



"Happy Holidays from Danny D & The Vagabonds"

The Review

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— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

And now, part two of our Year in Review... Oh what a year it was

By Ian Perrotta

The year 2010 was packed with news, so let's get right to it. Here is the second and final part of the year in review.

JULY

In the first week of July medical marijuana came to Hamtramck. The Hamtramck Compassion Club (THCC) began holding bi-monthly meetings to help educate the community on the impact that the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act can have on them. Voters approved legalizing pot in November of 2008, and the law went into effect in April of 2009.

"We want to be completely within the law. We're not doing what they don't say we can't do, we're doing what they do say we can do," said club founder Gregg Black.

For the second year in a row, the Bangladeshi Festival on Conant Ave. was a smashing success. About 5,000 people attended the three-day event, which was organized by the Bangladesh Association of Michigan. The festival featured lively entertainment that included games for the community, the musical stylings of several local groups and even a performance by a Bangladeshi pop star.

Mayor Karen Majewski gave the annual State of the City address, and though attendance was considerably less than in years past, the importance of the speech was significantly greater. Unlike the 2009 address, which painted a very rosy and bright picture of Hamtramck's future, this year's speech was ominously darker. The most notable part of the speech – and something that would take a lead role in shaping the city's future in coming months – was that the dispute between the city and Detroit over tax revenue from the Poletown plant had caused the city to adopt a fiscal strategy that utilized its emergency funding. Majewski said that could lead to the state taking back control of Hamtramck – and soon.

"That is an unsustainable

strategy, which by best estimate will deplete the fund and send us into deficit spending – and thus into re-



Hamtramck Mayor Karen Majewski's State of the City speech wasn't as optimistic as in years past. The city faces a \$3 million deficit and may go into receivership in a few years.

ceivership – by the first quarter of 2011," she said.

At the same time, the city began to ramp up its tax fight with Detroit. While Detroit Mayor Dave Bing and his City Council fought about finances, Hamtramck City Councilmember Cathie Gordon saw an opportunity to play the two parties' animosity against each other to the benefit of Hamtramck. She made an emotional "pitch" to the Detroit Council and warned them that if Hamtramck doesn't get the money, "the city will go belly-up."



The Weed and Seed program got a new Site Director this year. Barbara Stachowski is a former environmental engineer who switched careers to pursue matters of social justice.

Detroit councilmembers told Hamtramck officials they

were unaware of Hamtramck's dispute and seemed to be sympathetic, and City Manager Bill Cooper



Hamtramck Mayor Karen Majewski's State of the City speech wasn't as optimistic as in years past. The city faces a \$3 million deficit and may go into receivership in a few years.

was invited back to speak with the council's finance committee. But in a strange twist, a Channel 7 interview with Mayor Bing showed him claiming that he was unaware of the dispute with Hamtramck, a quote which Cooper categorized as "untrue."

"That raises some questions in my mind," he said. "We met with the special assistant of Bing and met with Bing."

The Review caught up with new Weed and Seed Site Director Barbara Stachowski, who had recently signed on

tions she believed that Hamtramck, with its many and diverse ethnic groups, epitomized the concept of community.

Our special contributor (and former quarterback of Hamtramck High) Omar Thabet also caught up with another of Hamtramck's newsmakers. Mohamed Zindani, a 2009 Hamtramck grad, was profiled for being accepted into the CB United international fashion design house. And that was just the first week.

With the next week came the Fourth of July and the holiday's requisite picnic. Despite a temporary hiatus, the Central Block Club's first foray back into holding events turned out remarkably well. About three dozen or so people trickled in-and-out throughout the day, and the barbecue offered them a

that eventually, there could be a merger with another city for police and fire services, and that by this time next year the city could be flat broke.

An even worse situation almost played out for a 20-year-old Hamtramck woman. She barely escaped what likely would have resulted in rape and murder when she and a group of friends were approached by a man armed with a revolver who ordered her friends to go inside and for the woman to get in his car. Arthur Paschal, 44, was ultimately arrested and charged with 10 felonies after the woman fought back, ran away and, along with her friends, gave police a description of his vehicle. A chase ensued, ending when he crashed his car into a building in the Eight Mile/Van Dyke area. Paschal, who had served 17 years in prison for



This year the Hamtramck Recreation Department enrolled 185 kids in its summer programs. Based on Census data, that works out to about four percent of eligible youth.

chance to meet and get to know each other in an informal setting and on friendly terms. Swapping stories over watermelon, brownies and burgers – both regular and veggie – residents were able to laugh at their similarities and joke about their differences.

Talk of receivership began to heat up, and a special City Council Meeting was held to discuss the situation. During the meeting, City Manager Bill Cooper warned that by next January or February city employees could face payless paydays. He also said

murder and had just been let out a year ago, was already wanted for being a parole absconder.

"If we had not caught him, he was going to do it right away to somebody else," said Hamtramck Chief of Detectives Dan Misiak.

Questions about the city's Recreation Department continued to be raised after an assessment of the program found that it enrolled only four percent of the city's kids in its summer program. Leading the critique of the department was School

Continued on page 2



Quick Hits

Is it us, or did the past year just fly by?

Well, here it is, Friday, New Year's Eve. We're going to be spending the night around town with friends, reminiscing and making plans for the year ahead.

Needless to say, the coming year will present a number of challenges. Hamtramck has always been a survivor and this year will test our collective mettle. Cheers to you dear readers and may 2011 find you in good health and with a bright future.

This week in history

• It's New Year's Eve in 1969 and you'd think it would be a day of celebration. But not on this date because that's when St. Francis Hospital here in Hamtramck closed down. The building later became City Hall.

• And talk of major closings, the Dodge Main plant closed for good in 1980.

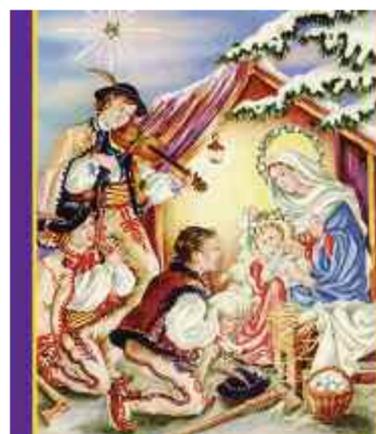
• Long-time school board president Chester Reese retired in 1990.

