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Volume 2 No. 46
November 12, 2010
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The Review

Hamtramck

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— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

A salute and a toast to Hamtramck's veterans

By Charles Sercombe

We're not sure why, but Thursday's Veterans Day seemed to attract more people than usual here in Hamtramck.

Maybe it's the increasing – and seemingly never-ending – wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Or, maybe it's the increase wave of nostalgia of America's "good war" – World War II.

No matter, the Hamtramck Allied Veterans Council knows how to honor our vets and

throw an old-fashioned good time Hamtramck party.

Food, drinks, songs, a toast and good cheer. That was the scene and the mood at PLAV Post 10 – the hub of Hamtramck's veterans posts.

This year's Veteran of the Year is Raymond Deloof, who served in the Army during the Korean War. Ray used to live in Hamtramck many years ago and is now a Center Line resident. He has been a tireless volunteer here in town. Ray, we indeed salute you.



Hamtramck's veterans came out in force on Thursday for Veterans Day. Upper left: That's Gary Nosis (left) of the Hamtramck Allied Veterans Council standing with this year's Veteran of the Year, Raymond Deloof, a veteran of the Korean War.



Tough talk about city finances

By Charles Sercombe

The budget ax is slicing and dicing in City Hall.

Well, at least threats of budget cuts and layoffs are flying.

At Tuesday's City Council meeting, the council issued a series of orders to begin deep cuts in the city budget. The decision on what cuts – if any – will be made is expected to happen at the next regular council meeting.

The talk of cuts could have been a signal to city unions that the time for contract concessions is now, not later.

Councilmembers stressed that action needs to be taken to let state officials know they are serious about wiping out a projected \$3.3 million budget deficit and the possibility of payless paydays come Feb. 1.

On top of the council's list of things to do is an order to each department head to come up with a 20 percent budget cut. For many departments already cut to the bone, that means only one

Continued on page 7

Now it's the schools' turn to warn of closings

"Well, all my friends are boppin' the blues. It, must be goin' round

All my friends are boppin' the blues. It, must be goin' round"

— Carl Perkins, "Boppin' the Blues"

By Charles Sercombe

What is going on?

First, the city – out of the blue – suddenly realizes several months ago that it's running out of money.

By next Feb. 1 the city will likely not have enough money to meet employee payroll, and could face a state takeover.

And now ... the public school district is facing the same abyss.

Last January, the district had an under-control \$5 million deficit reduction plan.

Continued on page 2

Quick Hits

Well, Hamtramck tried to be green.

Because of the city's financial troubles, this Saturday will be the last day to recycle here. The city had been hosting a recycle drop-off center in the parking lot on Caniff at McDougall, and will do so for the last time this Saturday (Nov. 13) from 9-3 p.m.

There are several other nearby recycling sites. The closest is an organization called, simply enough, "Recycle Here." It is located at 1331 Holden in Detroit's New Center area. Hours of operation are Wednesdays, 11-6 p.m. and Saturdays, 9-3 p.m.

This week in history

- The year is 1934 and a petition was circulated around town to have a women's division set up the Police Department. We're not sure how successful that was, but it's doubtful the city had money to hire officers considering this was during the worst period of the Great Depression.

- The HHS Cosmos football team had quite a year in 1959. They ended the season undefeated.

- The American auto reign begins in 1914 when the first Dodge rolls out of the Dodge Main Plant.

Source: Hamtramck Historical Commission

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Now it's the schools' turn to warn of closings

Continued from front page

Flash forward to this week and the public school district is looking at a \$6 million deficit.

Actually, it's inaccurate to say the public schools district's financial crisis is all of a sudden. The district has been charting a slow but steady decline in revenue for the last several years, according to an audit report released at a school board meeting on Wednesday afternoon.

Ah, but there is a remedy, and it was laid out for the public and school district teachers and employees on Wednesday. This was not an ordinary board meeting. Instead of meeting in the cramped administrative office next to Keyworth Stadium, the board met earlier than usual – at 4 p.m. – at the Hamtramck High School Community Center. It was set up for over 200 people, but maybe 100 showed up.

"Pathetic," said one district employee to another about the turnout – considering the dire financial news about to be discussed.

The news, indeed, wasn't good.

District Superintendent Tom Niczay said it's necessary to end leasing the former St. Lad's elementary school at

the end of this school year and shift those students into the district's other school buildings. That will save almost \$500,000 a year.

That savings plan came days after the district received an emergency loan from PNC Bank for a little over \$900,000 – which will cover this Friday's payroll.

Niczay tried to show optimism, however guarded. He invited school employee union leaders to meet with him on Dec. 1 and 2 to exchange ideas and come to some contract concessions – a fancy way of saying that they will be asked to take significant pay and benefit cuts.

The alternative, Niczay said, if there are no concessions: "We will go into receivership very, very quickly."

Why the financial crisis?

For just about everyone – except the super, super rich who have been enjoying unprecedented tax cuts under the Bush administration – there's been a meltdown of the American economy, the likes of which has not been seen since the 1930s-era Great Depression. Millions of Americans have lost their jobs and homes.

Local revenue streams for communities – including Ham-

tramck – have shrunk, to the point of pushing communities into insolvency.

That 1930s reference was even mentioned in an open letter from the school board to the community and school employees about the district's financial situation. Here's how the board began their letter:

"Today, the Hamtramck Public Schools finds itself in the same situation as our school district found itself in during the 1930s. ... We are at a crossroads."

Here are some bullet points for perspective:

In 1992, the district had an overflow of students. Total enrollment was 4,088 students, which necessitated the district to lease the former St. Lad's elementary school.

Kosciuszko Middle School – in the 1990s – had such an overflow that 10 portable trailer/classrooms had to be installed.

Today, the district has 2,900 students. For every student who left, the district lost a little over \$7,000.

Do the math. That's a loss of \$8.3 million per year in state aid.

Since last year, 151 students left the district. That represents \$1.1 million in

state aid gone away.

Why?

The rise of charter schools is largely the main reason for the mass exodus of students, and with their departure over \$7,000 per head.

Why do parents pull their kids out of public schools?

For many parents, it comes down to a sense that charter schools provide better security for their kids.

Whatever you believe regarding charter schools, though, they have consistently scored lower test scores than their public school counterparts.

