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Quick Hits

Did you know that next Thursday (Jan. 10) is "Save the Eagles Day"?

Since this is the first week of a new year, let's kick it off with an observance of our national symbol, the American Bald Eagle.

It just so happens that Hamtramck is also getting a new mural that prominently features an eagle. Check out the work in progress at Jos. Campau and Goodson.

The mural replaces one that stirred up controversy.

Now, who doesn't like an eagle?

Quote of the week ...

"You don't give people just a week's notice."

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.

— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

Second half of 2012 had plenty of highlights

By Ian Perrotta
We continue this week with a look back at the second half of 2012.

JULY

At a Town Hall Meeting, much was discussed but little was accomplished.

Called by City Councilmember Robert Zwolak in response to the city's proposed budget reduction plan, the meeting was a chance to for the public to air their thoughts on the matter in a forum other than a city council meeting. About two dozen residents showed up, though only a few took the opportunity to voice their concerns.

The meeting began with a presentation by Acting City Manager Erik Tungate who outlined the proposed deficit elimination plan. According to Tungate, the plan had four main objectives: Comply with Public Act 140 of 1971, serve as a prerequisite for a state loan, reduce the city budget by \$3.5 million, and prevent the city from being taken over by an emergency financial manager.

Among the ways the city planned to bring in money were several options described by Tungate as "revenue enhancements" and counter-described by the public as "taxes." In his conclusion, Tungate stated that though the task ahead is difficult, the decisions contained within the plan were necessary in order for the city to survive.

"The plan reflects difficult choices but puts the city on a positive long-term path," he said.

Yemen is a country with a rich cultural history, and on Sunday, July 1 it was all on display when the first annual "Yemeni Cultural Day" was held People's Community Services.

The event, hosted by the Yemeni American Committee, sought to educate the community about the history and culture of

the Yemeni people, many of whom live in the city of Hamtramck.

"We think it's very important that these types of events happen on a frequent basis," said an organizer of the event. "It's important that we learn about our culture, see things, and show ourselves off."



The city went through a number of acting city managers, including former Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko, who resigned and took a new job in Novi.

The revolving door of Hamtramck city managers kept spinning when – in a somewhat unexpected turn of events – former Acting City Manager Erik Tungate resigned from his position and was replaced by then-current Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko. Tungate had been hired three months previously after the council abruptly fired City Manager Bill Cooper.

"We are at a crossroads as a city, financially, and there is a lot involved," said Nazarko upon accepting the job. "No one in the right mind would want [this job]."

Hamtramck's newest school boardmember had a familiar face when former Boardmember Alan Shulgong was selected to replace Elizabeth Zwolak after she announced her resignation.

It wasn't an easy choice for Boardmembers Titus Walter,

Yvonne Myrick, Hedy Shulgong and Magdalena Srodek (Boardmember Eric Burkman was absent). Walters and Srodek were concerned about Alan being appointed since he is married to Hedy Shulgong.

"Don't hold it against him that we're married," she said in reference to her husband. "I am a

travelling in. Instantly killed were Shofiu Alom, 20, and 21-year-olds Rezwan Chowdhury and Nazim Khan.

The driver, Burhanur Rahman, 22 was taken to Erie County Medical Center in Buffalo where he was listed in critical condition. Police said it appeared one or both of the cars tried to dodge the other.

Chowdhury worked as a cashier at Boniful Sweets & Cafe for the past year. Khan worked at NYX in Livonia for the past seven months, according to a co-worker. Alom arrived from Bangladesh a week previously to visit his father, Shahjan Miah, who was on life support from an unrelated car accident.

Nazmul Hassan, chairman of the Bangladeshi American Democratic Caucus in Michigan, said

very independent person, believe me."

Nasr Hussain was the first to recommend Shulgong over the other two candidates, retired Hamtramck school teacher Dennis Lukas and Darla Swint.

"He's the most experienced, and he's been on the board before," Hussain said.

A joint funeral was held at the Masjidun-Nur Mosque for three young Hamtramck men who died in a car accident early Monday morning near Niagara Falls. An estimated 2,000-2,500 packed the Caniff Ave. mosque, and the area outside in the parking lot, for prayers.

A little after midnight on a Sunday going into Monday, an 87-year-old man who been driving his SUV eight miles the wrong way on I-190 smashed into the Toyota Camry the Hamtramck men were

There were still a lot of financial details to work out, but City Councilmembers Cathie Gordon and Robert Zwolak said the city would take over finding money to hold the yearly festival. That meant the city's Downtown Development Authority was no longer in charge of the event.

Councilmember Gordon said saving this year's festival was more about "restructuring." She said the festival needed to be shrunk down and have a smaller drinking area set up to cut down on the number of police officers needed.

Hamtramck sort of lost one of its most unique restaurants when after four-and-a-half years of operation the Pronko family closed Maria's Comida in favor of concentrating on the manufacture of their salsas and other items.



Once again, the annual Hamtramck Labor Day Festival was a smashing success. It even earned a small profit this year.

he was heartbroken by the news in a mass e-mail to Bangladeshi-Americans.

"I ask our community people to keep the departed ones and the families who lost their loved ones in their prayers," said Hassan.

Hamtramck's Labor Day Festival was confirmed for 2012 – with strings attached.

"The closing of the restaurant will give us more time for research and development. We currently have five salsas out at the moment and our Asian-inspired barbecue sauce," said business co-owner Marie Pronko. "Within a year, we also hope to be producing our Honey-Lime Salad Dressing, as well as some soups,

Continued on page 2

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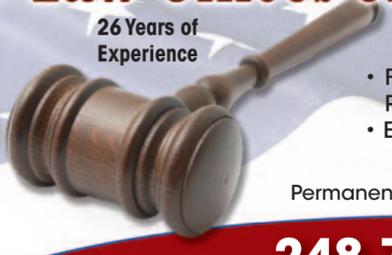
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Second half of 2012 had plenty of highlights

Continued from front page

maybe. My dad (Executive Chef Alan Pronko) has all these recipes in his head. We'll experiment with more flavors for the salsas, too."

To some it was art, and to others it was an insult. But either way, Hamtramck's most controversial mural was seriously trashed.

At some point in late July, someone flung paint on part of a mural that is on a city-owned building at Jos. Campau and Goodson. The mural had been the center of debate for several weeks, with some residents calling for its removal and others saying the city should keep it.

The mural depicted six cartoon characters carrying a coffin, which is apparently a statement on the death of street art. The mural was part of a larger city-wide art project that invited internationally-known street artists to create murals throughout town.

Only the Goodson street mural caused protest among some. Mickey Pokoj lead the charge to remove the mural on the grounds that its image of death is an insult to the city.