Source: Hamtramck Historical Commission

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And now, part two of our year in review...

Oh what a year it was

Continued from page 1

Boardmember Hedy Shulgon, who had been outspoken in her inquiries and concerns about the Recreation Department. When told only 185 kids had signed up for the summer program, Shulgon said she was disappointed.

"I was hoping there would be a lot more," she said.

Also continuing to heat up were talks about the upcoming Hamtramck Labor Day Festival. Though the fate of this year's festival was up in the air just weeks before, it was shaping up to be one to remember. There were plans for musical and comedic performances, a happy hour each day from 3-4 p.m., a charitable 5K fun run, the return of the great Hamtramck Boat Race, a campsite and much more. To help fund

these events a fundraiser at The Review's office was planned, as was a good old-fashioned road rally.



Free dance lessons were offered at The Painted Lady during the summer. Here, Review cover girl Kasia Maziarz gets spun by her partner.

◆◆◆ In the next week, people were having a ball at the Painted Lady, where Jessica Land Conti was teaching a

Primary Elections just a month away, Hamtramck was well represented. Several local candidates were vying for office, including current City Councilmembers Shahab Ahmed, who ran for State Representative, and Tom Jankowski, who sought the Wayne County Commissioner seat.

◆◆◆ It seemed like the City Council finally agreed on something when they all concurred that the stadium in Veterans Park should be preserved. A presentation on the stadium's history was given by baseball author and historian Gary Gillette, who highlighted the many important reasons for not only preserving the current structure, but rehabilitating it into its former glory. He said that it was one of only five former home ballparks for the Negro National League, and that with three of them in jeopardy, it would likely become one of the last standing structures of a by-gone era, and thus immensely important and historical. He also noted that if Hamtramck could accomplish a full historic preservation of the stadium it would make headlines across the country.

"I guarantee that if you preserve this stadium it will be a national story," he said.

◆◆◆ Later that week in City Hall, a bold idea was hatched to strike back at the city of Detroit, which had been withholding about \$3 million in tax payments from the Pole-town plant. In retaliation against Detroit's refusal to pay their share of tax dividends, Hamtramck decided to stop making monthly payments to Detroit for water and sewer services. The estimated \$230,000 a month

was to be held in escrow by a third party until an agreement could be reached.

"In 10 months we'll have our money back," City Manager Bill Cooper said with a laugh.

◆◆◆ And in another form of withholding payment – or, rather, demanding a refund – three area teens were charged with armed robbery and using a firearm in the commission of a felony after they hired a prostitute in Hamtramck, and, after being sexually pleased, allegedly pulled out a gun and robbed her. Amazingly, police say they were able to apprehend the suspects after the prostitute tore the dangling license plate off of their car. The incident kicked off a firestorm of controversy on The Review's website, with many of the alleged perpetrators' apparent friends coming to their defense in light of the allegations.

◆◆◆ There was more craziness



The Recreation Department held its annual Junior Olympics at Keyworth Stadium.

when a police officer's check on three suspicious-looking men in a car resulted in a life-threatening moment. After noticing the men sitting in a vehicle behind the former Shoppers World plaza, the officer ran the plates on the car, and, realizing it was stolen, attempted to intervene. As she approached the suspects the driver struck her patrol car with the vehicle, and fearing for her life the unidentified police officer fired several shots. Though back-up arrived shortly thereafter and a chase ensued, it was terminated due to the risk of injury to innocent bystanders. The suspects are still at large.

◆◆◆ The final week of July saw the return of the Recreation Department's annual Junior Olympics, but it also brought more controversy to the department after it was discovered that the newly purchased restrooms were unavailable for use during peak hours. Hamtramck

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ballroom dancing class on Thursday nights. A student of musical theater in college who later became certified by the International Ballroom Dance Teachers Association, Conti had for years been asked by her friends to teach them the art of the dance. Finally succumbing to their requests, she began with the barter of "If I teach you to dance, you buy me a beer" and from there expanded it to free classes.

"I keep it free because I don't want to have business involved," she said. "This isn't a job – it's just for fun."

◆◆◆ Elsewhere, City Manager Bill Cooper continued to try to convince the City Council to raise taxes – or, rather, to allow voters to decide whether to raise property taxes – by 5 mills in order to offset the cost of running the police and fire departments. But despite his estimates that the tax would raise \$1 million a year, the proposal was met by silence from the City Council, who didn't even make a motion to vote on it.

"It could have put us in what I call a reasonable deficit," said Cooper.

◆◆◆ The political news didn't stop there, though. With the



The effort to preserve the grandstands at Veterans Park picked up steam when city officials, a baseball historian and an architectural preservationist teamed up to pursue the matter.

School Boardmember Hedy Shulgon said that despite Recreation Director Craig Daniels' insistence that they were open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the week and for most of the day during the weekend, the truth was that the restrooms were rarely open to the public.

◆◆◆ Following the direction of several other area municipalities, Hamtramck decided to explore its options of regulating medical marijuana, which was legalized in 2008 with the passage of the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act. The

Continued on page 3

This week at the library...

Computer Classes for Beginners - Tuesday, January 4 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, January 4 at 5:30 p.m. Jide Aje is the instructor for the reading and conversation ESL classes.

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

Movie Wednesday - Wednesday, January 5 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, January 6 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.

Winter Teen Club - Thursday, January 6 at 5 p.m. Members of the Teen Club will make their own "ginger bread buddy" for the upcoming holiday celebrations (registration required). Everyone is invited to join.

Jeopardy at the Library - Thursday, January 6 at 4 p.m. Sign up and participate in Jeopardy games held on Thursdays at the library. Compete against friends, win prizes and have fun developing your knowledge skills.

Meeting of the Library Board - Tuesday, January 13 at 6 p.m. Regular meeting of the Library Board will be held in the auditorium. Open to the public.