The resources of charter schools are dubious at best. At one, during the school's grand opening for the public a few years ago, the school's superintendent proudly rolled out the schools' "library" – a single cart filled with books.

This is the competition facing Hamtramck's public schools.

And despite this incredibly gloomy news, Superintendent Niczay was still optimistic. At one point he said the district was "falling off a cliff." Later, he rallied the teachers in attendance at Wednesday's meeting, saying: "We will survive," pausing and then adding, "leaner."

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New Weed and Seed Youth Coaches hit the ground running

By Ian Perrotta

They've only been on the job for a few weeks, but the Weed and Seed program's

new Youth Coaches have already begun to make a difference.

Last Saturday (Nov. 6), Antonio Allen and Khris Booth – who both began working for Weed and Seed last month – hosted the first of what will likely be many youth-oriented clean-ups. The duo was at the southend of town to combat graffiti that has plagued the Jos. Campau viaduct.

Though the clean-up group was relatively small, they were still able to have a

big impact. In addition to covering the graffiti that plastered the walls and columns



of the viaduct, they also used a special cleaning solution –

both ironically and appropriately called "Goof Off" – to clean graffiti off of the area's street signs.

"It was a good start to the upcoming year," said Allen. "We want to not only get kids involved, but have them be excited about it. We hope to get a lot accomplished next year."

Curious about who the new youth coaches are? In the following weeks The Review will profile both Antonio Allen and Khris Booth.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

ON THE ADOPTION OF AN OBSOLETE PROPERTY REHABILITATION ACT (OPRA) TAX ABATEMENT PROJECT LOCATED AT 10201 JOSEPH CAMPAU, HAMTRAMCK, WAYNE COUNTY, MICHIGAN PURSUANT TO AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH PUBLIC ACT 146 OF THE PUBLIC ACTS OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN OF 1996, AS AMENDED

Notice is hereby given that City Council will hold a Public Hearing on:

Tuesday, November 23, 2010 at 7:00 p.m.

in the City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 3401 Evaline, Hamtramck, MI 48212

The purpose of the hearing is to adopt Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Act (OPRA) tax abatement for property located at 10201 Joseph Campau, Hamtramck, MI 48212, and to receive any public comment on the proposed OPRA tax abatement.

The public is invited to attend and comment on the proposal during the Public Hearing or to make written comments on or before November 23, 2010. Written comments should be made to the attention of the Community & Economic Development Director, 3401 Evaline, Hamtramck, MI 48212.

A description of the property along with any maps and a description of the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation plan are available for public inspection at the Department of Community and Economic Development, Hamtramck City Hall, 3401 Evaline, Hamtramck, Michigan, 48212.

This week at the library...

ESL Class for Beginners - Saturday, November 13 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, November 6 at noon. All children are invited to children's storytime at the library. This Saturday we will be celebrating the library's 92nd birthday after we read "Library Mouse" by Daniel Kirk.

Computer Classes for Beginners - Tuesday, November 16 at 11:30 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, November 16 at 5:30 p.m. Jide Aje is the instructor for the reading and conversation ESL classes.

Math Club Meeting - Tuesday, November 16 at 4 p.m. Mr. Nuo is the instructor for the math club and math tutoring.

Movie Wednesday - Wednesday, November 17 at 3:30 p.m. Every Wednesday is movie day at the library. Come and enjoy our feature presentation, which includes popcorn and snacks.

Computer Classes for Intermediate Users - Thursday, November 18 at 11:30 a.m. Adults with basic computer skills can enhance their computer literacy each Thursday at the library. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

Fall Teen Club - Thursday, November 18 at 5 p.m. Members of the Teen Club will be making fall decorations for the library. Everyone is invited to join.

Jeopardy at the Library - Thursday November 18 at 4 p.m. Sign up and participate in Jeopardy games held on Thursdays at the library. Compete against friends, win prizes, have fun developing your knowledge skills.

Friends of the Library Meeting - Thursday, November 18 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.

Income Tax Training Classes - Monday, November 29 at 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency will conduct tax training classes on Mondays and Wednesdays, starting Nov. 29.

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

Group mentors young people 'to the finish line'

By Ian Perrotta

There's a new nonprofit in town, and it's ready to help young people succeed in the race of life.

Making It To The Finish Line – an organization with the mission to embrace women (and lately men) of all ages and empower them through training, motivation, support and encouragement to reach their highest potential – recently opened an office in Hamtramck. Located at the old UAW Hall at 2140 Holbrook, the

nine-year-old nonprofit is currently looking for young people to mentor.

The nonprofit is the brainchild of founder and CEO Gladys Pearson, who started it in 2001. The genesis of Making It To The Finish Line was a secret Pearson kept for 32 years. At the age of 13 she gave birth to a baby girl, which she was forced to give up for adoption. Pearson hid her secret from friends and family until the daughter tracked her down and she was made to

confront her past.

Between the time she gave birth to when her daughter found her, Pearson felt an overwhelming sense of shame, which caused her self-esteem to suffer. However, she persevered through the challenge and eventually went on to marry, have two more kids and obtain a bachelor's and two master degrees. But despite her successes, she still felt anxiety over how her friends, family and colleagues would react to her past.

Knowing that she couldn't possibly be the only person to experience her type of situation, Pearson realized she could use it as a way to teach others. It was then that she organized Making It To The Finish Line and began working to help others succeed. Since then, she's helped hundreds of kids through a variety of programs that include seminars on turning hobbies into profit, entrepreneurship, personal and professional development, and many more.

Additionally, through their "Tools for School Drive" Making It To The Finish Line also offers young people the supplies they need to succeed in the class-

room. And rather than helping out with just academics, the organization also works to ensure extra-curricular activities can be attended by providing free prom dresses to students who complete an essay. These aren't moth-balled dresses from the 1980s, either – each dress is purchased brand new.

But just looking the part is only half the battle, which is why Making It To The Finish Line began its "Young and Elegant Cotillion" and "Young and Debonair" programs. These four-month boot camps are structured to help ensure young people are responsible enough to face the challenges of today's society and are open for girls and boys ages 7-18. On Sunday, Nov. 21 at 3 p.m. there will be an informational meeting regarding this program.