Jason Friedmann, the city's Director of Community & Economic Development and the point person for the city in the mural project, said the defacement is a crime against city property.

"If anything, it made the building look worse," he said.

AUGUST

Hamtramck got a little bit more historic – or, at least, a little more recognized for being so. All thanks to the efforts of a few caring local folk, Hamtramck Stadium made its way onto the National Register of Historic Places.

The impetus for the project was an article that appeared in The Review that caught the eye of local resident Scott Collins, a planning commission member. After hearing the city's debate about possibly tearing the structure down, he said that the sta-

dium was still in pretty good shape and that it wouldn't take much to fix it back up.

After a few more articles, Gary Gillette (a Detroit native who once wrote for ESPN Insider) contacted the paper and quickly became a champion of the project. He went to a council meeting armed with facts, maps and the like and explained to the council what made him believe the stadium was one of only five remaining home fields where the Negro Leagues had actually played.

A Grandstands Committee was formed, and after months of work the 21-page federal application form, which was processed through the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior, was finally submitted. After a few weeks of waiting to hear back, word finally came down from the top that the application had passed.

The good news was that some sections of the city were getting



Residents complained that they received little advance notice of a major gas line replacement program that resulted in many sidewalk slabs being torn up and streets getting blocked off.

new gas lines, and because of the work required to install the lines, new sidewalks would also be created. The bad news was that for a few weeks, some residents wouldn't be able to park on their street.

Actually, it was worse than that.

People in the affected areas, which included Evaline and Yemans from Jos. Campau to the freeway, were howling mad.

"They (DTE Energy) just bulldozed their way through the blocks without any consideration to residents," said Hedy Shulgon.

She added that residents were given just one week's notice of the project.

"You don't give people just a week's notice," Shulgon said.

The city's Director of Public Works, Steve Shaya, said although he knew it would be a major inconvenience, "the work [had] to be done."

To lighten the pain, parking regulations near the affected areas were lifted, and some parking meters on the side streets near Jos. Campau were covered up to allow for free parking. Unfortunately, as you will see later in the year the sidewalk issue took months to resolve.

Hamtramck candidates struck

Commissioner Martha Scott from her position, but Scott easily beat out her field of contenders with 42 percent of the vote.

In the wide-open State Rep. race, Hassan managed to win Hamtramck (with 584 votes). Zwolak came in second with 301 votes.

There appeared to be a scandal brewing in city hall – or maybe not, depending on how some payments to contractors could be explained.

At a mid-August city council meeting, a heated discussion was held on an audit review of work invoices submitted by contractors which revealed \$56,835 couldn't be properly documented.

A financial auditing company, Stout Risius Ross, Inc., submitted a report to the council showing that out of \$190,653 paid out to contractors, only \$133,819 could be matched with proper billings and invoices. The biggest unexplained cost, of \$36,602, went to a contractor called Platinum.

The auditing company, SRR, said that the discrepancies were caused by four things: "Authorization for work not properly documented with Work Order per Contract; Insufficient detail on invoice to determine work done and rate charged; Services billed at amounts inconsistent with contract; Services performed without an executed contract."

Just the act of agreeing to accept SRR's report erupted into a debate. Councilmember Cathie Gordon insisted that the council should not officially accept the report because in doing so it may open the city up to a defamation lawsuit.

City Attorney James Allen, whose law firm the Allen Brothers was one of the four contractors included in SRR's review, repeatedly said the report was already a public document that anyone can have access to.

Still, Gordon insisted on not accepting the report until the contractors and department heads have a chance to respond to the findings.

"If we don't treat contractors with respect, no one will want to come here," Gordon said.

Councilmember Robert Zwolak agreed, saying the report implicates employees and management.

"It just doesn't smell right," he said.

Mayor Karen Majewski said she was "amazed" that there was a discussion on whether to accept the report. She said the council should be more concerned about what's in the report instead of "shooting the messenger."

Acting City Manager Nevrus

Nazarko said he was waiting to hear an explanation on the billing. He did question the number of times snow plowing and salting were performed considering the

with a day at the park. But it wasn't just an ordinary walk through it – a full carnival was set up in the outfield of historic Hamtramck Stadium, and for just \$5 kids



The grandstands in Veterans Park received historic designation by making its way into the National Register of Historic Places. The grandstands were part of the stadium where the Detroit Stars of the Negro National League played their home games at.

previous year's mild weather.

You may have noticed more daytime activity coming from your Muslim neighbors after Sunday, August 19. The day marked the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, during which observers fasted from sun-up to sundown.

To commemorate Eid Il-Fitr – which means "festivity of breaking the fast" and is commonly referred to as just "Eid" – the local Muslim community celebrated

could have unlimited rides.

Three down, how many more to go?

Just four weeks into the job, Acting City Manager Nevrus Nazarko submitted his resignation. He said the search for a permanent city manager went on too long and that he needed to concentrate on his job as finance director.

He was the third person in this
Continued on page 3

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This week at the library...

Story Time for Children - Saturday, January 5, at 11 a.m. Join your friends at the library for a reading of a children's story. This week it is Snow Day Celebration.

ESL Class with Christine Templin - Saturday, January 5 at noon. Intermediate ESL class conducted by Christine Templin, free to the public.

Make'nTake Crafts - Tuesday, January 8, at 4 p.m. All children are invited to our arts and crafts workshop.

Math Kangaroo Club - Tuesday, January 8 at 3:30 p.m. Learn math in a fun way, and prepare for the annual international math contest while improving your grades in school.

Financial Activist Club - Tuesday, January 8 at 5 p.m. Hamtramck residents of all ages are invited to join the financial workshops, designed to expand your knowledge of budgeting and investing. Registration is required.

ESL Conversation Class - Tuesday, January 8 at 4 p.m. Ms. Trisa conducts English Conversation classes each Tuesday night. Free of charge to Hamtramck residents.

Computer Classes for Beginners - Wednesday, January 9 at 11 a.m. Learn basic computer skill and how to navigate the Internet or use email. Registration is required, space is limited.

Movie Night - Thursday, January 10 at 4 p.m. All children are invited to a movie and popcorn. This week's feature to be announced.

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

ESL Class with Latisha Edge - Friday, January 11 at 3 p.m. Intermediate ESL class conducted by Latisha Edge, free to the public.

Toddler Time at the Library - Monday, January 14 at 11 a.m. Join us for story time, arts & crafts, games and other fun activities. This week we will celebrate the holiday season. (Children must be accompanied by an adult.)

Family Game Night - Thursday, January 17 at 4 p.m. Everyone is invited to participate in games and contests during family night. This week it is checkers night.