Friends of the Library Meeting - Thursday, January 20 at 6:30 p.m. FHPL President Kathy Kristy and Treasurer George Gorday, invite all members and volunteers to participate in the regular monthly meeting and election meeting of the FHPL.

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

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Second Front Page

And now, part two of our year in review ... Oh what a year it was Continued from page 2

proposed ordinance sought to restrict the areas where growing marijuana was legal through the use of zoning regulations, but after a lengthy discussion it was decided that no action would be taken at the that time.

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About 20 teachers and other public school employees took advantage of a state buyout to retire, which initially cost the district \$440,000 but will ultimately save it a considerable amount of money in years to come. The buyout was part of a larger five-year plan by the district to close a \$2.8 million budget deficit.

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And in an unfortunate turn for drivers, a proposed speed trap law hit a roadblock in the state legislature when special interest groups intervened with local lawmakers' plans to curtail the despised practice. State Representatives Rick Jones and Bettie Cook Scott were trying to pass an amendment that would require municipalities to conduct traffic studies to ensure the speed limits on their roadways were at an accurate level.

AUGUST

The big news in the first week of August was the results of the Primary Elections on Aug 3. While Hamtramck's growing Bangladeshi-American community continued to flex its political muscle, it wasn't yet strong enough to carry their candidates into state office. Four Hamtramck

Councilmember Tom Jankowski also ran in that race but finished dead last. And forgoing an easy re-election for his seat as a state Representative, Bert Johnson won the seat vacated by Scott in the state Senate.

◆◆◆
Hamtramck Public Schools were also making news when it was announced that state test scores showed the district's students continue to improve. Unfortunately, the same test also showed they still had a way to go before hitting state averages. Superintendent Tom Niczay credited the improvement in test results to the continued focus on preparing students.

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"It's a combination: instruction, planning for it, the kids and extreme emphasis on it," he said. "We're definitely on the right road."

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In the conclusion of this subject, the final meeting to discuss the revision to the city's Master Plan was held at the library. It was the last chance for the public to get a glimpse at what was being proposed and also to gauge which areas were most important to focus on. Though it was more sparsely attended than in meetings past, at its conclusion the area of Recreation & Open Spaces was deemed to be in need of the most immediate attention.

◆◆◆
At People's Community Services, the month-long program about self-advocating put on by University of Michi-

they took over the city lot at Caniff and McDougall to set up a one-stop shop that provided a host of services. In



During "War Week," several churches - including Hamtramck's own REAL Church - joined forces to provide a number of services to the community.

addition to giving a bag of groceries and a health screening to those in attendance, the church also provided haircuts, family portraits and caricature drawings free of charge.

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The second week of August brought news of the greatest party of all time - the Hamtramck Review Labor Day Festival Fundraiser. Over \$3,000 were raised to help offset festival costs, but the real story was that if Publisher John Ulaj throws a party, you don't want to miss it. Local favorite Danny D performed a set on a custom-built stage in the newly renovated courtyard of The Hamtramck Review office. For \$20, guests were invited to dine on Royal Kabob and Polish cuisine and have

of clues they had to figure out, and, based on their completion time and number of correct answers, a winning

team was chosen. This year's winning team consisted of Mary Przybyl, Basia Grabas, Nick Nowakoski and Mari Terokowski.

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At City Hall, the Council got lost in a legal haze during a special meeting for a proposed zoning ordinance that would limit the areas where people would be allowed to grow medical marijuana. After several hours of debate and testimony, it was decided that there was still not enough information on the subject for the Council to make an informed decision. However, the city was cautioned by attorney Paul Tylenda, who told them being proactive was the best bet.

"It's better to take control of it now than to wait around for the state to set up guidelines," he said. "The people that care about Hamtramck are the people inside of Hamtramck."

◆◆◆
During the regular City Council meeting, an ordinance proposed by Cathie Gordon to make a change to the City Charter was shot down. The vote on her proposal - to have the treasurer appointed by, and responsible to, the mayor and council, instead of the city manager - was split down the middle, with the tie broken by Mayor Karen Majewski. In defense of her proposal, Gordon said



The Primary Elections in August were hotly contested, but despite a number of Hamtramckans vying for office, come January there will be no local representation.

candidates who had received support over the past few years from the Bengali community finished a far distance behind in the race for state Representative. However, the voter turnout for the election was much larger than in 2008, which political observers said is due to the Bengali voting bloc that appears to be getting stronger.

◆◆◆
Elsewhere in the Primary there were a number of upsets, both large and small. Wayne County Commissioner Moe Blackwell was booted off the Democratic ticket - and, with that, essentially out of office - and replaced by long-time politician Martha Scott, who was termed out of her seat in the state Senate. City

gan Masters of Social Work interns Whitney Lacefield and Cheri Pace culminated with the presentation of "My Community, My Voice." In this multimedia presentation, area youth were able to creatively express their feelings about important subjects through a variety of media.

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And if it seemed like it was more crowded in town than usual during the first week of August, it was because several dozen churches - including Hamtramck's own REAL Church - were in town pitching in. Called "War Week," the week-long event was an execution of community service with military-like precision. The youth completed a city-wide clean-up, and on Aug. 4



To help raise money for this year's Hamtramck Labor Day Festival, publisher John Ulaj held a fundraiser at The Review's office. The next time he throws a party, don't miss it.

their way with an open - and full - bar.

More money was raised for the festival the next day with the return of the Hamtramck Road Rally. Sort of like a scavenger hunt on wheels, contestants were given a bag

she wasn't "implicating" the current city manager, but rather she thought there could be a better way to handle things.

"I'm not comfortable with our system of checks and bal-

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Police Chief Mark Kalinowski

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And now, part two of our year in review... Oh what a year it was

Continued from page 3

ances," Gordon said. "We've had too many incidents of money falling through cracks."

◆◆◆
Hamtramck went Hollywood during the third week of August when a portion of the movie "Vamps" was filmed at the Record Graveyard on Caniff. Production for the movie, which stars Alicia Silverstone,

Chinese food returned to Hamtramck when Kuen Kwong re-opened the Golden Hill Chop Suey restaurant at the intersection of Jos. Campau and Caniff. The revival of the business was welcomed in Hamtramck and residents quickly found their favorite meals.