"It's important for young people to learn how to be respectful and respectable," says Pearson. "If parents put their kids in these types of programs we can change the way they think."

For more information on Making It To The Finish Line call (313) 877-8327 or visit their website at mittfl.org.



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Coming Events

NOVEMBER 13, Sat. 2 - 4 p.m. – Holy Cross Church will hold its monthly soup kitchen, located in the church hall at Pulaski at Fleming. All are welcome.

NOVEMBER 13, Saturday, 4 p.m. – Daughters of Isabella Mystical Rose Circle 736 will hold a Memorial Mass at St. Florian Church, entrance on Poland St. has an elevator. Lunch to follow Mass.

NOVEMBER 14, Sunday – Transfiguration Parish (5830 Simon K in Detroit) is hosting its "Annual Turkey Dinner." Admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children 11 and under. The meal includes raffles, door prizes, game booths and bake sale. For more information, call the Parish rectory at (313) 892-1310, or Dolores at (586) 939-0631.

NOVEMBER 17, Wednesday, noon – Daughters of Isabella Mystical Rose Circle 736 will hold an "Autumn Card/Bunco Social Lunch," featuring a raffle, share the wealth, door and table prizes. Admission is \$7, at the Q of A Fr. Blaszczyk Center, entrance on Harold St., fenced parking.

SECOND MONDAY of each month, through Dec. 13, 12:30-2:30 p.m. – A Wayne County program, food program for low-income families, at People's Community Services, 8625 Jos. Campau. To qualify you must be a Hamtramck resident and had picture ID and proof of income. Volunteers are needed to unload supplies, etc. To volunteer, show up at 10:30 a.m.

City is finalizing energy savings plan

By Charles Sercombe

Hamtramck is gearing up to save some big bucks in energy costs.

Several months ago, it was announced that Hamtramck, along with several other cities involved in the Cities of Promise program, was awarded \$460,000 to make energy upgrades.

The money was funneled through the state thanks to the Obama stimulus project to boost local economies.

Hamtramck's Public Works Director Martin Ladd said energy improvements will be made to City Hall, the fire station and the library.

"We're going green," Ladd said.

Just what that includes is being reviewed by an engineering firm. Ladd said it will likely be simple things like changing over from fluorescent lights to more energy efficient lights and possibly installing new furnaces.

He said work should begin this winter.



Henry Ford Medical Center - Hamtramck Shows Appreciation to Patients

By Dr. Emmanuel P. Dizon



Dr. Dizon

Current patients of Henry Ford Medical Center – Hamtramck are encouraged to stop by for refreshments and giveaways during the first annual Patient Appreciation Day on Tuesday, November 16.

"This event is our way of saying thank you to the many patients who have shown their loyalty and demonstrated kindness to our staff," said family medicine administrator Marianne Beach-Langois. "We look forward to continuing this relationship and extending the welcoming mat for new patients to join our close-knit patient family."

During Patient Appreciation Day, Henry Ford Medical Center – Hamtramck will serve light refreshments and give away items including kids' backpacks, pens and reusable, earth-friendly bags filled with medical center information. Items will be distributed at the front desk during center hours of operation from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. while supplies last.

Patients who seek services ranging from family medicine, physical therapy, OB/GYN, podiatry, neurological and foot & ankle rehabilitation, wound care

and X-rays have relied on exceptional patient care and mutual respect from Henry Ford Medical Center – Hamtramck for the past 10 years.

The Henry Ford Visiting Physicians service is also based at Henry Ford Medical Center – Hamtramck. Henry Ford Visiting Physicians visit patients in their home or assisted living facility who may not otherwise be able to see their primary care physician due to mobility issues. This service allows patient to be seen by their primary care office without having to make arrangements for transportation.

For more information about this event, or to make an appointment with a physician at Henry Ford Medical Center – Hamtramck, please call 313-972-9007.

Call the doctor!
 Snap this icon to schedule an appointment with Dr. Cohen, Ford or Hackel. Get the free mobile app at <http://gettag.mobi>

For more information or to contact
 Henry Ford Visiting Physicians – 313-972-9001.

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TOAST of the TOWN

When it comes to good food and great times, Hamtramck has plenty to offer. In this column, we'll talk about what's happening at our bars, restaurants and other events that can be found throughout the city.

By Charles Sercombe

You know Jean's Bar, the bar that boasts: "Characters Always Welcome!"

Well, one of the biggest characters you can find here is the owner, Virginia Szymanski. And we mean that in all

the right ways. Virg is actually pretty awesome. Plus, she has a salty sense of humor.

It took a lot of cajoling to get Virg, as her friends and customers call her, to talk about her bar.

"I don't know how you're going to write this," she said to Toast of the Town. "I'm a crazy lady."

That quote may sound weird but you have to imagine her saying that in a self-deprecating, jocular tone. In other words, Virg is a non-stop jokester and often, she spins the joke at her own expense. We here at Toast certainly have a soft spot for anyone who is quick to make her – or him – self the butt of the joke instead of being mean and catty about others.

And anyway, if Virg is crazy, we could use more of her crazy in these screwed up times (we'll drink to that).

Her bar, located on Jos. Campau and Commor, has been there under one name or another for decades. Virg's mother, Betty, bought the place in 1971.

So, if Virg's mother's name is Betty, why did she call it Jean's? Old Betty had a trick up her sleeve. You see her sister's name was Jean, and Jean happened to work down the street at the now long-gone Senate Bar. Jean was actually a silent partner with her sister.

The thinking was, since Jean was popular with the Senate crowd, those patrons might be tempted to check out Jean's Bar. We're not sure how that plan worked out but Jean's is still here and the Senate closed down sometime in the early 1990s.

OK, time for an old story. Before Virg and her mother owned the bar. Hamtramck was once a major star attraction in the 1940s and 50s when the city had a population of 50,000-plus and the Dodge Main plant was running full speed.

Big stars used to perform here. We mean big. Abbott and Costello. Peggy Lee. Danny Thomas. The list goes on.

Back then, there was a major bar here in town called The Bowery. That's where the stars performed. The Bowery was just down the street, just north of Jean's Bar (which was called The Commor Bar at that time).



