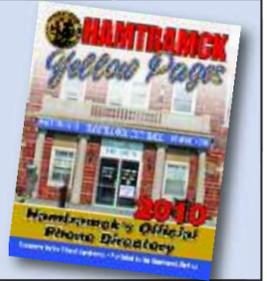


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Volume 3 No. 7
February 18, 2011
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Hamtramck

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Quick Hits

In the ongoing celebration of Black History Month, Hamtramck's public library will host a gospel concert tomorrow (Saturday, Feb. 19) at 1 p.m.

The mighty voices of the Inspirational Choir from Corinthian Baptist Church will perform. It should be a real treat and a cultural high point of the year.



Quote of the week ...

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

"Hamtramck is, in my opinion, one of the greatest cities in the country. It is literally a haven for creative people."

— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

Murder suspect has record of drugs and violent behavior

By Charles Sercombe

A 27-year-old man charged with beating his girlfriend to death in the Hamtramck Senior Plaza apartments has also admitted to an unsolved Detroit homicide, police say.

When Ward refused to hand over money, Jarvis picked up a hammer and hit her in the head several times, police say. He then took her money and her car to score drugs. He came back early the next



Murder suspect Benjamin Jarvis

Benjamin Jarvis was arraigned Wednesday in Hamtramck 31st District Court for the murder of Natalie Ward, 40. Police say he killed Ward Saturday evening, around 6 p.m., in Ward's apartment in the Senior Plaza apartment building after she refused to give him money so he could buy drugs.

morning, left an apology note and then again left with her vehicle.

Hamtramck Detective Jackie Crachiola said the content of the note could not be disclosed because it's part of an ongoing investigation into the matter. She said Jarvis confessed to the murder and an

Continued on page 6

Senior Plaza was at one time not just for seniors

By Charles Sercombe

One question lingering from the murder of a 40-year-old woman living in the Hamtramck Senior Plaza apartments is, why was she able to live in a senior apartment building?

The plaza is a federally-subsidized public housing project under the supervision of the Hamtramck Housing Commission, which is part of the federal HUD agency.

Although the perception is that the building is strictly for seniors, that hasn't been the case until just a year ago.

The building was mistakenly reserved for disabled adults as well as seniors. Natalie Ward, the woman who was murdered Saturday in her apartment at the Plaza, was disabled.

Housing Commission Executive Director Kevin Kondrat said federal law bars him from asking what exactly her disability was.

Kondrat said he began look-

ing into the disabled designation for the building a few years ago. He said having younger adults living in the apartment complex wasn't a good fit for seniors, and didn't make sense.

It took quite a bit of investigating and trying to get a hold of someone within the federal HUD bureaucracy, but finally his persistence paid off.

It's not a coincidence that Kondrat is also a retired Hamtramck detective.

The upshot, Kondrat said, was that someone in the Detroit HUD office made a typo in filling out some form or another and labeled the Plaza an apartment complex for the disabled as well as seniors.

With the matter cleared up, Kondrat said that now only seniors may apply to live in the apartments, but the dozen or so younger, disabled adults will be allowed to continue living there.

There are 170 tenants living in the Plaza.

Council does about-face on state loan

By Charles Sercombe

After weeks of haggling and passionate debate, the City Council agreed to apply for a \$2.5 million emergency state loan in a special council meeting Wednesday evening.

But that decision didn't come easy.

All councilmembers voted for the loan, except for Mohammed Hassan and Shahab Ahmed, who were absent.

At first it didn't look like the loan stood a chance. A motion made by Councilmember Catrina Stackpole, after about an hour's worth of discussion, to apply for the loan failed to receive a motion of support, meaning it didn't even come to a vote.

But what happened in the few minutes after that motion to change the minds of Councilmembers Cathie Gordon, Kazi Miah and Tom Jankowski is a mystery. The loan went through after Councilmember Jankowski did an about-face and motioned to apply for the loan, which brought in the other holdouts on council.

Councilmember Gordon questioned the need to seek \$2.5 million as opposed to just \$1 million. City Manager Bill Cooper explained several times that \$1 million would only see the city through the end of this fiscal year, which ends June 30.

He said that \$2.5 million would keep the city afloat through 2012. It is hoped the city will by that time, have settled its lawsuit against Detroit over how much Detroit owes Hamtramck from tax revenue collected from GM's Poletown plant.

Councilmember Jankowski was skeptical of warnings that, if the city fell into payless paydays, the state would immediately send in an emergency financial manager, calling that a "scare tactic."

Yet minutes later, he said about the loan: "We have to do this."