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In a well-played but ironic



Actress Alicia Silverstone was in town to film the movie "Vamps." Here she is pictured with Vata Ulaj, brother of Review publisher John Ulaj.

took over the city lot at Caniff and McDougall for three days. It may be indicative of a future trend in the city, as several major motion pictures have filmed in and around Hamtramck, including the Drew Barrymore flick "Whip It."

◆◆◆
The public school district stayed in the news when the Michigan Department of Education released a list of the bottom 92 schools in the state. Fortunately for Hamtramck, it was nowhere near the bottom.

hand, the 2010 Hamtramck Poker Run raised over \$600 for the Weed and Seed's Drug Education for Youth (DEFY) Mentor Program. Set-up in the form of a bar crawl, participants collected a playing card at each bar, and after the fifth and final stop played a hand with those cards.

"It was even better than I expected it to be," said event organizer Kevin LaPointe. "It was a complete success and everyone had a great time."

◆◆◆
After fielding numerous complaints about blight from

residents, the city decided to do something by budgeting \$70,000 to combat the growing problem. A special work session was held to attack the situation, at which Councilmember Cathie Gordon was able to convince her colleagues to shift half of a proposed \$50,000 budget to help businesses start-up toward a new program aimed at housing code enforcement and attacking litter and overgrown yards.

◆◆◆
On a literary note, Chairman of the Hamtramck Historical Commission Greg Kowalski published his latest book "Wicked Hamtramck: Lust, Liquor and Lead." The book chronicles the city during the Prohibition era as well as the Communist movement and



Nearly \$100,000 was set aside by the city to help combat Hamtramck's growing blight problem.

◆◆◆
some of the most notorious crimes in Hamtramck history.

◆◆◆
A baseball legend's tale was finally ready to be told when the documentary "The Legend of Pinky Deras: The Greatest Little-Leaguer There Ever Was" premiered to a packed crowd at the Hamtramck Community Center. Produced by Brian Kruger and Buddy Moorehouse, the movie chronicled the life of Art "Pinky" Deras from his time as a Little Leaguer to his shot in the Big League.

"It was best to be on the same side as Pinky," said former Major League player Tom Paciorek, who played with Deras in the Pony League. "I've said Art was the greatest Little League player for the last 40 years."

◆◆◆
As Hamtramck continued to wait for the administration of Detroit Mayor Dave Bing to get off its ass and complete – and reveal – an audit of a tax sharing agreement that De-

troit and Hamtramck share from GM's Poletown plant, the budget crisis continued to take center stage. In an attempt to cut expenses and chip away at a projected \$3.3 million deficit, the city offered its retirees a yearly \$7,500 payment to opt out of a city-funded health insurance plan.

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But none of that mattered to four teen suspects who went on a robbery spree across Hamtramck on a Friday night. Unfortunately, after police caught up with the suspect's getaway car, because only three out of four suspects were caught it was impossible to determine who the driver was and they were ultimately released without charges.

tional media attention in the form of a mention on espn.com. The committee tasked with saving the grandstands continued to meet and discuss how best to preserve the stadium as well as how to

raise more questions than answers, and ultimately the City Council decided it would pass on grass. Well, at least, pass on making any decisions involving the regulation of medical marijuana growth.



This year's Labor Day Festival was one of the best ever and featured a weekend full of food, beer, music, games and rides.

go about doing so.

SEPTEMBER

Kicking off the month of September was the 2010 Hamtramck Labor Day Festival, and by all estimates it was one of the best ever. After the fate of the event was left up in the air when Special Events Coordinator Eve Doster Knepp was laid off due to budget shortfalls, local residents Kathleen Bittner and Rachel Karpinski Srodek stepped in and organized one hell of a party. Over 200,000 people came to the city for a weekend of music, festival food and, of course, beer.

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The proposed medical marijuana ordinance continued to

Instead, it decided to wait until the new year, when the next round of politicians could decide on the fate of the state law.

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In some not so great news for students heading back to school – although something that makes perfect sense – Hamtramck Public Schools students were required to wear uniforms. While it seemed that the idea was going to take off at the beginning of the year, it's safe to say the level of observance probably would not receive a passing grade.

◆◆◆
Returning for the third year

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Review: Opinion Page

Hamtramck's financial story is the story of America on the downside

By now, most of our readers are probably aware that Hamtramck's financial crisis has made national headlines.

The city's request to go into bankruptcy made it to the pages of the New York Times, the Huffington Post and national network news.

We are the proverbial canary in the coal mine for hundreds — if not thousands — of other communities faced with similar financial woes. The loss of tax revenue and the ever-increasing costs for pensions and municipal workers are wiping out city budgets.

It is sadly not only a tale of American cities but of many states and heck, even the nation. Once an economic powerhouse, we are now driven poor by the loss of manufacturing jobs. Our jobs have been allowed to drift overseas and down to Mexico, where labor is dirt cheap and companies don't have to bother with environmental regulations.

It's heaven for manufacturers but hell for those left behind.

If you ask us, it's a national disgrace that we have given American companies carte blanche to abandon us. It makes you wonder why

American companies hate America so much. But that's a topic that needs to be debated on the national stage.

In the meantime, we, as a city, have to figure out a way to survive. We have reported on this story for the past 12 months. The only solution left for city officials is to get city unions to agree to contract concessions. To make a long story short, the city needs less expensive health insurance and an end to minimum staffing requirements.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has refused to allow Hamtramck to file for bankruptcy. She is leaving office for good at the end of this week.

Incoming Gov.-Elect Rick Snyder has given cryptic comments on his view of allowing Hamtramck to file for bankruptcy. He has been quoted saying he fully expects other communities to face the same choice during his first term.

Regardless of what Snyder will OK, we've read some interesting comments from some union employees. There are some union members who believe city officials are crying wolf and don't really believe we're in a financial crisis.

Unfortunately, there is a grain of truth to that. In the

past, that is, when city officials would often use scare tactics as a form of contract negotiation.