That's Virginia Szymanski at left in a Halloween costume who knows how many years ago. What's the connection with Peggy Lee (right) and Rusty Warren (on page 10)? Read on.

The owner of The Commor told Virg's mother that Danny Thomas and Peggy Lee would often sneak out of the back of the Bowery and come into his bar for a private drink – just to get away for a few minutes between their sets.

Virg is telling us this tale on Wednesday morning as she sips her coffee. She points over to corner of the bar, at the back.

"That's where Peggy Lee would always sit," she said.

A chill went down our spine. Imagine, not so long ago – ahem, relatively speaking – there she was. Sipping a



drink. Taking a drag off a cigarette. All by herself. Lonely. The oh-so-cool ice queen in black and pearls.

You can hear it. Her famous song:

*"Is that all there is, is that all there is
If that's all there is my friends, then let's keep danc-*

Continued on page 10

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RAFFLES & DRINK SPECIALS

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Block Club Corner ...

First Thursdays, 4 Cs Neighborhood Watch (if you live or have a business between Carpenter, Conant, Caniff, and Campau), 7 p.m. Hamtramck Recreation Center, 1135 Charest, lower level

Second Mondays, Eastside Block Club (if you live or have a business East of Conant) 7 p.m. Our Lady Queen of Apostles Church, Activity Center, entrance on Harold Street

Second Wednesdays, 3 C7 Neighborhood Watch (if you live or have a business between Carpenter, Campau, Caniff, and I-75) People's community Services Senior Center on Caniff, across from the Public Library

Third Wednesdays, Midtown Neighborhood Watch (if you live or have a business between Caniff, Campau, Holbrook and I-75) 6:30 p.m. in the Convent of St. Florian's Church, on Florian Street

Fourth Thursdays, Southend Neighborhood Watch 6:30 p.m. in the People's Community Center on Joseph Campau and Danforth, for all residents and businesses south of Holbrook.

The Central Neighborhood Watch (Caniff, Conant, Holbrook, Campau) will meet the first Wednesday of each month, starting Oct. 6, at Skipper's Bar, located at 9735 Conant at Evaline. Also there will be a neighborhood cleanup project on Sunday, Oct. 10. For more information, go online to hamtramckCBC@gmail.com. Facebook: Hamtramck Central Block Club group page.

The Hamtramck Housing Commission Neighborhood Watch is now called the W75 and it meets the second Wednesday of every month at 12025 Dequindre (housing commission activities center) at 1:30 pm.

Neighborhood Watch meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend. If additional information is needed contact the Weed and Seed office at (313) 281-8150.

For more information about Hamtramck's network of block clubs, go online to: www.hamtramckblockclubs.com

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Review: Opinion Page

City Council and voters can help ease city's financial woes

Last week we urged City of Hamtramck employees to agree to contract concessions to ensure the city's survival.

Hamtramck is facing a \$3 million budget deficit and by January the city could be without cash to pay bills or meet employee payroll.

There are two other groups who could ease Hamtramck's financial crisis: the City Council and voters.

The council can still increase the city's maximum tax millage rate by 2.3 mills. That increase will bring in an additional \$500,000 a year. A majority of councilmembers have blocked increasing the city's maximum tax rate despite the financial burden on the city.

Yes, homeowners are under financial strain too. But the alternative to not doing anything is for the city to come under the control of a state-appointed

emergency financial manager. If a financial manager does step in, the very first thing that he or she will do is raise our tax rate to the legal limit it's allowed.

It appears some councilmembers don't have the courage to raise the tax rate for fear of voter backlash.

To that, we can only say: get some courage and do the right thing.

The council can also further help matters out by at least allowing voters to decide whether to increase our property tax rate past the limit allowed by law unless it's voter-approved.

The city needs at least an additional 5 mills added to the tax rolls. That would bring in about \$1 million a year. What the city really needs is an extra \$3 million a year to prevent it from going bankrupt.

Asking for an additional \$3 million would require an extra 14 mills. We doubt

voters would approve that – although it would mean only an extra \$420 a year.

At the very least the council should allow voters to decide the fate of the city. The extra money could be earmarked solely for budget deficit reduction.

Hamtramck is coming to a crossroads. If the city goes bankrupt it's a good bet a state-appointed financial manager would contract out the city's most expensive budget item: public safety.

It's a very real possibility that we will be forced to merge our fire and police services. We think that would have dire consequences for the city.

Voters should be able to decide what will happen to the city. City officials need to get this proposal on the next available election date and stand out of the way. Let the voters decide.

Odds & Ends

Health check ... Our friends at the Henry Ford Health clinic here in Hamtramck are opening their doors to the public for a "Patient Appreciation Day" next Tuesday (Nov. 16) from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Patients – and those curious about what Henry Ford has to offer – can stop by and receive a number of giveaways and light refreshments.

The clinic is located next to the senior apartment building on Holbrook.

Best and brightest ... We recently stopped by Dickinson East Elementary School for the induction of a fresh crop of students into the school's Honor Society. It was a pretty impressive night, to say the least and the kids were beaming with pride.

Here are the names of the students who were inducted: Raisa Ahmen, Ihsan Akhtar, Jaynab Akhtar, Zubaeer Akhtar, Hyatt Almarsoumi, Ema Barua, Mark Dedvukaj, Syed Haque, Arman Hossein, Logan Hughes, Autumn Hyde,

Selma Kaltak, Nabeel Khan, Nusrat Iascar, Ema Melkic, Nazifa Miah, Mahdi Mohsin, Kenlee Morris, Shaida Nishat, Garry Sangma, Naila Saric and Alyssa Spillman. Congratulations kids!



Letters • Letters

Don't let hatred and fear divide Americans

On behalf of the Islamic Shura Council of Michigan (ISCOM), we would like to thank the Hamtramck Review for renouncing the offensive rhetoric and planned Quran burning of Pastor Terry in Florida in the article on page 5 of September 10, 2010 issue, "Burning the Koran violates the 'Golden Rule'".

The Michigan Muslim community is very grateful for those who stand against hatred and bigotry in defense of common morality and decency. The importance of such condemnations by reputable public media outlets such as the Hamtramck Review is essential in the perpetual fight for justice and equality.