Friends of the Library Meeting - Thursday, January 18 at 6 p.m. FHPL President Kathy Kristy and Treasurer George Gorday invite all members and volunteers to participate in the regular monthly meeting.

Special Thanks for Donations: Mr. Donald D. Crawford, past City Manager of Hamtramck, donated a collection of 32 new books on December 29, 2012 invoiced at over \$650.

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.

Second Front Page

Second half of 2012 had plenty of highlights

Continued from page 2

position to either be outright fired, forced-out or just plain quit in the last five months. Nazarko had been praised for his work until the last council meeting, when he experienced some sharp questioning on a few decisions he has made.

That appeared to have caught him off guard. After the meeting, he said, he decided to go back to his regular job as finance director, a job that he had continued to fulfill while being city manager.

"The job involves a lot to do," he told The Review in regard to the city manager's role.

"I'm still shorthanded on the finances side, and the search is taking a lot longer than I thought. I cannot do both jobs."

The sixth annual Hamtramck Hustle, sponsored by the Dead Last Car Club, may have hit the turning point of being a very small-scale car show to a full-blown party. But it was no ordinary clas-

– it's a way of life. The guys, dressed in jeans and boots with greased back hair, were a throwback to the greasers of the 1950s. The gals were dressed something like Betty Page.

The city got a new Acting City Manager but it continued to run into the same old problem – infighting.

Though newly-appointed Acting City Manager Kyle Tertzag insisted that someone other than the city attorney negotiate employment terms with him, the council's resolution to hire Tertzag included having Allen negotiate the contract.

Tertzag told the city council that he considers himself a "good friend" of City Attorney James Allen and that it might be "unforward" to have Allen work out his contract.

Councilmember Robert Zwolak said he is concerned that there might be a conflict of interest

tival: "Hamtramck is the best city in Detroit."

This year's festival barely happened at all, but the volunteers who agreed to pull it together at the last

Nazarko came up with the plan, and he said that after three years the city will still continue making payments at least for the next 15 years or so. The tax money will lighten the city's general fund



Mayor Karen Majewski gave her State of the City Address in September.

minute did a Herculean job.

The weather behaved too, although cloudy skies from Hurricane Isaac did threaten to open up and rain here and there. Otherwise it was a sunny and gorgeous weekend.

The day after the festival – as if on cue – a much needed downpour finally let loose, and helped wash Jos. Campau from the built up beer slosh and barbecue grease. But although the festival had just finished, there was still more work to be done.

"We'll be starting to plan next year's festival next week," said co-organizer Konrad Maziarz.

Mayor Karen Majewski gave her seventh State of the City Address, and once again it was a long list outlining the city's challenges and successes.

Though Mayor Majewski said she wouldn't tear up during this year's State of the City Address, it only took a few minutes into her speech before she had to dry her eyes.

Once again, Majewski stressed that Hamtramck's greatest strength is its ethnic diversity. However, she went one step further in describing the city's unique characteristic.

"We are all here because we love this crazy place, our own sweet little village," Majewski said. "Let's remember that deeply emotional, even inexplicable attachment to this little piece of earth we share; let's remember that it can unite us as easily as divide us; let's remember that it is, like Hamtramck itself, our common ground."

City officials agreed on a financial plan to fix the city's budget for the next three years, but the budget came with a price for property owners. The city council agreed to a budget deficit elimination plan that included a small property tax increase of 1.89 mills.

That millage will last only three years and will generate about \$325,000 per year. The money will be earmarked to pay a lawsuit filed years ago by police and firefighter pensioners.

Finance Director Nevrus



Rat rods and custom cars ruled Veterans Park during the Hamtramck Hustle.

sic car show – most of the cars were what some might think of as old rust buckets.

For kicks, organizers held a carburetor cover race, which are carburetor covers put on wheels. There was a homemade raised slot that the carbs were placed on, and down they went. Hey, it's a diversion.

For many of the guys and gals, this is more than just a car show

since Tertzag is now Allen's boss. "I'll be watching to see if he makes an issue that's questionable," Zwolak said. "But I'm willing to give him a chance, see what he does."

SEPTEMBER

Perhaps the hippie dude summed it up best about this year's Hamtramck Labor Day Fes-

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Jan. 22 - Holy Mass for people on prayer list, 7 p.m.
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Second half of 2012 had plenty of highlights

Continued from page 3

\$10,000 in repair costs.

If something happens to any of the city's buildings, the city is on the hook for the first \$100,000 of the claim. City officials better hope Mother Nature doesn't hit the city with a fierce storm, or massive flooding.

Nearly a year after the stabbing death of Joseph King, no charges were filed against the four suspects. King was killed in October 2011 after encountering the suspects late at night two blocks from Small's Bar on Conant. The suspects had been in the bar.

Detective John Aiello, who was in charge of the investigation, said the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office declined to press charges. King, 24, reportedly got into a knife fight with the suspects and was found with his throat slit. The suspects also had knife wounds.

According to sources, the suspects said that King instigated the fight and they were forced to defend themselves, although investigators initially thought the death was a hate crime because King was black and the suspects are white.

There was no evidence to support that theory, police later said.

The exodus in city hall continued.

First there was Acting City Manager Erik Tungate who resigned – OK, maybe he was forced out by some on city council – then City Clerk Ed Norris announced he was leaving.

Tungate wound up as Oak Park's new city manager, and Norris also headed to that city to become its new city clerk.

Added to the list of recently-departed employees was Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko, who had been with the city for 14 years.

Nazarko left the city with what city councilmembers agreed was a good budget plan to ride out the next three years, when, hopefully things will take a turn for the better.

But, even after three years, the city will face a budget deficit.

Nazarko touched on that in his resignation letter.

"While I realize that there are some tough times ahead for the city, in financial terms, there is nothing that this hard-working, blue-collar town can't overcome," he said.

"At the end of the day, the Hamtramck that I know will emerge stronger, leaner and ready to write yet another chapter in its rich history."

Hamtramck's newest storefront isn't exactly a chip off the old block. Rather, it's more of an indication of what the city's future has to offer.

Chiipss – a skate shop located at 10229 Jos. Campau – was the latest in a string of businesses to open at the hands of an entrepreneurial young person. And as more Millennials follow the lead of people like Chiipss owner Pat Miller, 26, the city can only stand to benefit.

"To be honest, before opening up I had no familiarity with Hamtramck," he says, despite being a lifelong resident of metro Detroit. "It wasn't until I went to Hamtramck from Corktown that I realized where exactly it was located.

And then, after spending some time here, I saw how cool it really was."

The new location is much larger than the last one, a fact Miller illustrated by comparing the old store's size to the half-pipe located inside the new store.