This time, however, one only has to look around to see that this financial meltdown is bigger than Hamtramck. There are officially 15 million Americans without a job and many millions more working something less than fulltime and with few or no benefits.

We have allowed our country to become poor. That's the economic reality facing us. If our union members want to keep their jobs, well, their fate rests with their hands.

Gov.-Elect Snyder has also been quoted saying he expects cities and public school districts to begin merging services.

We don't know exactly how that will work out or whether Snyder's proposal will eventually become one big court battle. Nevertheless, the clock is running out for Hamtramck and we will be broke in the coming months if budget cuts aren't made soon.

From our viewpoint, it would be prudent to agree to contract concessions just so we can keep our jobs and community intact.

Letters • Letters

Cartoon insults Christians and Muslims

The Bible and the Koran both speak of Mary with high regard.

cartoon mocking Joseph, Mary and the angel Gabriel was not only sacrilegious, but also insulting to Muslims and

Christians as well.

**John C. Henning
Hamtramck**

Coming Events

JANUARY 20, Tuesday, 7 p.m. – Preserve Our Parks meets every third Tuesday of the month, at the Senior Plaza at 2620 Holbrook. For more information, call Dick Kaleski at (313) 874-2651.

Obituaries

PODSIADLIK

Gerald Podsiadlik, 68, died December 22, 2010.

Mr. Podsiadlik was a Hamtramck resident and a retired truck driver. He served in the Army.

Mr. Podsiadlik was preceded in death by his parents, Frank and Sophie.

He is survived by his son, Gerald Podsiadlik Jr.; sisters, Esther Norris and Geraldine (Robert) Babicz; brother, Tom (Christine).

Funeral arrangements were made by Jurkiewicz & Wilk Funeral Home, and funeral services were held at St. Florian Church. Burial was at Great Lakes National Cemetery.



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Merry Christmas from My Family to Yours and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year!

from John Ulaj, Publisher

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And now, part two of our year in review... Oh what a year it was

Continued from page 4

was the Hamtramck Hustle, a car show that features "kustom" cars, ratrods and choppers. A variety of old school rides packed into Veterans Park, and the night ended with musical performances at The Painted Lady.

A well-known business on Conant got a makeover and a name change when the former Gandhi restaurant redid its inside and changed its name to Zamzam. The newly renovated restaurant was a huge change for the eatery, which was now able to serve both casual eaters and the formal dining crowd.

devastated and lost several homes when it took firefighters an hour to respond. Exacerbating the situation was the fact that firefighters found hydrants that were not working and were forced to back-lay over 500 feet of hose to the nearest hydrant that was operable.

In the weeks after, it was discovered that despite a Mutual Aid agreement between Detroit and Hamtramck, there were no calls made to Hamtramck for assistance during the fires. During the firestorm, Hamtramck firefighters were on standby in case they were needed, and Hamtramck Fire Chief Steve

Jankowski ratcheted up his pressure for police concessions, saying that police



Thanks to a Safe Routes to Schools grant, many of the city's sidewalks were repaired over the summer. However, a dispute with the contractor led to several months of waiting before many of the holes were filled in.

should pay half the cost of a new bulletproof vest police were required to wear. It was part of a larger campaign by Jankowski to get the department to agree to contract and salary concessions to help offset the \$3.3 million budget deficit.

The effort by Jankowski gave former City Councilmember Scott Klein an opportunity to jump back in the political arena. He said that he might file recall petitions against Jankowski and the councilmembers who agreed with him.

"What if a cop gets injured?" Klein said. "If that were to happen, then the Council has blood on its hands."

There was other news concerning the police that week

as well. The department linked into a new system called Nixle, an information

◆◆◆
Though school had been in session for three weeks, there was still a waiting game to finish up the city's sidewalk repairs. After the installation of new traffic signals was complete, in several places around the city the sidewalk was left open due to problems with the electrical wiring. However, due to unrelated problem with the contractor it would be another three months until the holes

◆◆◆
As if on cue, just as Hamtramck police officials were coming back with good news about the city's auto theft prevention unit – mainly that it had been spared the budget ax – police officers apprehended two suspected carjackers.

"It underscores the need for the auto theft unit," said Police Chief Mark Kalinowski.

In other police news, the timing of a city-wide bar sting stirred up questions of



We didn't start the fire ... well, that's what DTE said after nearly 90 separate fires were reported in a four-hour span on Sept. 7. Though the company was ultimately exonerated, in several areas witnesses maintain that faulty power lines were the cause.

◆◆◆
Major news occurred just after Labor Day on Sept. 7 when a firestorm swept through Detroit. All together, nearly 90 separate fires were reported in just a few hour time span. One neighborhood just north of Hamtramck was

Paruk said they would not have hesitated to lend a helping hand.

"I don't know why they didn't call us," Paruk said. "We would have done something."

◆◆◆
City Councilmember Tom

network that allows anyone to sign in and find out about breaking news on crime, suspects on the loose and traffic problems. However, it seems that the department has yet to utilize the system, as to date it mostly sends out notices about upcoming events.

◆◆◆
The Labor Day Festival wasn't the only party in town during Labor Day weekend. The community's Hindu population also took it to the streets of Hamtramck on Saturday of that weekend with a parade celebrate the birth of their god Sri Krishna. The celebration, Suvo Janmastari, a birthday ceremony of Lord Krishna, was sponsored by the Durga Temple, located just outside of the city at McNichols and Ryan.

◆◆◆
Despite a national trend that had seen violent crime decline over the past three years, in Hamtramck it was on the rise in 2009. But fortunately, its rate of growth was slower than in years before.



The city's Hindu population observed Suvo Janmastari, a birthday ceremony of Lord Krishna, with a parade throughout the streets of Hamtramck.

were filled-in.

◆◆◆
It was a big milestone for St. Ladislaus Parish this year. The Caniff church marked its 90th anniversary with a special mass celebrated by Episcopal Vicar Msgr. Donald Hanchon. A banquet was held at the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Warren afterward.