As human beings united as American citizens we can't afford to let those who choose

to perpetuate fear and hate sow discord and tension between American citizens. In staying true to principles of fair treatment and justice we must seek to address our misunderstandings and grievances responsibly and constructively.

The Michigan Muslim community is open and willing to take steps to address misunderstandings of our faith with the broader community and we hope to work in unison under the universal principles of respect and fairness with those of all faith traditions.

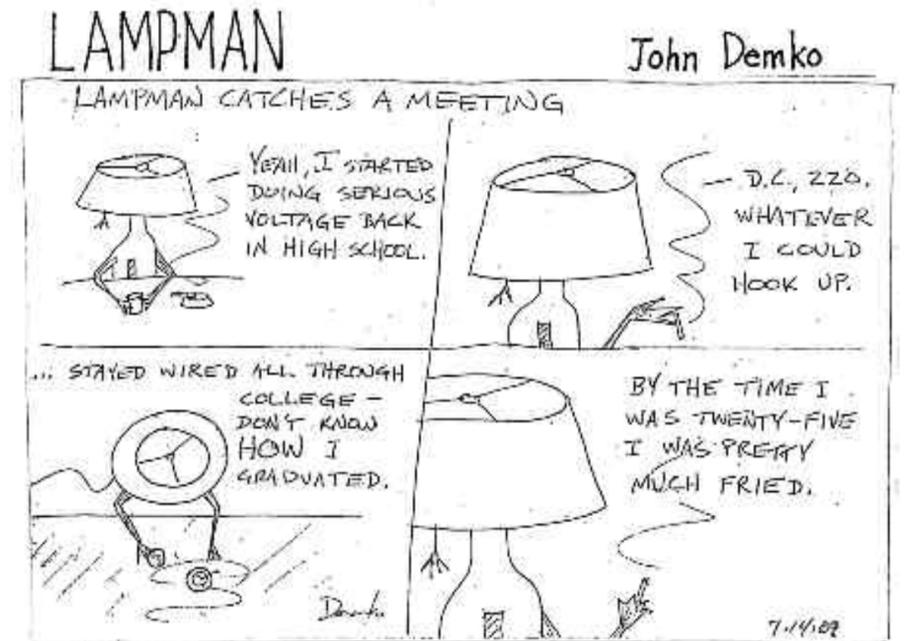
As the holiday season approaches ISCOM hopes the universal golden rule "do unto others as you would have done unto you" permeates throughout our society.

The Muslim holiday of Eid Al Adha is approaching and this

holiday is in honor of Prophet Abraham the patriarch of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. During this time Muslims celebrate and give away large portions of meat to the needy and ISCOM distributes over thirty thousand pounds of free meat to those in need in Detroit, Hamtramck, Lansing and Flint.

So during this upcoming holiday season let us unite under our common humanity, work towards good in our society, and engage in honest and respectful discourse. For more information on ISCOM and its work please feel free to contact the Islamic Shura Council of Michigan.

Raheem Hanifa
Islamic Shura Council of Michigan (ISCOM)
Executive Assistant



The Hamtramck Review Published every Friday
3020 Caniff, Hamtramck, MI 48212 Phone: 313-874-2100 Fax: 313-874-2101
www.hamtramckreview.com • email news@thehamtramckreview.com
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Street Life

Once you've experienced Hamtramck, you're here forever

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

By Walter Wasacz

All roads lead to and from Hamtramck. You can get here from anywhere. Once this place becomes part of your experience it seems to linger, in one form or other, forever.

This week, my friend Carleton Gholz came to town for a short visit. We didn't have a huge amount of time to spend together, maybe three hours, but we packed in enough stuff to make it seem much longer.

Gholz is a former project partner of mine. He and I started a DJ collective called Paris '68 in 2002. Our first event was at the then newly-opened Gandhi restaurant on Conant.

Music and an Indian buffet are a perfect combination for a party. I'd been to something similar a few years before in New York, when a London-based group of South Asian electronic musicians hosted a night like this called Mutiny. Curry and tandoori chicken in one room; dancing to Sikh DJs accompanied by tabla players in another. Wonderful. Carleton and I also shared a Metro Times column called the Subterraneans beginning in 2004. He began graduate school the following year at the University of Pittsburgh, while I continued the column on my own.

When he came over this week, we did some of our usual things – talked about

books, played some new records, then walked over to the corner of Gallagher and Caniff for Middle Eastern food and Slovenian water. He also popped into Barberella Hair Salon for a haircut. Carleton S. Gholz looks great, in case old friends of his are wondering, as the photo here will attest.



We talked about how the corner had been transformed since last time he really dug into it. He'd never been to the impressive Al-Haramain International Foods market, which replaced the grimy Get 'n' Go party store. We had dinner at Royal Kabob, another new commercial piece assembled during the past five years. Across the street, Public Pool art space was also established while he was gone (as was the prior tenant, Design 99), and Bozek's Meats had survived a fire and bounced back to become an even stronger business presence.

The corner rocked. You could feel it as we sat in a booth in the restaurant, which looked to be close to capacity, as people passed by on Caniff and Gallagher – on

foot, on bicycles, in cars.

We ran into David Puls, who owns the building which contains Public Pool – and the Detroit Zymology Guild (a slow food preservation cooperative) in the back. Puls was instrumental in getting the city's charter updated a few years back and has been a steadfast advocate of improving quality of life in the city since he hit town in the 1990s. If he's behind a project, trust that it's good works being done.

We also ran into Steve Panton, who has welcomed visual and sound artists to his loft on Edwin St. I introduced the two guys to each other and they appeared to instantly hit it off. They talked about Carleton's Ph.D work on Detroit post-Mo-town music and culture and his proposed thesis and book as well other published works that touched on the region's healthy obsession with sound and fury.

While he buttons up his doctoral studies, Gholz is sending out resumes for teaching jobs. Some are close to home (Wayne State University), others are not (University of Wisconsin).

"I'd really like to stay here, if I can" he told Panton, as we left Royal Kabob. "I can see myself in this neighborhood," Carleton said to me as we walked back to my house.

We can see it too, buddy. Get that job and make yourself a home here. You're already more than halfway there.



City Hall Insider ...

What is our City Council up to these days? We have the scoop and the highlights – as well as the lowlights – of the latest council meeting.

