called "Flavor," should be open within three months.

In the meantime, the board will have its hands full this year. The district is facing a \$4 million budget deficit, and unless the teachers' union agrees to contract concessions in the coming months, layoffs will be needed.

The district already plans to end leasing the former St. Ladislaus Parish's elementary school at the end of this school year to save money. Students at Dickinson West Elementary School will be transferred into other schools within the district.

The district has been steadily losing students over the past several years to area charter schools and other school districts. That has resulted in the loss of millions of dollars in state revenue aid.

The school board will also have to deal with newly-elected Gov. Rick Snyder's call for school districts to merge services. Just what exactly Snyder means by that is unclear.

Snyder has also talked about wage and benefit cuts for teachers and public employees.



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# Metro news ...

It's said that whatever happens to Detroit, so goes Hamtramck. If you were to rely solely on the local mainstream media, you'd think Detroit is no more than a crime-infested wasteland. Well, we're here to say that isn't so. Our friends over at [modeldmedia.com](http://modeldmedia.com) and [metromode.com](http://metromode.com) have been reporting on fascinat-

ing development projects for the past few years.

With their permission, here is a round-up of their reports from the past week:

The Detroit Riverwalk is much-loved but non-contiguous. Currently, it stretches for about a mile from Joe Louis Arena to Rivard St. and then picks up again

at Joseph Campau for another three-quarters of a mile to Mt. Elliott. Soon, those stretches could be joined with a recent funding announcement from the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund (MNRTF).

Some \$34.4 million has been pledged to the Riverwalk for land acquisition that will connect the two segments to each other, expand Milliken State Park and construct a path along the Uniroyal site that currently di-

vides the walkway from the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy's Gabriel Richard Park at the foot of the MacArthur Bridge to Belle Isle.

A portion of the money is pegged for redevelopment of the Globe Building (\$9 million) and a 0.7-mile extension of the Dequindre Cut north to Mack Ave. (\$375,000 for land acquisition).

The MNRTF Board of Trustees recommended a total of 117 recreation projects and land ac-

quisitions totaling \$102 million be funded in 2011, the largest grant award since the fund was created in 1976, and Detroit's riverfront came away with a not-insignificant slice of the pie. "The Riverwalk has enough accomplishments on the ground to show that it is working and that the project is ready to receive the funding," says Nancy Krupiarz of the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, an organization that advocates for a

statewide system of trails and greenways.

Other Detroit parks saw some love as well: Balduck on the east side and Southwest's Patton each garnered \$500,000 towards improvements.

The Trust Fund recommendations require the approval of the state legislature for the funds to be disbursed; that could happen as early as spring 2011, says Krupiarz.

**Writer: Kelli B. Kavanaugh**

### The "No Spin" zone: My solution to the city's financial woes

Cont. from page 5

fire departments in the state. They are most professional, and have a desire to do well and see the city prosper. One example would be that, for a typical emergency call to either department, the response is normally unimpeachable — often less than two minutes. Regrettably, I have to state the argument here that the police and fire must consider TEMPORARILY giving up their Blue Cross and Blue Shield health plans, to go with a cheaper version such as an HMO. This alone could save the city over a million

dollars per year. Keep in mind that, after emerging victorious from the three-year legal battle with Detroit, the unions should then go back to the bargaining table and renegotiate their benefits.

In conclusion, not to reach such an internal compromise would, I feel, be tantamount to dismantling the city, and "killing the goose."

**What do YOU think? Feel free to email me at [Julaj@thehamtramck-review.com](mailto:Julaj@thehamtramck-review.com) with your thoughts.**

# Yazan's Plaza celebrates grand re-opening

By Ian Perrotta

Normally, when the words "accident" and "gas station" come together to make news, it doesn't have a happy ending. Fortunately, that's not the case for the gas station/convenience store at Holbrook and Conant.

On Saturday (Jan. 15), the Marathon station celebrated its grand re-opening with a low key ceremony to commemorate the occasion. The gas station, located in Yazan's Plaza, has been closed since April of last year, when a sudden power surge fried the building's electrical components.

The problem began when the power company shut off service to the wrong address, accidentally disconnecting electricity to the gas station. Things only got worse when they returned to reconnect the power but made a wrong connection.

That wrong connection apparently caused the electricity to "cross arc," sending a power surge throughout the building and rendering all electrical appliances — gas pumps, coolers, drink dispensers, televisions, signs

and much more — useless. Now, after nine months and over \$420,000 in renovation costs, the station is back in business. Although those costs are being paid for by an insurance company, the business is still seeking to recover lost income during its down time.

None of that really seemed to matter on Saturday, however. The day was all smiles for owner Yazan Musleh. As he greeted friends, family and business associates into his store, Musleh, a Hamtramck resident, proudly showed off the newly renovated interior. Also on hand was a tasty spread of food from the Sultan Al-Kabob, a restaurant that recently opened on the corner opposite of Yazan's Plaza.

Though the gas pumps couldn't be turned on until Monday (Jan. 17) because of a pending final inspection by the state, the added delay didn't seem to bother Musleh at all. He was just happy that the ordeal was over.

"It's already been nine months, what's a few days more?" he said. "I'm just glad to be back in business."



Patrons celebrate the grand re-opening of Yazan's Plaza with a tasty spread of food from the Sultan Al-Kabob.

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## Gardener's Corner ...

By Kathleen Wojcinski

The saddest thing about Christmas being over is seeing naked, empty Christmas trees tossed unloved into the alley trash.

What once gave such beauty and joy to a family for a brief time, now lies in a pile of snow and debris. Please, there is another life for these despondent pines. Drag them into your yard to be reincarnated with dignity to a few more months of happiness for wildlife.

Tuck it upright in a corner

against a fence where it can be used by birds for shelter. Hang popcorn strings and Christmas cookies, unwanted fruitcake chunks, burnt toast, orange and apple slices.

Roll pinecones in peanut butter, then dip in birdseed. String cheerios to garland the branches, and watch the post-holiday feast disappear. Eventually, the needles will dry to be collected as mulch.

In spring, you can discard the branches, or leave a brush pile for nature. So, help a tree feel happy again!



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