◆◆◆
Local resident Russ Gordon showed the city that getting to know your neighbors is a picnic. For the fourth year in a row, he held his international picnic on Zinow Street, celebrating the cultural diversity that has come to be a hallmark of Hamtramck.

whether it was merely coincidence or retaliation. The sting raised some eyebrows because it not only happened after a recent controversy that saw City Council hold up the purchase of bulletproof vests for the Police Department, but also involved two City Councilmembers who also own bars. Tom Jankowski and Cathie Gordon, owners of Whiskey in the Jar and the New Dodge Lounge, respectively, both initially argued that officers should kick in 50 percent of the cost of the vests despite available funding that would not require the city to spend a cent.

◆◆◆
The city's place in history was cemented with the dedication of a Wayside marker commemorating the "Automobile Row" corridor of Jos. Campau. The marker, a plaque made of super futuristic plastic material, gives a brief summary of the road's history and includes photos of the street during its prime.

OCTOBER

There was more news about Jos. Campau in the first week of October, although this time it involved shopping. The 2nd Annual Sidewalk Sale – a tradition resurrected last year by the Downtown Development

Continued on page 7



During the city's Sidewalk Sale, shoppers were given the opportunity to peruse goods in the open air on Jos. Campau.

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 (the area bounded by Caniff, Conant, Holbrook and Jos. Campau) will meet the first Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m., at the HATCH building, 3456 Evaline. 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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And now, part two of our year in review...

Oh what a year it was

Continued from page 6

Authority – was held much to the delight of both local and out-of-town shoppers alike.

The Assistance League of Southeastern Michigan, a non-profit group that in 2009 gave six \$1,000 mini-grants to Hamtramck Public Schools teachers, was at it again when members invaded Dickinson East Elementary School as part of “Operation School Bell.” After setting up a store in the school’s gym – complete with racks, “employees” and a check-out aisle – underprivileged kids from the

Hamtramck High’s football team shut down opponent STAR Academy in a blowout homecoming win. The 26-0 victory was so dismantling to opposing players that they had to forfeit in the fourth quarter after an emotionally charged shoving match erupted on the field.

As part of the 350.org environmental project, over 30 youths participated in a clean-up at the St. Aubin Community Garden. The mostly Muslim youths helped



The Assistance League of Southeastern Michigan came to Dickinson East Elementary to set up a “store” and give needy children an opportunity to shop for new clothes and other accessories.

school went shopping for new clothes, books, hygiene kits and a gift card for shoes. The best part? It was all free.

After waiting months for an audit report from Detroit officials about a long-simmering dispute over shared tax revenues from GM’s Poletown plant, Hamtramck finally got an answer. However, city officials had to read about it in a Detroit Free Press story. And, unfortunately, according to the report, Detroit believed that it had overpaid Hamtramck \$7.1 million.

The city’s tallest commercial building leaped another hurdle toward a major makeover when owner Mark Hausner was granted \$116,000 in tax credits through the Hamtramck Brownfield Redevelopment Authority to help offset the cost of redevelopment. The money won’t be given directly to Hausner but will be skimmed off taxes collected from the future increase in the property’s value.

pull weeds, edge beds and build a platform to put two water tanks on which will help with watering the plants in years to come.

In another blow to the city’s finances, it was discovered that \$57,000 needed to be refunded to American Axle for an overcharge of personal property taxes in 2009. The transfer of manufacturing equipment to other locations caused a significant devaluation of the building. The city also lost \$137,000 this year in personal property taxes because the plant was closed down.

Hanley Academy was cleared to graduate to a bigger school when plans to build a new building on Denton Street were approved by the city. Once complete, the new school will be a two-story, 65,000-square-foot facility with enough room for 40 classrooms as well as a gym and science lab.

Local favorite Maria’s Co-

mida got a makeover when its menu looked to the east for inspiration and began to incorporate Asian flavors in its food. The new Mex-Asian fusion was a hit with customers, as was the addition of several new flavors of

salsa, which the Pronko family (Maria’s’ owners) has now begun to sell in a variety of stores.

The city celebrated all good things about fall with the first-ever Hamtown Harvest Fest,

a weekend-long Oktoberfest held in the municipal lot between Polish Village and Polonia Restaurant. Organized by the same people who put together this year’s Labor Day Festival, the event featured musical performances, hayrides, pumpkin carving, vendors and – of course – lots of beer. Though it wasn’t a financial success, it was a great time for everyone in attendance.

A plan by the city to spend \$75,000 of Wayne County money was put to an abrupt halt when it was discovered that the grant did not exist. Beverly Watts, the director of the county’s parks department, claimed that the money promised by former Wayne County Commissioner Moe Blackwell was not in this year’s budget, although Blackwell insists that he was told by Watts that there was in fact money on the table,

and that it was later rescinded by Wayne County Executive Bob Ficano.

“It’s not that Moe Blackwell didn’t do his job,” said Blackwell, speaking in the third person. “It’s about Bob Ficano playing politics.”

It was declared that an arsonist was on the loose after nearly a dozen arson-suspected fires were reported by the Fire Department. Several of the fires involved the burning of city-issued blue garbage cans. Incidentally, on Halloween the department was busier than in recent years.

“I’m wondering if we have a firebug in town,” said Fire Marshal Paul Wilk.

A Town Hall meeting hosted by Weed and Seed gave residents the opportunity to learn about the program as well meet their neighbors in a

Continued on page 8



Maria’s Comida unveiled a new menu when it began incorporating Asian flavors in its cuisine. The new food – Mex-Asian fusion – is some of the best around.

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- 3454 Caniff - Hamtramck** - 6 bedroom, 2-family home in need of repair. Full basement, garage, \$24,900 - NEW PRICE!
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And now, part two of our year in review...

Oh what a year it was

Continued from page 7

laxed and comfortable environment. During the meeting, personnel from the city's Police Department spoke on ways that residents can improve their safety and empower themselves to be proactive in fighting crime. Later on in the month, the organization hosted a successful fundraiser to cover the operating costs of the four-year-old non-profit.

There was a new state law which took effect on Halloween that affected drivers who like to drink. Anyone caught driving with a Blood Alcohol Content of 0.17 or higher was now legally "super" drunk. If found "super" drunk, drivers now face heavier fines and associated costs as well as the possibility of up to six months in jail.