By Charles Sercombe

On Tuesday, Nov. 9, the City Council held its regular council meeting. Councilmember Shahab Ahmed was absent. The meeting lasted for two hours at which point the council went into a closed session to discuss pending litigation. After about 40 minutes in closed session, the council returned to pass a resolution authorizing the city manager to send a letter to the state Treasury Department.

Special note: We received calls on Wednesday, the morning after Tuesday's meeting, wondering why the cable TV version of the meeting was a recording of a previous meeting in which Councilmember Ahmed was present. Ah, it's a conspiracy, said some, to protect Ahmed.

Not so, said City Clerk Ed Norris. He said there was an electrical outage that caused the machine that airs the meeting to revert to playing a previous meeting. "It's my fault," Norris said.

So, upshot is, sadly for those insisting on a conspiracy in City Hall, there's nothing there. However, that won't stop the whispers.

You could say that the first two-thirds of the meeting was the calm before the storm – and what a storm it was. But more on that later.

Councilmember Catrina Stackpoole started the meeting with a rundown of past grants and programs awarded to Hamtramck "despite the really bad times" the state's economy is in. A good portion of those grants, it should be noted, were from stimulus money from the federal government – and that tidbit is for you "Tea Partiers" out there.

A public hearing was held on whether to adopt a local ordinance that would treat second-hand stores the same as pawn shops, meaning they would be required to keep track of who sold items.

Robert Zwolak was the only one to speak on the issue, saying it will "complicate" local stores with paperwork.

He also said the ordinance needs to be expanded to cover public health issues, namely bedbugs. Councilmember Stackpoole later said that her resale shop, Recycled Treasurers, has not had one instance of bedbugs in the store's items.

(Editor's note: Zwolak has raised this issue during past discussions of the proposed

ordinance, much to the apparent annoyance of Stackpoole. Bob, guy, what's with the veiled smears on Recycled Treasurers? As far as we know, there have been no reported cases of bedbug infestation in town.)

A lengthy discussion ensued on the ordinance, which was proposed by Councilmember Cathie Gordon. Councilmember Tom Jankowski questioned the need for adopting a local ordinance since there is already a state law covering the issue.

He said adopting a local law might prompt local second-hand shops to move out of the city. Councilmember Stackpoole said that although she supports passing a local law in order to keep fines and penalties local (as opposed to handing them over to the state), she thinks the law is "redundant."

Gordon said that if Hamtramck police officers are going to enforce the state law, "we ought to reap the benefits of that."

Councilmember Mohamed Hassan said despite talking about this issue for quite awhile, police officers are not enforcing the state law.

Councilmember Jankowski said the benefits of having a local version of the law isn't so much about collecting additional revenue from fines, it's about "quality of life." And by that, he said, if there is a store known to traffic stolen goods, the police department needs to crack down on it.

Gordon said she still does not understand opposition to having a local law and be able to "reap the benefits."

In the vote to adopt a local law, only Gordon and Stackpoole voted in favor of it. That ended weeks and hours of discussion on this issue.

Looking to save money any which way they can, Councilmember Gordon suggested looking into whether the city can be reimbursed for its legal costs to work out a deal with the former Shadow Bar. The bar had been the scene of numerous robberies, assaults and finally a murder.

The city threatened to pressure the state to close down the bar, but the bar owners agreed to change its format from an urban contemporary to being a gay bar. (Editor's note: Put on your decoder ring everyone. What they agreed to was they will no longer cater strictly to African-Americans and instead will now be gay orientated.)

In a discussion about city code inspectors, Councilmember Hassan asked for copies of each inspector's state license. He had questioned whether all of the inspectors were properly certified.

In an effort to avoid payless paydays for the next two months, the council agreed to transfer \$2 million from its budget stabilization fund to the general fund.

Councilmember Gordon asked the city manager how much time this would buy the city before it has no cash on hand to pay bills or salaries.

City Manager Bill Cooper answered tersely: "January 31, 2011."

The issue of medical marijuana was rolled up and passed around again. Instead of agreeing to just stop talking about whether to pass an ordinance regulating where commercially-certified growers can grow the plant, the council agreed to put the whole issue into a stoned-like silence, more commonly known as a "moratorium."

City Manager Cooper said the city needs to wait for state legislators to tinker and "clarify" the law before the city puts its regulations together. (Or as Bob Dylan would sing: "Well, they'll stone you and say that it's the end. Then they'll stone you and then they'll come back again.")

This next issue kind of crept up and went away under a fog of smoke (Editor's note: enough already). Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko suggested – and the council agreed to – that city funds being held in Peoples State Bank be transferred to either Huntington Bank or PNC Bank.

Nazarko said only one bank will be chosen as soon as details are available about their rates.

He did not say why the transfer is needed. However, outside of the Council Chambers he conceded there is concern about the financial health of Peoples State Bank and how much longer it will remain open. He said the city is transferring out \$11 million.

(Editor's note: According to financial news wire services, Peoples Bank is considered "critically underfunded.")

In yet another apparent case of councilmembers looking at all possible revenue streams and how money is spent, Councilmember

Continued on page 7



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City Hall Insider ...

Continued from page 6

Jankowski asked for a list of all expenses and income for the Police Department's drug forfeiture fund, the 911 fund and money brought in under the traffic patrol program.

He asked for all that information to be compiled within two weeks.

City Manager Cooper noted that the traffic patrol program has collected \$900,000 from tickets out of \$1.4 million worth of fines levied against motorists.

This is where the council began to hack away at the budget and requested a ton of financial information.

Councilmember Stackpoole asked for a cost-analysis of merging the fire and police departments into one department and the savings the city would receive to contract out those services.

City Manager said it could be six to eight months before he has those figures, which

prompted Councilmember Jankowski to ask what the city will do come Feb. 1 when there is no cash on hand to pay salaries.

Cooper said he's only looked at the "concept" of contracting out public safety services and that getting specific cost savings projections would require meeting with other cities.

Stackpoole stressed that talks need to begin on merging services.

Councilmember Gordon jumped into the discussion by proposing the elimination of all non-emergency overtime. The council agreed. Later, however, Hillary Cherry, a resident, asked if that includes the Police Department's traffic patrol program.