That's right – after you pick up your shoes, T-shirts, decks, trucks, custom screen printed designs and whatever else you need, you can test everything out right in the store. And while you're there you can see the new facade, a simple yet effective mural of a skateboarder done courtesy of local artist Jay Croft.

"We keep it loose," says Miller. Here's something we can all celebrate, even if you kind of already did that during Labor Day weekend. But what the heck, let's crack open a beer anyway.

What's all the fuss about? The Hamtramck Labor Day Festival made a nice little profit of \$4,546.

Considering the festival was put together at basically the last minute – OK, there were several weeks to organize after the DDA bailed out and Shannon Lowell and Konrad Maziarz agreed to organize the festival – that's an amazing accomplishment.

By the numbers, festival expenses amounted to \$81,476 and revenues totaled \$86,022.

On a Friday afternoon and evening in late September, you might have thought there was a crazy street party happening on Jos. Campau.

Oh wait, there was. Hamtramck took part in the worldwide art movement to celebrate parks and creativity by holding a PARK(ing) celebration.

It was basically a highfalutin sounding way to say, hey creative folks, you can occupy a street parking space and do your thing.

In Hamtramck, that resulted in musicians holding jam sessions, a mini art gallery being set up, a reading room and a one-hole mini golf court.

Adjacent to this happening was the introduction of Hamtramck's dog park, held in an empty lot near Belmont.

She wasn't bitten by a radioactive spider nor does the yellow sun allow her to fly, but Hamtramck High School Principal Rebecca Westrate is still a superhero.

After just three years in the school district, Westrate was named General Motors School Superhero for the month of September by the GM Foundation, the United Way for Southeastern Michigan and B.L.A.C. Detroit magazine. She is the award's first recipient.

The honor – bestowed upon educators who have a positive impact on the lives of their students and who exemplify the professionalism and commitment that define a School Superhero – stems from the Network of Excellence program, which was created to increase graduation rates and better prepare students for higher learning and advanced careers.

"High-performing students are supported by adults that provide two things: opportunities to grow through experiences and the accountability to stay on track," said Westrate.

"When the system is set up to ensure both of those measures are in place students can flourish and the school finds success."

OCTOBER

It had been in the works for years, and now it's becoming a reality: Hamtramck will have bike lanes throughout the city.

At least that's the plan according to Community & Economic Development Director Jason Freidmann. After several ups-and-downs for the project, the lanes were finally ready for the construction phase.

Well, almost. First, a consultant must upgrade the previous plan (created in 2010 as part of the city's Master Plan) to comply with new Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) specifications. Once that has been completed the project should be good to go.

If you're wondering why the

process took so long, the answer is money. Originally the city was promised \$50,000 for the project, but cuts in state aid reduced that amount to just \$5,000. Without that money – which was supposed to match another state grant – the venture couldn't move forward.

"There are a lot of benefits – both tangible and intangible – to having bike lanes in the city," says Friedmann. "And I hope Hamtramck will experience them all."

For the past four years, the city relied on one company to plow and salt emergency route streets when it snowed, and to do lot clean-ups.

Since August of 2008, that service had cost over \$1.8 million, according to financial records kept by the city and obtained by The Review through a Freedom of Information Act request.

Shaya has since produced documentation to the council that outlined what work was performed.

However, Acting City Manager Tertzag is recommending the city break the contract with Platinum and two other contractors, and rebid the work out.

The city council will have to agree to that recommendation. Mayor Karen Majewski said she agrees with Tertzag.

A review of the bills submitted by Platinum Landscaping, which is based in West Bloomfield, was eye-opening.

For example, when the company first came on board in 2008 and 2009, the company charged the city \$22,000 to plow and salt key city streets for each snowfall.

That price came down in recent years to about \$12,000 for each snowfall.

Cutting and clearing lots also came with a high price tag. For example, a lot at 3142 Caniff cost \$2,286 to cut and clean in 2008.

Over at 3973 Belmont of the same year, the cost of cutting and clearing that lot was \$3,965.

At that time, Steve Shaya, the city's Director of Public Services, was employed with the company. He became Director of Public Services last February.

The Review asked him to explain the costs for the services, but Shaya declined to comment. He said questions about Platinum should go to Acting City Manager

Continued on page 5

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF HAMTRAMCK

The City of Hamtramck is holding a Public Hearing on Tuesday, January 8, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers on the 2nd Floor of City Hall, 3401 Evaline, Hamtramck, MI 48212, to receive comments from the public on the following proposed resolution:

A RESOLUTION TO RENAME A PORTION OF CANIFF STREET TO REVEREND JOSEPH R. JORDAN STREET

The public is invited to attend and comment on the resolution during the Public Hearing or to make written comments on or before January 8, 2013. Written comments should be made to the attention of the City Clerk, 3401 Evaline, Hamtramck, MI 48212. A complete copy of the resolution is available in the Hamtramck City Clerk's Office.

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Review: Opinion Page

Council's indecision on budget plan shows lack of leadership

It's a new year, but so far, we've seen the same old, same old from our city council.

We're speaking of the council's collective inability to make a decision about a budget deficit elimination plan. At a recent special council meeting, the complaint about the latest plan was that it contained too many "what-ifs."

Well guess what? Any city budget plan is based, to some degree, on projected revenue that may or may not come in.

That's just how things are when it comes to municipal finances.

If the council continues to delay adopting a plan the city will simply run out of money.

What it really comes down to is that no one wants to make hard decisions. Any budget plan is going to contain an increase in taxes or fees. There is no way around that.

But some on council who have expectations to remain in public office see that as political sui-

cide.

In the meantime, no one has given Acting City Manager Kyle Tertzag any meaningful suggestions on what cuts and/or revenue increases he should propose.

Instead, this council keeps rejecting one proposal after another.

That's not leadership. Any councilmember who wants to be re-elected better realize that running on a record of doing nothing and allowing the city to go into bankruptcy won't win an election.

Obituaries

BUCKAY

Joseph R. Buckay, 86, died December 28, 2012.

Mr. Buckay was retired from the City of Hamtramck, and was also employed by Greyhound. Mr. Buckay was a veteran of the U.S. Navy and served during World War II. He was also a member of the V.F.W.

Mr. Buckay was predeceased by his wife, Marge and his brother, Victor. He is survived by his sons, Ronald and Thomas.

Funeral services were January 3, at St. Florian Church with burial at Mt. Olivet Cemetery. Arrangements were made by Jurkiewicz & Wilk Funeral Home.

LOOTENS

Shirley R. Lootens, 89, died January 1, 2013.

Mrs. Lootens was a retired school crossing guard for the Hamtramck School District.

Mrs. Lootens was predeceased by her husband, Marvin.

She is survived by many cousins.