The new traffic light installed in front of the fire station had drivers seeing red when the federal money used to install it meant they could no longer drive through the light after stopping. Federal safety rules don't allow blinking red traffic lights, said City Manager Bill Cooper.

"I understand the problem," he said. "I've been caught in a few jams."

If there is something strange in your neighborhood, who are you gonna call? The Detroit Area Paranormal Research Society, that's who. Over the last year, local residents Matthew Herch and his



Hamtramck voters mainly went with a straight ticket in this year's General Election. However, state voters decided differently and elected self-described "nerd" Rick Snyder as governor.

fiancée Julie Kelley worked to organize and equip a team to observe and document the area's paranormal activity. The duo announced a call-to-investigation initiative that sought to find paranormal hotspots in the city in order to

further investigate them.

NOVEMBER

This November kicked off with midterm elections, and at times Hamtramck voters were at odds with state voters. Unlike their statewide counterparts, the city's vot-



The Detroit Area Paranormal Research Society officially began its mission with a call for investigation. If you know of any paranormal activity in the area visit www.detroitaprs.com.

ers stayed true to their Democratic Party roots and, for the most part, voted a straight ticket. The big story of this cycle was the victory of Republican Rick Snyder for the governor's seat.

In other election-related news, it was announced that a whopping 40 percent of voters who voted in the 2009 city elections – 1,276 out of 3,351 – failed to pay Hamtramck income tax. City Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko discovered the discrepancy when he cross referenced the names and addresses of those who voted in the General Election with those who paid income taxes in an attempt to find ways to raise more revenue for the city. Later on in the month, it was revealed that a number of people who were asked to pay income taxes admitted to the Finance Department that they didn't actually live in Hamtramck.

On Veteran's Day, Hamtramck showed its support for our veterans in a number of ceremonies across the city. The hub of the day's activities centered around PLAV Post 10, where Raymond Deloof was named the 2010 Veteran of the Year.

It was the school district's turn to warn of closings when the school announced that despite a seemingly manageable \$5 million deficit in 2009, this year it faced a \$6 million deficit. Due to a drastic drop in enrollment this year the district lost over \$1 million in state aid, and in order to prevent further deficit spending Hamtramck Public Schools Superintendent Tom Niczay announced that it would be necessary to end leasing the former St. Lad's Elementary School at the end of this year. That measure will save almost \$500,000 a year.

A new nonprofit came to town in November, and it was 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 – opened an office at the old UAW Hall at 2140 Holbrook.

The city geared up to save some big bucks in energy costs when it began to finalize energy-saving measures as part of a \$460,000 Cities of Promise grant. 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.

Dickinson East Elementary was also going green this month. The school's staff and students teamed-up to create

versations about the Hamtramck's future. Threats of cuts loomed large as the City Council ordered every department to figure out how to cut 10 percent of their budget. City Manager Bill Cooper said he needs to find an additional \$3 million a year – either in savings or in new income streams – to keep the city afloat, and in an unprecedented move the Council approved his request to send a letter to the state asking for permission to file for bankruptcy. Though the state would ultimately deny his request and instead offer a



In light of two ongoing wars, Veteran's Day seemed to have a little more importance this year. Raymond Deloof was named the 2010 Veteran of the Year.



Dickinson East Elementary School went environmentally friendly when its students worked to build more green space outside of the school.

green space on the school's grounds and to help it become more environmentally friendly overall. Students raised over \$4,000 to help fund the project, which included removing concrete in several areas and replacing it with gardens.

The city's financial picture continued to remain front page news as officials began to have a series of tough con-

number of different loan options, news of the letter made national headlines.

"While this step may seem radical in its approach," Cooper said, "it is the only approach that will quickly and effectively address our short-fall."

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Continued on page 10

Hamtramck Public Schools

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For more information, contact the Department of Pupil Services at (313) 892-2036

Parents may pick up application packets beginning on January 4th. Applications may be submitted M-F between January 10th and January 20th from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Hamtramck Public Schools Administration Building, 3201 Roosevelt



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* These gatherings replace our Sunday events in Hamtramck.

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Rentals and Real Estate

APARTMENTS & FLATS FOR RENT

2 Br. upper, on Caniff, \$450/month, includes water and basic cable, no pets, 586-531-9722, 313-418-8791. 1/21

Beautiful spacious, updated, 2 Br. upper flat, on St. Aubin St., \$575/month + 1 month security deposit, laundry access, separate utilities, 313-629-5305. 12/31

1, 2 and 3 Br. Detroit on Bloom St. next to White Elementary School, 313-310-3540. 1/7

Hamtramck, 2 Br. lower, water-heat included, adults preferred, no pets, \$575/month + \$575 deposit, references required, 313-874-1442, leave message. 1/7

Upper 2 Br., new carpet, large backyard, safe area, appliances + water included, \$500/month plus first month's rent for security, 313-301-0594. 1/7

Hamtramck, 2 Br., 5-room flat, lower, seniors or working couple preferred, no pets, \$500/month + deposit, 586-294-7111. 1/7

Beautifully remodeled 3 Br. upper (\$595/month) and 1 Br. lower (\$400/month) + security deposit, utilities not included, Section 8 OK, credit check, 313-590-1000. 1/7

APARTMENTS & FLATS FOR RENT

Hamtramck, 9478 McDougal St., 2 Br. upper, good condition, no pets, ask for Doda or David, 586-722-8963, 586-978-2363. 1/7

Clean upper flat, 11435 Fleming, stove-fridge, washer-dryer, heat + water included, \$550/month + 1 month security, Kim, 313-682-2928. 1/7

Hamtramck, 3134 Belmont. 2 Br. lower, stove-fridge, call for appointment, no pets, 586-604-0553. 1/7

Hamtramck, Belmont St., 2 Br. lower, Wallside windows, \$500/month, clean, **313-492-8302**. 1/7

Hamtramck, 11435 Fleming, clean upper, stove-fridge, washer-dryer, heat + water included, \$550/month + one month security deposit, Kim, 313-682-2928. 12/31