A silence fell over the council, but City Manager Cooper acknowledged that part of the patrol program is conducted on non-emergency overtime.

After the council took a recess before going into a closed session, Gordon told The Review it was not her intention to include the traffic patrol program.

"Kind of a gotcha there," a Review reporter said to Gordon as she walked outside of City Hall for a cigarette break. Gordon's response: "That's the story of my life."

Back to the budget knife. Councilmember Jankowski received support to eliminate city vehicles from being used for personal use.

Councilmember Hassan motioned to eliminate all non-essential expenditures. Councilmember Stackpoole elaborated on that, saying no trees should be cut unless they pose an immediate danger of falling down.

Cooper pointed out that some services, such as tree cutting, are paid by grants.

Now, here comes that afore-

mentioned storm. Councilmember Gordon asked for each department to draw up a 20 percent budget cut.

Jankowski said budget cuts will likely have to include laying off staffers.

Stackpoole asked Cooper to draw up what the savings would be for the city to force a new health insurance plan with employees.

Jankowski said he recently learned that although department heads were forced to take a 5 percent pay cut, they have been allowed to take a paid day off to compensate for that loss in income. He called for ending that practice and requiring department heads to work a 40-hour week.

The council agreed. And now cue up Mr. Bob Dylan:

*"Well, they'll stone ya when you're trying to be so good
They'll stone ya just a-like they said they would
They'll stone ya when you're*

tryin' to go home

Then they'll stone ya when you're there all alone

But I would not feel so all

alone

Everybody must get stoned"

From "Rainy Day Women #12 & 35"

Tough talk about city finances

Continued from front page

thing: lay off employees and essentially ground down city services to almost nothing.

The police and fire departments have the least room to cut. Laying off police officers or firefighters would likely require the remaining public safety officers to put in overtime.

City Manager Bill Cooper said that unless Detroit hands over the \$3 million it is withholding from Hamtramck in a dispute over how much in tax revenues is owed from GM's Poletown plant, the city will be broke by the end of this January.

And even if that payment comes forward, which at this point looks doubtful, the city could operate only until next June or so.

Cooper has been trying to convince the city's unions to agree to a less expensive health insurance program. City employees now enjoy a top-notch Blue Cross plan. Cooper said switching to a less expensive plan could save the city anywhere from \$1 million to \$2 million a year.

So far, the unions have refused to budge on that concession. At the same time that the City Council is forcing the issue of concessions, a majority of the council refuses to increase the city's property tax rate to its legal limit, another 2.3 mills. If that increase were made, the city would generate an additional \$500,000 a year, Cooper said.

Still, that's not enough to ward off insolvency. Cooper said he needs to find an additional \$3 million a year - either in savings or new income streams - to keep the city afloat.

Unless something comes along, the city is heading toward another state takeover. Cooper received the go-ahead Tuesday night to send a letter to the state Treasury Department outlining the city's financial woes.

Michigan city has forewarned state officials that it is heading toward financial disaster, Cooper said.

In his letter to the state, Cooper is asking for the state's assistance to move the city into bankruptcy. He said this is the only legal way for the city to "set aside" union contracts and begin layoffs in the police and fire departments without being restrained by minimum staffing agreements.

"While this step may seem radical in its approach," Cooper said, "it is the only approach that will quickly and effectively allow us to address our shortfall."

In the meantime, the council ordered that anyone using a city vehicle to stop using it for personal use - which apparently also includes driving them to and from work.

The council also put a stop to all non-emergency overtime and all non-essential services.

Councilmember Catrina Stackpoole ratcheted things up another notch by asking Cooper to put together a cost-saving analysis of merging the police and fire departments into one department, a move a number of other communities have undertaken. That would mean police officers would also act as firefighters when needed, thus allowing the city to lay off firefighters.

Stackpoole also asked Cooper to look into the cost savings of contracting out public safety services.

Cooper said he will start talking with Detroit, Highland Park and Wayne County about providing public safety.

Councilmember Cathie Gordon said in an interview on Wednesday that the tough talk from council is an attempt to "get the message out. This is reality."

(You can contact Charles Sercombe at cs@thehamtramckreview.com, or by calling 313-874-2100.)

Real Estate Corner



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Goodbye concrete jungle at Dickinson East

By Ian Perrotta

Its colors may be teal and orange, but Dickinson East Elementary might as well change them to green.

Currently, the school's staff and students are working on a project to create green space on the school's grounds and help it become more environmentally-friendly overall. The project started when the school began a recycling program to turn milk cartons into benches – the first and only kind in the area – and has been evolving ever since.

The original plan was to pay for the project with money from the Safe Routes to School program, but unfortunately that fell through. However, the students themselves have been working to raise money through a variety of fundraisers and have collected over \$4,000 to date.

According to the school's Restorative Practices Coordinator Sarah Dajani, who has been working on the project along with science teacher Jennifer Bradley, by having the students raise money themselves it allows them to take ownership of the project and helps them have a stronger connection to it.

"It's important for kids to understand ways to respect the environment and to learn to be a little more responsible," says Dajani.

The project has an open-ended completion date, which is understandable considering the scope of its plans. In addition to tearing out the concrete near all the entrances and then replacing it with garden space that includes ground cover, shrubs and trees, a number of benches and tables will be added to create an outdoor learning environment. Moreover, large planters will be placed at each entrance, the playground will be resurfaced and the playscape replaced and relocated.

So far the work has come along nicely. Last Thursday (Nov. 4) new lines were painted in the parking areas, and the next day (Nov. 5) students were outside spreading topsoil in the new garden areas. And at the beginning of this week, students planted flowers and bulbs.

"People will see a significant difference by spring," says Dajani. "And hopefully by then we'll have another bench!"



Dickinson East students help prepare the new green-space area. Above: Students spread top soil where concrete used to be. Below: Students plant bulbs for next spring.



New mothers get some tips and supplies

By Ian Perrotta

With a name like Friendship House, you can expect a lot of people to show up to your party. That's exactly what happened two Fridays ago (Oct. 29) at the non-profit's semi-annual Community Baby Shower at Corinthian Baptist Church.

About 50 expectant mothers attended the event, which was the tenth time in six years that it has been put on. At the baby shower, the women were given the opportunity to learn more about what it's like to be a mother, and speakers gave presentations on topics that included baby wellness do's

and don'ts, infant mortality and breast feeding.