Visitation is Friday, January 4, from 2 – 8 p.m. at Krot Funeral Home. Instate January 5, 9 a.m., at St. Bonaventure Church (Cappuchin Monastery). Burial will be at Oakview Cemetery in Royal Oak.

NESTEROWICH

Bernadine "Bonnie" Nesterowich, 70, died December 29, 2012.

Mrs. Nesterowich was retired from the State of Michigan and was a generous supporter of animal rights groups. She was a member of the Altar Society, M-K Society, and the secretary of SPUNIA at Holy Cross Church.

Mrs. Nesterowich was the beloved sister of Gregory (Theresa); loving aunt of Robert (Milena), Paul (Dawn), and Dawn (Steve) Doerr; cherished niece of Victoria Dow. She is also survived by numerous great nieces,

nephews, and cousins.

Funeral services were Thursday, January 3, at Holy Cross Polish National Catholic Church with interment at Forest Lawn Cemetery. Donations can be made in Bonnie's name to the Michigan Humane Society.

PIERCSINSKI

Julius L. Piercsinski, 79, died January 2, 2013.

Mr. Piercsinski was retired from Ford Motor Company.

Mr. Piercsinski is survived by his wife, Geraldine; son, Kenneth (Barbara); grandsons, Nicholas and Matthew; great grandchildren, Logan, Andrew and Quinn; nieces, Audrey Nowakowski and Charlene Kijek; great nieces, Megan and Amber.

Visitation is Friday, January 4, from 1 – 9 p.m., at the Jurkiewicz & Wilk Funeral Home. Instate Saturday at 10 a.m. until time of the Funeral Mass at 10:30 a.m., at St. Florian Catholic Church. Interment will be at Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

Second half of 2012 had plenty of highlights

Kyle Tertzag.

Tertzag said he could not comment on the matter because he was not here when the contract was OK'd.

He said he does not have experience in his past roles as city councilmember in Allen Park or city administrator of Woodhaven with private contractors doing the work of public works departments.

"I have no way to make comparisons," Tertzag said.

The talk of the town in early October was about the layoff of 12 firefighters – nearly half of the department.

According to media reports, firefighters accused city officials of playing politics because the firefighters' union and city couldn't come to an agreement on contract concessions.

(William Diamond, the president of the firefighters' union, did not return a call to *The Review* for comment.)

City officials were tight-lipped about the layoffs, and Mayor Karen Majewski would only say that the city was ready to "sit down with them anytime."

Acting City Manager Kyle Tertzag said firefighters should not be surprised. He said firefighters were issued layoff notices last June.

But the layoffs aren't just about the city's ongoing financial crisis. The layoff notices were issued to qualify for a federal grant, called "SAFER," that will pay the salaries of firefighters for two years.

The grant is being made available to financially-struggling cities.

Just a week after laying off 12 firefighters, the city called all of them back.

That's because the city was awarded a federal SAFER (Staffing for Adequate Fire & Emergency Response) grant that will pay for the salaries of firefighters for two years.

Firefighters had claimed the grant was worth \$3.1 million, but they failed to realize that was the maximum amount that could be awarded. Acting City Manager Kyle Tertzag said the grant only covers the city's actual cost, which is closer to \$2.25 million.

No matter – the grant will go a long way in reducing the city's projected \$3.5 million budget deficit by next summer. However, Tertzag told *The Review* that there is one catch: The grant is not handed

out in one lump sum. Instead, the city will get reimbursed for each of its payrolls to the firefighters.

Not everyone on city council was on board with the grant. At a special meeting on Monday, three councilmembers, Robert Zwolak, Mohammed Hassan and Abdul Gazali, voted against it.

That forced Mayor Karen Majewski to break the 3-3 tie by voting for the grant.

Hassan said he voted against the grant because "after two years, what are you going to do?"

Zwolak said he opposed accepting the grant because he and his council colleagues had an agreement to not accept the grant unless firefighters agreed to contract concessions.

"That's what we agreed to do," he said.

October's "Operation School Bell" was a ringing success when the Assistance League of Southeastern Michigan (ALSM) came to town to distribute new clothing to students. It was the third time in

child. "It looks just like a store – but everything is free!"

After five years, local resale shop Recycled Treasures was still going strong. Or, rather, it finally was.

Either way, the store celebrated its anniversary with a private party for friends and family. In addition to better-than-usual pricing on items, a smattering of wine and cheese was also laid out for attendees to enjoy.

For any small non-profit, five years in business is a big milestone, and Recycled Treasures is no exception. Most businesses don't make it past the first year, and year five is usually considered the benchmark for whether-or-not a company will be successful.

Catrina Stackpoole, Director of Recycled Treasures, said that the first few years were pretty rough. Several times she had pay for expenses out of her own pocket, and even now she has only been able to pay herself just once –

into Hamtramck Director of Public Works Steve Shaya in city hall. He said in an angry tone: "Why don't you print Jim Allen's and C.P.I.'s invoices?"

Shaya is a former employee of Platinum, and he now supervises the work of Platinum and signs off

voices could jeopardize pending legal matters.

After about only two weeks from when the city council asked the FBI to investigate the invoices of contractors, agents from the federal bureau were in city hall.

Acting City Manager Kyle

Continued from page 4

In an effort to drum up support for the measure, Hamtramck public school teachers, along with UAW members, hit the streets to drum up awareness. Holding signs and chanting slogans, they walked down Caniff and down Jos. Campau.

"If this doesn't pass, things like class size will go through the roof," said Hamtramck High School teacher Toni Coral. "We have to protect our rights."

On Saturday, October 20 Hamtramck turned into one giant art gallery.

About two-dozen artists were featured in the one-day affair, which took place in nearly 20 different locations. In addition to a variety of murals, sculptures, paintings and other visual works of art, a number of musicians serenaded the city from.

Also on the agenda was a guided walk with the artists. Participants on the walk were able to contribute photos and stories to an online show about Hamtramck.

If a few Volts can help jumpstart the economy, then there is good news for Hamtramck. General Motors – which produces the Chevrolet Malibu and Volt at its Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly Plant – announced it would be adding another shift to the plant.

According to Hamtramck Community and Economic Development Director Jason Friedmann, this new shift will add an additional 400-600 jobs to the facility. Currently the plant employs about 1200 people.

But the good news doesn't end there. Friedmann, who met with GM officials several times in the last few months of the year, also said that the company would like to get its employees more involved in the community surrounding the Detroit-Hamtramck plant.

Though nothing yet has been made official, early ideas include the creation of a co-op program

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Hamtramck school kids were treated to free clothing in October.

as many years that the ALSM visited Hamtramck.