Hamtramck, 3101-03 Jacob St., lower 2 Br., large living room, dining, kitchen, newly remodeled, laundry facility included, stove-fridge, excellent condition, 586-497-8810. 12/31

1 Br. upper, stove - refrigerator, water + heat included, \$400/month + \$400 security, 586-939-7118. 1/28

Hamtramck studio apartments, good location, immediate occupancy, 248-229-4295, 248-229-4297 12/31

APARTMENTS & FLATS FOR RENT

Hamtramck, 2-family, upper and lower, 2441 Alice, 313-465-2344. 1/7

Hamtramck, 2242 Hewitt, lower 4 rooms, \$650/month + deposit, all utilities included, 586-588-1227. 1/28

HOUSE FOR RENT

Warren, 23507 Peters, 2 Br., finished basement, big living room, air conditioning, fenced yard, clean, good neighborhood, \$625/month + security deposit, 586-806-4888, 586-354-8673. 12/31

Single family, 3 Br. two-story, \$650/month + one month deposit, 313-444-5638. 1/7

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HAMTRAMCK, 9525 Jos. Campau, two-story, 45'x100' brick building with a full basement in the heart of town. Elevator to all three levels, rent to own or lease with option to buy, 248-931-9731. 12/31

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And now, part two of our year in review...

Oh what a year it was Continued from page 8

party, and that's exactly what happened when the non-profit hosted its semi-annual Community Baby Shower at Corinthian Baptist Church. About 50 new or expectant mothers attended the event, which was the tenth time in six years that it was held.

There was a new horizon for adult education in Hamtramck when the Horizon Adult/Alternative Education Center celebrated the grand opening of its brand new computer lab. The school was equipped with 20 Acer desktop computers complete with flat screen monitors and workspace thanks to a Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth grant.

Call it a coincidence ... yeah, a coincidence ... but six weeks after Michigan's smoking ban at bars and restaurants went into effect, there was a decrease of about \$8

million in Keno – a game limited to bars – gambling money collected by the state. Incidentally, state lawmakers began reconsidering the ban to allow bars and restaurants

an overall negative impact on businesses, particularly in bars.

The library celebrated its 92nd anniversary with a com-

project, and if it's possible to bring in Wayne County to increase funding and improve services to residents, then it's a good thing," said City Councilwoman and HUSS member Catrina Stackpoole.

Another Hamtramck favorite returned when the 16th Annual Winter Glow brought residents to the Hamtramck Community Center despite unseasonably chilly weather. Braving temperatures in the teens, residents enjoyed a number of season-themed activities courtesy of the Hamtramck Recreation Department.

After the city announced it



Horizon Adult/Alternative Education Center went hi-tech when it received 20 Acer computers and workstations courtesy of a grant from the Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth.

to offer smoking rooms. Anecdotal evidence throughout the city showed that the ban had

memorative ceremony at the Polish National Alliance (PNA) Banquet Hall on Caniff, inducting four new members into its "Hall of Fame." This year's inductees were Shannon Lowell, John Ulaj, Titus Walters and Jerzy Dabrowski.

City landmark Peoples State Bank's future was up in the air after the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) downgraded the bank from "significantly undercapitalized" to "critically undercapitalized."

A hit-and-run accident turned from a small incident to a near scandal when a police officer refused to take a report, saying it was department policy not to take reports for accidents that happen on private property. WXYZ Action News Investigator Scott Lewis picked up on the story, and, after the issue came to light, City Manager Bill Cooper confirmed that the



Peoples State Bank has had better years. This year the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation downgraded the bank from "significantly undercapitalized" to "critically undercapitalized."

was shutting the recycling program due to the budget deficit, the Hamtramck Recycling Commission was determined to keep it going. Counting on donations from those who use the service, it hoped to raise enough money to continue offering the option to residents in the city.

When a party store tried to open its doors across from the Metropolitan Baking Co., it turned into a situation of David versus Goliath. The bakery's owner claimed that if the party

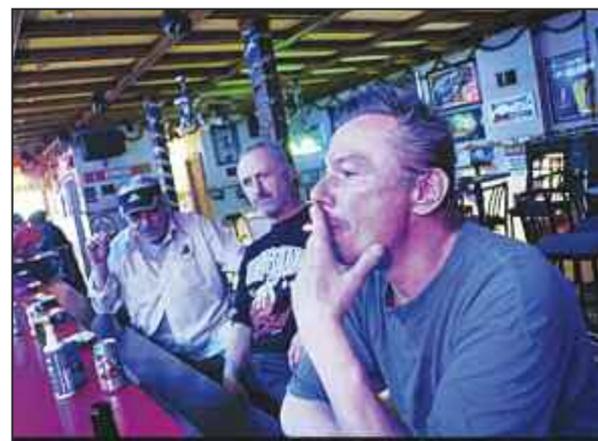


The 16th Annual Winter Glow was held at the Hamtramck Community Center and helped usher in the holiday season.

store were to re-open it would bring about negative consequences to his business and the neighborhood.

If taste is king, then the Sultan Al-Kabob – a new restaurant on Conant – rules Hamtramck. The casual dining establishment quickly won over customers after opening its doors early in the month.

"I think we're one of the best restaurants in Hamtramck," said manager Wadie Ali.



Due to the smoking ban that took effect May 1, state Keno revenue was down \$8 million just six weeks later. Even more troubling, bar and restaurant owners have reported an overall decrease in business.

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A proposal to open up a party store on Lumpkin caused a stir when neighbor Metropolitan Baking Co. complained that the store would be harmful to its business.

policy had been thrown out. "Since it's become an issue, we're going to change it," he said.

DECEMBER
The holiday season kicked off with the Goodfellows' food drive, and this year area residents needed help more than ever. Approximately \$7,000 was needed to pay for a few thousand meals for needy families.

An intersection of ideas involving the Hamtramck Union of Social Services (HUSS) and the Wayne County Health and Human Services Department may lead to a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) coming to the city. At the non-profit's final meeting of 2010, the two organizations agreed to pursue the matter as a joint effort.

"I think this is an important



When they posed for this picture, these girls had no idea that it would be used over and over throughout the year to help promote the recycling program.

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