The coming year will give Cooper a chance to negotiate

Continued on page 2

City's oldest bank is now one for the history books

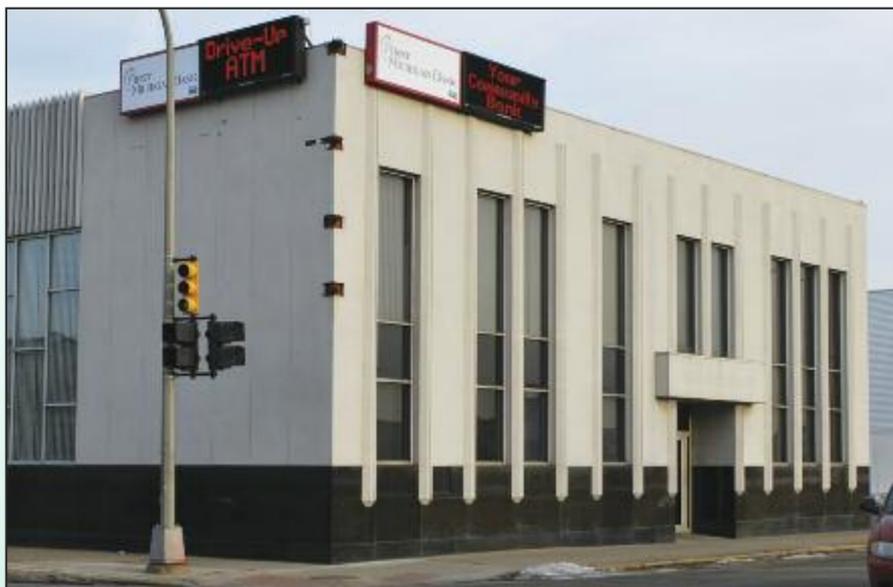
By Charles Sercombe

A series of bad loans finally caught up with Hamtramck's last remaining independent bank.

Federal regulators closed down Peoples State Bank last Friday and announced that First Michigan Bank out of Troy was taking over People's assets and deposits.

Peoples, located on Jos. Campau at Holbrook, had been struggling in recent years to stay afloat, and in the past year had been ordered by the FDIC to merge with another bank. Those in charge of People's had told this newspaper that a number of loans had defaulted in re-

Continued on page 2



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City's oldest bank is now one for the history books

cent times, causing severe damage to the bank's assets.

Federal regulators emphasized that individual accounts are insured up to \$250,000.

As the saga of Peoples worsened in recent months, a number of customers pulled their money from the bank, further sinking it.

The new owner of the bank, First Michigan, quickly stressed that accounts remain safe.

"Our top priority is to assure all customers that their deposits are safe and remain

readily available to them. We are excited to bring Peoples State Bank customers and employees into our banking family," said David T. Provost, chairman, president, and chief executive officer of First Michigan Bank, in a recent press release. "Our mission as a community bank is to continue to provide our customers and communities with localized, highly personalized service and enhanced products so that they, in turn, can achieve their financial goals." First Michigan has taken

Continued from front page

over all of the branches of the former Peoples State Bank. The branches were open for business last Saturday.

"Customers should know that it will be business as usual for them," Provost said. "Banking hours will remain the same. They will handle their banking business at their existing banking offices with the same friendly, local employees that they have come to know. They can rest assured that their deposits remain insured up to the maximum coverage allowed under the FDIC. We will continue to communicate details to all of our stakeholders, and we will work hard to make certain the transition is as seamless as possible for our customers."

Peoples had been in business for 102 years, starting out here in Hamtramck. The bank focused on the needs of recent immigrants, and for most of its history had only one branch.

In recent years, the bank had begun to expand, with its headquarters relocated to Madison Heights.

First Michigan Bank has been in existence for 10 months, but has grown rapidly during that time.

Council does about-face on state loan

Continued from front page

with the city employee unions for contract concessions. He has been trying to get the unions to agree to a less expensive health care provider, which Cooper estimates would save the city about \$1 million a year.

So far, the unions have not agreed to significant cuts. That may change, even without the help of the unions, in the weeks to come. State legislators are set to vote on changes to a state law regulating when the state can take over a financially distressed city in order to allow the city to tear up union contracts without the unions' consent.

Hamtramck's financial picture turned bleak in the last year-and-a-half when Detroit stopped payments from the Poletown plant, which in the past amounted to \$2-\$3 million a year.

Detroit is claiming it has overpaid Hamtramck \$7 million over the last several years. The two sides have

been negotiating a deal through the state Treasury Department and a deal is expected to break through in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, Cooper

erty values.