Just like in years past, each child received two pairs of pants, two shirts, underwear, socks, hygiene items, a book, a winter coat with hat and gloves and a \$15 shoe voucher – all stuffed into a duffel bag. The only difference this year is that one set of clothing was a new school uniform.

Altogether there were 80 volunteers on hand to manage the store, which serviced about 300 kids from the district's three elementary schools. Each bag contained about \$85 worth of goods. "Wow, this is great!" said one

and that didn't happen until this year.

Still, Stackpoole is happy with where the store is at now. She continues to be able to fulfill her mission of helping to provide high-quality second-hand items at a low cost, and in doing so is also able to give away items like beds and appliances to those truly in need.

"I'd like to keep open as long as possible," says Stackpoole, "and help as many people as we can."

After *The Review* published the invoices submitted by city contractor Platinum Landscaping we ran

on the bills that the company submits to the city.

We thought that was a good idea about publishing Allen's and C.P.I.'s bills, so we submitted a Freedom of Information Act request for the bills of C.P.I. and another contractor, ADR.

ADR provides computer and IT support for the city.

All four of those contractors, including City Attorney Jim Allen, were the subject of a review by a private financial forensics company that former Acting City Manager Erik Tungate hired in an effort to find ways to save money.

We didn't submit a Freedom of Information Act request for Jim Allen's law firm, the Allen Brothers, because we did that last April. Jim Allen denied the request on the grounds that it is protected material.

Allen said at the time the invoices come under attorney-client privilege, and that revealing the in-

voices could jeopardize pending legal matters.

The request for the FBI came a few weeks after a private financial auditing company, SRR, was brought in to review some invoices from four of the city's larger contractors.

In one case, SRR said the city actually had no contract with a company called ADR, which provides internet and IT support services. SRR did not suggest there was any sign of wrongdoing.

The campaign over state ballot proposal 2 was heating up as the Nov. 6 election neared.

The proposal would guarantee the right of collective bargaining by making it part of the state constitution. Supporters and opponents of the proposal bombarded the airwaves with commercials.

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Second half of 2012 had plenty of highlights

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with Hamtramck Public Schools and possible incentives for employees to live in Hamtramck. You might also soon see GM employees mentoring and volunteering in the community.

Essentially, GM seems to recognize the importance of being a good corporate neighbor. Recently the GM foundation awarded \$10,000 to Friends of Historical Hamtramck for their museum, and in the future the company would like to directly invest in the neighborhoods surrounding the plant.

"We have discussed a lot of projects," said Freidmann. "The HamTram Shuttle, the city's plans for bike lanes and trails – even creating a business/high tech incubator. Right now there are a lot of possibilities."

It had been 25 years since Pope John Paul II visited Hamtramck, but on the afternoon of Sunday, October 21 about four dozen members of the church gathered at the cathedral's steps to meet for a Rosary procession down Jos. Campau to Pope Park.

Carrying crosses, flags and banners while singing Catholic hymns, the group recreated a portion of the Pope's route when he came to town on Sept. 18, 1987.

Once at Pope Park, Reverend Miroslaw Frankowski performed an evening Mass to the crowd, which by that time had grown considerably larger.

The event was just one of many that St. Florian Church had planned for the month of October, which was Polish Heritage Month.

NOVEMBER

If you're a resident with a business idea, then you've got a friend at Friendship House.

In October, the local non-profit launched the CONNECT resource center. CONNECT provides a variety of opportunities to help entrepreneurs advance and develop their business idea.

Among its many services, CONNECT offers planning assistance

and support, local mentorship, referrals for other business services and small loans of up to \$1,000. Funding for the loans comes from Comerica Bank.

"We're at the bottom of the ladder," says CONNECT coordinator Sam Young. "But hopefully we can help people climb a few rungs."

Once again, Hamtramck made history.

The downtown district on Jos. Campau – from Lehman (one street south of Holbrook) to Pulaski (four streets north of Caniff) – was officially placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Eighty out of 130 total buildings in the 14-block strip were determined to have enough historic significance to contribute to the district's designation. It is the city's second designation of this type, with the area surrounding St. Florian Church being the other.

"The National Register does not put any kind of burden for restoration on property owners and does not add requirements for historic review," said historian Rebecca Binno Savage. "Hamtramck has many historic buildings that should be designated."

Throw together cold, rainy weather, eight different kinds of soup, Polish folk dancers and a rockin' polka band and what do you get?

It doesn't matter what kind of weather it is, it's a Hamtramck party.

St. Florian's first-ever Soup Festival was smashing success when hundreds of parishioners and party lovers turned out for the all-day event.

Besides hearty soups, the parish dished up Polish favorites. Looks like this festival will be a bookend to St. Florian's spring Strawberry Festival.

Hungry at 3 a.m.? Hamtramck's newest eatery can help fill the void in your stomach.

In November, L. George's Coney Island officially opened its doors to the public at the former Clock Restaurant space. Family-owned

and operated by the father-and-son team of Vaselj (Vasso) and Tony Lucaj, the restaurant offers an assortment of items traditional to a Coney Island menu.

However, the similarities be-

and overall organization," says Tony Lucaj. "Everything is hand-made and home-made. We take a lot of pride in our work here."

Should there be a Recreation Commission in Hamtramck?

which caught some off guard. Recreation Director Craig Daniels questioned the suddenness of the proposal without prior discussion.

"How did we get to the point of disbanding the commission?" he said.

Boardmember Titus Walters agreed. "This is a gross overreach," he said of the resolution.

Boardmember Magdalena Srodek said that the commission essentially disbanded itself by not meeting for several months.

District Superintendent Tom Niczay mentioned the behavior of Dave Olko, who was the commission chairman until his term expired.

Niczay objected to Olko pointing at him and making remarks while the board was talking. He asked that Olko be told to leave if he continued.

When Olko was asked by Board President Yvonne Myrick if he had anything to say, Olko declined, saying that he would only have "negative" things to say.

He then said: "I take my hat out of the ring. I will not deal with these people."

He then left the meeting. Before Nov.3 most people had never heard of Frontier International Academy. It only took 90

minutes to change that.

The school's unranked soccer team stunned No. 8 Grand Rapids Covenant Christian, beating the Chargers 3-2 in the Division 4 final to become state champions. It was only the third year Frontier International has participated in the sport.

With an impressive run like that, it's safe to say the upstart team from Hamtramck will not go unnoticed next year. The squad will remain mostly intact – only four members will be lost to graduation – and according to Frontier International Athletic Director Mohammed Alasanai, the JV team is full of talent.

"We had a great season this year," said Alasanai. "And we expect to be competitive next season, too."

In a sudden announcement, Hamtramck Public Schools Superintendent Tom Niczay submitted his resignation. In a letter to the board, Niczay said it was time for a "lifestyle" change after serving in the district for 35 years.