It wasn't all learning and lectures, however. Also included in the free event was a meal of soup, salad and bread, as well as a chance to win door prizes like strollers and bouncy seats. And everyone in attendance received a diaper bag full of diapers, a onesie, a receiving blanket, an outfit and either shampoo or baby powder.

The event was organized and the supplies were all collected by Shelly Lewis, a Wayne State University Masters of Social Work student currently interning at Friend-

ship House. To put the event on, Lewis collected donations from local entities like the police and fire departments, schools and other area businesses.

"Friendship House was thrilled to be able to provide community leadership through our baby shower," she said. "Many thoughtful hearts contributed toward making this day special for our surrounding area's parents."

(For more information about the program, call Friendship House at (313) 871-7434.)



At Friendship House's semi-annual Community Baby Shower new and expectant mothers were given helpful tips on how to raise healthy children.

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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 modelmedia.com and metro-mode.com have been reporting on fascinating

development projects for the past few years.

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

Developer Joel Landy - well-known around these parts - is transforming the former Malcolm X Academy on Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., into the Music School, a hub for music recording, instruction, rehearsal and performance. There are three studios al-

ready moved in, most notably one helmed by legendary producer Don Was, Landy's former junior high school classmate.

Landy purchased the building from Detroit Public Schools in August. It is 58,000 square feet with a gymnasium, 300-seat auditorium and 42 classrooms. It is "wonderful shape" says Landy, in no small part because of \$1 million in bond

money the district spent on upgrading the facility in 2006.

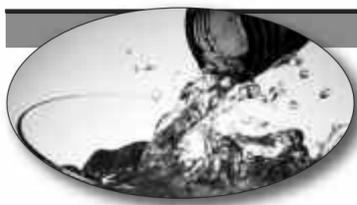
The condition of the school facilitates extremely low rent - \$0.50 a square foot. The 5,000-square-foot auditorium is priced at \$2,500 a month, and Landy hopes to find a promoter interested in the venue. The classrooms average 750 square feet and the building is highly soundproof. Was is taking over the gym-

nasium as the People's Recording Studio - Detroit. "He's loving the sound," says Landy. "We changed the character of the room by hanging huge velvet curtains." Was plans on recording an album in his new space in December. This is the fourth school building that Landy has purchased. He turned the Leiland School near Lafayette Park into lofts, the Burton

School on Cass now houses a movie theater and the offices of several small businesses and non-profit organizations and the Selden School has become Midtown Academy, a charter school.

Interested in being part of a reuse of a former school? Head right over here for details on a seminar being held Nov. 17 on the topic.

Writer: Kelli B. Kavanaugh



TOAST of the TOWN

ing
Let's break out the booze and have a ball
If that's all there is"

Virg no longer works regular hours at the bar. She's now in her early 80s. But you'd never guess her age by looking at her. She is still incredibly youthful looking, and, we might say, still a looker.

Virg's immediate family consists of two sons, neither of whom has an interest in carrying on the family line of work. That means sooner or later the bar will be up for sale, or at least the liquor license. The person who owns the building connected to the

bar owns the bar space.

Virg owns everything else, which she quickly points out: "Everything is old in there ... including me."

(Self-deprecating wit. Cue Peggy Lee:

"Is that all there is, is that all there is

If that's all there is my friends, then let's keep dancing.")

You can hear a snare flam at the end of that line, and Virg has a gazillion of them. She kind of reminds us of the ribald comedienne, Rusty Warren. In fact, there might even



be a bit of a resemblance.

For you kids, Google that name, or better yet, go to YouTube.

Virg is there at the bar during the days mostly, whenever she feels like it. Stop by and check out one of Hamtramck's gems. She'll have something snappy to say.

We're feeling a bit maudlin, heck the freakin' Republicans are back in charge. We need a drink ... to forget (forget what? I don't know ... I forgot). Someone ... cue Peggy Lee again:

"Is that all there is, is that all there is

If that's all there is my friends, then let's keep dancing."

We're not sure how Hippo's Bar manages to get into this column so often. But considering what a likeable guy owner John Hypnarowicz is, we can't help it. John just retired this past summer from the public school district where he drove a bus for over 30 years.

His job included driving

Special Ed students. John's a big guy and you know, he's got an even bigger heart. Several years ago he started throwing Christmas parties for the kids where each one would receive a present of new clothes.

The guy cares. He was there for his kids and believe us they loved him like a dad.

And believe us, many of them needed those new clothes. These are kids who came from hard times.

Well, on Dec. 10, you can do something about that.

John will be holding his last party for the kids. Before that, however, he needs to

raise a lot of money to buy those clothes. He's having a fundraiser on Saturday (Nov. 20), 2-6 p.m., at the bar, featuring great home cooking and beer specials. Think about it, on a Saturday afternoon do you really need anything more than that?

For 6 bucks you get a meal of your choice: meatballs and mashed potatoes or kielbasa and kraut and add in some bread and dessert. There will also be raffles and drink specials.

Stop by and have a toast with Toast of the Town.

A few weeks ago we mentioned that the lovely Melody Baetens, a co-owner of Small's, recently got married. We couldn't remember the name of her beau. What a Doofus we are (yes, with a capital "D"). You know, one can Google this stuff easily enough.

The lucky groom/hubby is ... drum roll and cymbal crash, please ... Dave Malarsh. Again, all of our best to you guys.

By the way, we stopped by Small's last Saturday for the Seatbelts reunion and man, old rockers still know how to rock, and in fact, could teach some of the young dudes and dudettes a lesson or two.

Be sure to check out Skipper's this coming Thursday (Nov. 18) - there's going to be a chili bar with 18 toppings, garnishes and sauces. For just \$8 you'll get a plate and a PBR. There will be two chilis,

one "mild" and one "wild" and the event is being catered by "Hire a Freshman" and chili is served by Chef Terry. Toppings include cheddar cheese, onions, sour cream, mushrooms, jalapenos, corn bread, hot sauce, scrambled eggs, nacho chips, burgers, oyster crackers, saltines, baked potato, burgers, french fries, hot dogs, bacon bits, olives and mild peppers.

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