Hamtramck isn't alone in facing tough financial times. Many other communities are on the brink of insolvency. Hamtramck just happens to be the first municipality to bring its troubles to the state.

Several weeks ago Cooper asked permission from the state to file for bankruptcy, a request that Treasury officials turned down. State officials instead suggested the city accept a loan.

The loan is a sweet deal, as far as loans go. The interest rate is less than 1 percent, amounting to a payment of \$5,000 a year. The city

doesn't have to make payments on the principle of the loan for the first 10 years of the 20-year loan.

The city can also pay back the loan at any time, which may happen sooner rather than later if a settlement with Detroit is reached in the near future.



City Councilmembers meet Wednesday evening in a special meeting to discuss one more time whether to apply for an emergency state loan.

has warned that the city will run out of cash by mid-March. The state loan will buy the city time to work out other financial problems that have come up since the economy tanked.

Other problems with the city's budget include reduced tax revenue sharing aid from the state and declining prop-

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CITY OF HAMTRAMCK, MICHIGAN SEQ CHAPTER \h \r 10RDINANCE 2011-1

Ordinance 2011-1, known as the "Emergency Response Cost Recovery Ordinance," repeals and amends existing cost recovery provisions in the City Code and expands the scope for recovering costs associated with emergency response. A complete copy of the ordinances is available in the City Clerk's office.

Enacted: February 8, 2011

T. Edwin Norris, City Clerk

Published: February 18, 2011

Hamtramck, Michigan

This week at the library...

Gospel Music Concert - Saturday, February 19 at 1 p.m. In celebration of Black History Month, the library will host the Inspirational Choir from Corinthian Baptist Church with their annual Gospel Music Concert. Everyone is invited. Refreshments will be served.

Art Exhibit - February 19, 2011. In celebration of Black History Month, the library presents an art exhibit of a local African American artist, Jacqueline Walker. Her paintings will be displayed in the library until March 5, 2011.

Special Screening of a LiNK Documentary Movie "Hiding" - Thursday, March 24 at 7 p.m. LiNK (Liberty in North Korea) is an organization that is currently working on a modern day underground railroad, helping refugees who have escaped North Korea to find freedom. Many North Koreans face starvation if they stay (in addition to complete religious oppression and persecution), so they risk their lives to flee to China where they must live in hiding. If caught, they will be sent back to North Korea and executed or put into a concentration camp.

Premiere Showing of the Polish Movie "MGLA" - Friday, February 25 at 7 p.m. This movie, produced by Maria Dlużewska and Joanna Lichočka, presents interviews and known information about the plane crash that took place on final the approach to Smolensk airport and claimed the lives of the President of Poland and high ranking members of the Polish Government.

Black History Month Contest - "When I Think Africa..." contest is open to all school age children. All forms of media are accepted; for example, poems, short stories, paintings, drawings, photos, songs, essays, etc. All entries must be submitted by February 16, 5 p.m. Winners of the contest will be announced and prizes will be awarded on Saturday, February 19, during Black History Month Program.

ESL Class for Beginners - Saturday, February 19 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, February 26 at noon. All children are invited to the library's Storytime. Celebrate Black History Month by making African Unity Wreaths during the arts and crafts program after the reading of the book "Martin's Big Words" by Doreen Rappaport.

Computer Classes for Advanced Users - Monday, February 21 at 11 a.m. Adults with basic computer skills can enhance their computer literacy each Monday at the library. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

Computer Classes for Beginners - Wednesday, February 23 at 11 a.m. Basic instructions on computer use for beginners will be held on Tuesdays. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

Reading and Conversation for ESL Students - Tuesday, February 22 at 5:30 p.m. Jide Aje is the instructor for the reading and conversation ESL classes.

Math Club Meeting - Tuesday, February 22 at 4 p.m. Mr. Nuo is the instructor for the math club and math tutoring.

Movie Wednesday - Wednesday, February 23 at 3:30 p.m. Every Wednesday is movie day at the library. Come and enjoy our feature presentation, which includes free popcorn and snacks.

Black History Month Movie - Thursday, February 24 at 5:30 p.m. "Throw Down Your Heart" - Inspired by love of African music and an interest in tracing the roots of the banjo, American banjo great, Bela Fleck embarks on a musical journey through Uganda, Tanzania, Gambia and Mali, playing with locals and discovering the beauty of the land. Everyone is invited.

Winter Teen Club - Thursday, February 24 at 5:00 p.m. Members of the Teen Club will learn how to make peanut butter feeders that you can hang on a tree and watch the birds peck at. George Washington Carver, a black scientist, invented peanut butter. Everyone is invited to join.