His contract runs until Dec. 6 of 2013. Niczay said he gave the early heads-up so the board can begin its search for his replacement.

"The process can take several

Continued on page 7



The good folks at PLAV Post 10 treated veterans to a hearty Thanksgiving meal.

tween L. George's and other Coney Islands end there. Immediately upon walking into the refurbished dining area – complete with a new counter and spiffy neon sign – it is apparent that L. George's is a different breed.

"The biggest difference between us and other places is our cleanliness, customer service,

That's a question the Hamtramck Public School Board began pondering after it was realized the commission had met only twice so far this year and the terms of three of its six members expired about a year ago.

The school board met in a special session to consider a resolution to disband the commission,

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The week's crime reports cover Dec. 27 through Jan. 1.

Thursday, Dec. 27:

- At 11 p.m. a man was arrested at a house on Danforth St. for domestic abuse and possession of heroin.
- A female employee at 18th Street Deli on Conant reported she was assaulted by her supervisor.
- A vehicle reported stolen in Hamtramck was recovered by Detroit police.
- Officers confiscated a shopping cart from a market on Holbrook. The cart was allegedly stolen.
- Officers investigating a possible break-in at a house on the 3400 block of Comstock noticed that there was water leaking in the basement. Officers said there was about 6 inches of water. The Department of Public Works was notified.
- A woman reported that a former neighbor had been repeatedly calling and harassing her.
- A woman was arrested at CVS around 9:30 p.m. for disorderly conduct.

Friday, Dec. 28:

- At 10:30 p.m., two teens were arrested during a traffic stop for curfew violation.
- At 4 a.m., officers were sent to a house in the 11000 block of Sobieski where a break-in was in process. When officers arrived, the suspect was gone, but a porch window had been broken.
- Officers assisted state police in the capture of a suspect fleeing the scene of an auto

accident on northbound I-75.

Saturday, Dec. 29:

- A man reported that his sister had died in her dwelling on the 2600 block of Holmes St.
- An Evaline St. resident came to the police station to turn in a purse that was found.
- A Florian St. resident was taken to a hospital to prevent a possible suicide.

Sunday, Dec. 30:

- At about 12:15 a.m., a woman reported that a black male grabbed her purse while she was in front of her residence in the 12000 block of Mitchell St. The woman's father ran after the suspect but when he caught up with the suspect he was assaulted. The suspect was seen getting into a Cadillac that had pulled up. The father continued his pursuit in his car but lost sight of the get-away vehicle in the Mt. Elliot-Huber area of Detroit.
- Officers investigating a house alarm in the 2200 block of Alice noticed a bathroom window broken out and the front door unlocked. The owner of the house was notified. It was not immediately known if anything was stolen.
- A report was taken regarding domestic violence at a residence on Winfield St.
- A Caniff resident was arrested for obstructing police while officers were investigating a car crash at Caniff and Gallagher.
- A domestic violence report was taken from a residence in the 2000 block of Trowbridge St.

A resident in the 11000 block of Fleming reported receiving harassing phone calls.

Monday, Dec. 31:

- A man was arrested for domestic violence that occurred in the 9700 block of Dequindre.
- A resident in the 11000 block of Lumpkin reported the driver's side window of his 2002 Caravan was broken out.
- A Hazel Park resident was arrested for having an illegally concealed handgun while police were investigating a report of a disorderly male at Alice and Lumpkin.

Tuesday, Jan. 1:

- A man was arrested at a residence in the 12000 block of Selfridge St. for pointing a shotgun at a neighbor. Officers also said that when they came to the suspect's residence, he answered the door with a fully-loaded shotgun.
- A resident in the 11000 block of Klinger St. reported the rear window of his 1997 Toyota was shattered at approximately 1:45 a.m.
- A Holbrook resident was arrested for brandishing a chef's knife at a Trowbridge St. location.
- A man was arrested for domestic violence that occurred at a residence in the 12000 block of Dequindre St.
- At about 6:30 a.m., a woman reported that her ex-boyfriend had been stalking her.
- A woman was arrested in the area of Jos. Campau and Lehman for possession of heroin.

Sudoku

5				3	7	2
					3	
7	4		9		1	6
	4	8	9	7		
			1		2	4
1	7					8
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	2		3	6		1
3			4		8	

2	6	8	1	4	5	7	9	3
1	7	4	6	9	3	5	2	8
5	3	9	7	8	2	1	6	4
8	9	6	5	2	4	3	7	1
7	4	2	8	3	1	9	5	6
3	1	5	9	7	6	8	4	2
9	5	1	2	6	8	4	3	7
6	8	3	4	5	7	2	1	9
4	2	7	3	1	9	6	8	5

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Coming events

WEDNESDAY, Jan. 9, 11 a.m. – The Daughters of Isabella Mystical Rose Circle 736 will meet at Queen of Apostles Activity Center. Entrance on Harold St., fenced-in parking.

Hamtramck Drug Free Community Coalition meets every second Thursday of the month (next meeting: Jan. 10), 11 a.m. at The Piast Institute, 11633 Jos. Campau.

Second half of 2012 had plenty of highlights

Continued from page 6

months, or even a year, and of course I will remain on the job until a replacement can be found," he said in his letter. Niczay started out in the district as a teacher and rose to the level

of principal at Holbrook Elementary School and then Dickinson East Elementary School.

He had a loyal following among parents, and among those in the know he was considered one of the best principals the district had.

What would it take to balance the city's budget?

According to Acting City Manager Kyle Tertzag, a 20 percent across-the-board wage and benefit cut for all city employees and retirees is the magic number to wipe away the city's financial woes.

And just what are the chances of employees and pensioners agreeing to that reduction? You probably have a better chance winning the lottery before that happens.

Councilmember Cathie Gordon conceded that at this point there is little that can be done.

"We're in limbo," she said

There are a few fresh faces in Hamtramck's Police Department. Just call them "The God Squad."

Police Chief Max Garbarino filled the newly-created position of Police Chaplain with not one but three members of the local clergy. It was the first time the department has had a chaplain.

According to Garbarino, the three chaplains will play a vital role in helping the department with not only victim services, but counseling officers as well. Garbarino says a lot of departments already have chaplains, and it was just a matter of time before Hamtramck caught up.

"My hope is that the chaplains eventually become experts in helping victims cope and get resources, as well break down bar-

riers between officers and the community," says Garbarino. "I'd like to see them become liaisons between residents and the department."

After six years of a growing budget deficit, it looked like things were looking up for the Hamtramck Public School District.

At least that was the message at a mid-month board meeting when an audit of the 2012 budget was reviewed.

Superintendent Tom Niczay and his administration had been working on a budget deficit elimination plan, and he said he would present a revised plan to the board at the December meeting.

Niczay said that if things go as predicted the district should be able to balance its budget by 2015.

Nothing says "thanks" like a hearty, home-cooked meal.

Keeping that in mind, PLAV Post 10 and the Hamtramck Allied Veterans Council visited the Piquette Square for Veterans to serve residents a Thanksgiving dinner – with a little Hamtramck twist.

Post 10's chef Dave Pomainville whipped up a huge spread of turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy, yams, green beans, cranberry relish, salad and dessert. A giant tray of flaky angel wings and a pan full of Polish sausage and sauerkraut topped it all off. About 130 meals were served in all.

"You can't give enough thanks back to groups like Post 10 and the HAVC," said Veterans Resource Facilitator Chery Allen. "We wouldn't be able to survive without the community support we receive."

Continued on page 8

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Square Deep Dish	\$7.00	\$10.00	\$12.00
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Second half of 2012 had plenty of highlights

Continued from page 7

A Hamtramck landmark business announced it would close its doors for good.

A letter went out from the Kowalski Sausage Co. announcing that it was closing its deli on Jos. Campau, as well as three other delis in the metro area.

The deli had been in business for over 50 years.

"After a long discussion we have concluded that the company should exit the retail store business and focus on our main purpose of producing great, high quality food," said Michael Kowalski, president of the company, in a letter handed out to customers.

During the second round of the 2012 Wayne County Property, local artist collective Power House Productions (PHP) made a power move. The non-profit purchased 18 properties for a total of \$22,851.

It might seem like a lot to work with, but only two of the properties were actually purchased for use by PHP. The rest, which are mostly located in the Detroit neighborhood north of Carpenter known as "NoHam," "Hamtramck Heights" or more recently "The Power House Neighborhood," were bought on the behalf of others with PHP acting as a fiduciary agent.

According to artist Mitch Cope - who along with wife Gina Reichert comprises the team of Design 99, the progenitor of PHP - most of the people who purchased a property are other artists who decided to take the plunge after eyeing-up the area.

"Some have been living here on-and-off for a while, some came through Juxtapoz," says Cope.

"They're from all over."

DECEMBER

Is the Hamtramck Blowout about to blow out of town?

That was the hot and heavy rumor in the last few weeks of November. But according to the Metro Times, the alternative weekly magazine that sponsors the weekend music festival, the Blowout is staying in town.

However, cha-cha-changes are coming.

"We're not leaving Hamtramck, we're just trying to expand it," said Chris Saxon, the Publisher of the Metro Times.

That likely means that other venues outside of Hamtramck - such as in Ferndale - will be part of the Blowout.

He also confirmed another rumor that the Blowout will be moved from March to April when there is warmer weather.

Just like the sidewalks, Hamtramck residents were still a little torn-up after months of gas line repairs.

DTE Energy had been ripping up sidewalks throughout town since last summer, but in the meantime residents had to deal with closed streets and trying to find a place to park their cars - often blocks away from their home.

Residents complained that once the gas line replacement work was completed, the sidewalks were being shoddily replaced with a couple of inches of cement.

No need to worry, said Public Works Department Director Steve Shaya. There was a method to this madness, he said.

Since there were so many sidewalk slabs that needed to be replaced and so little time to do it before cold weather set in, Shaya said he told DTE to pour a temporary cement slab of two inches instead of the standard four inches.

"It's just to get us through the winter," he stressed.

Shaya said the plan is to have a DTE contractor come back in April and remove the temporary slabs and put in a proper sidewalk.

After eight months of detainment, four Detroit men were fi-

nally convicted of the kidnapping and murder of two Hamtramck women last February.

Two Wayne County Circuit Court juries convicted Brandon Cain, Brian Lee and cousins Jeremy and Reginald Brown in the deaths of Abreeya Brown, 18, and Ashley Conaway, 22.

Cain was the main suspect, and investigators said he was behind the plot to kill the women to prevent them from testifying that he had previously shot at them.

The women were taken at gunpoint from their home on Andrus St. on Feb. 28. They were never seen again until their bodies were discovered about a month later in a Detroit park on the city's west-side.

Hamtramck Police Chief Max Garbarino said the investigation was one of the toughest the department has faced in years. As for the verdict, he said "justice has been served."

Mayor Karen Majewski said the verdict also comes as a "relief." She also noted that it didn't take the two juries long to come to their decision.

"It's pretty telling the deliberations were relatively short," she said.

The City of Hamtramck and newly-appointed City Treasurer Mike Wilk used to just be friends with benefits, but at a city council meeting the relationship was made official.

After two-and-a-half years of working on a part-time, uncompensated basis, Mike Wilk was hired for the treasurer position of full-time.

Along with the "new" title there is also a new focus - reconciling overdue account balances. Additionally, the Treasury Department will also look for ways to make things more economically efficient.

"If we can streamline things financially, that will be a priority," says Wilk. "But the real challenge is to get all the money we are owed."

Shortly before leaving his position with the city, former Acting City Manager Nevrus Nazarko made a small change that had a big impact.

Early in the fall, Nazarko restructured the city's Code Enforcement Division by transferring

it from the Department of Public Works to the Community & Economic Development Department.

Additionally, he reinstated the practice of maintaining city lots and alleyways, which had been abandoned the previous year due to budget constraints.

The result has been a much cleaner city. Since then the Code Enforcement crew has completed over 200 work orders, taking care of everything from vacant, city-owned lots to boarding up empty houses - plus a lot of stuff in between.

Moreover, the changes brought about a new attitude in town. Whereas code violators used to get away with repeatedly ignoring orders for compliance, since the changes took place compliance has not fallen below 80 percent.

"Our rate of compliance is higher than any of the other municipalities that I've talked to," says Code Enforcement Supervisor Thomas Russell.

The annual Review Christmas party came and went - but what a memorable event it was!

Thanks to a lot of hard work, The Review office building looked warm and inviting on the evening of Dec. 8. It was further illuminated by the presence of some very special guests, including U.S. Senator Carl Levin and his wife Barbara, and U.S. Congressman Gary Peters. Of course, many of our own local dignitaries, customers and friends joined in the fun as well.

What began a few short years ago as a simple statement of appreciation to our many friends, advertisers and supporters quickly grew into something of a "must-attend event," and we can only hope it will continue to prove to be so.

As Senator Levin so eloquently noted, Hamtramck is once again an up-and-coming city. We hope that our annual tradition of throwing a Christmas party can play some small role in fulfilling the senator's faith-full words.

And last but not least, after another year of publication The Review once again produced a year-in-review edition. It was most recently read by...you. Happy New Year.

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