Jeopardy at the Library - Thursday, February 24 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 - Thursday, March 10 at 6 p.m. Regular meeting of the Library Board will be held in the auditorium. Open to the public.

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

For more information about events at the library

call (313) 365-7050, or visit our website at <http://hamtramck.lib.mi.us>

where you can also access our online catalog.

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 Ian Perrotta

This week's Toast of the Town picks up where an article in our paper two weeks ago left off: Maria's Comida.

First of all, Maria's was going to show up in this paper anyway – a key fact about their salsa was wrong. We reported that it has a shelf life of 30 days, but the truth is its closer to 365 days. The state mandates that it last at least 30 days, but the Pronkos (Maria's owners) made sure they did it right so theirs stays fresh for a year. Once it's opened it lasts for about eight days, but who really needs that long to finish a jar of salsa? Especially the Roasted Habanero with Mango.

Speaking of that particular salsa, did you know that the Ahmed brothers at Amar Pizza are using it as a sauce on one of their pizzas? It's called the Southwestern Pizza, and though this writer hasn't tried it yet, based on previous performances by both restaurants involved it's probably safe to say that the pizza is delicious. (Kurshed, we'll take a large thin crust next Thursday at 4 p.m.) Amar also cooks a pizza with the hottest pepper in the world – it's called the Ghost Pizza – which may be the subject of a show on the Food Network, but that's another story for another week.

Back to Maria's, but we'll stay in the category of TV shows. You see, the restaurant will soon be featured on an episode of Detroit Public Television's show "Under the Radar Michigan." The show follows host Tom Daldin as he explores everything that Michigan has to offer that is, well, under the radar. As he goes to museums, neighborhoods, businesses and restaurants, his goal is to discover the people, places and things that are unique about the Mitten State.

One of those unique spots happened to be Hamtramck's own Maria's Comida, so on Monday (Feb. 7), the cast and crew came to town to check out the eatery and sample some of the goods or, rather, some of the greats – whatever you want to call it, the food is

stom. Essentially, it sells a company's coupon at a discount price and splits the profits. For the Maria's deal, you could buy \$20 worth of food for \$9, which was divided between the two companies.

Though getting only one-fourth of the menu price on



The host of Detroit Public Television's show "Under the Radar Michigan," Tom Daldin, right, speaks with Al and Marie Pronko during a recent taping. The episode is slated to air sometime in March.

fantastic. Anyway, the first thing that Haldin did when he got there was to sample the salsa. After he and his crew gave it rave reviews, they then went into the kitchen to watch some things get prepared.

During this time there was a lot of joking around between the Under the Radar guys and the Pronkos, and it was clear that everybody was enjoying themselves. They filmed a few items being cooked – Blackened Salmon with (here it comes again) Roasted Habanero with Mango Salsa, Asian Baby Back Ribs, Smoked Chorizo Spaghetti with Toasted Almonds and Chickpeas and Chile Garlic Shrimp – then it was time to dig in.

"It was a really good experience and we appreciate being chosen for the show," said Marie (as in not Maria, strange as it may be) Pronko. "They were a great crew and a lot of fun to work with. And it will definitely help the business!"

Also helping the business was a Groupon sale that happened on Wednesday (Feb. 9). For those who don't know, Groupon is a website that recently came out of nowhere to take the business world by

items may seem like a raw deal – and indeed Groupon has been criticized for this very reason – in the case of Maria's it brought in a ton of business. A total of 673 "groupings" were purchased, and the fact that only those who purchased the deal can get the deal means that the only money being spent (or, rather, not made) is money that comes from someone who has already become a customer by buying the discount.

Needless to say, you can expect Maria's to be a little busier than usual, and that was just the case last Friday night (Feb. 11) when a camera guy from "Under the Radar" came back to film a regular dinner service. The seats were packed and the plates were stacked, and it can all be seen sometime in March on Detroit Public Television.

Do you know of a cool bar, a great restaurant or just a nice place to hang out? If you have tips on special events or just want to shine some light on your favorite spot send a message to news@thehamtramck-review.com or call us at (313) 874-2100.

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Second Front Page

Poletown tax dispute may soon be settled

By Charles Sercombe

Detroit is not exactly whipping out a checkbook yet, but there is a good chance that Hamtramck's tax dispute with the city will be settled in the near future.

Hamtramck is suing Detroit for property tax revenue it shares from the GM Poletown plant, which straddles both cities. Detroit says it has overpaid Hamtramck \$7 million over several years.

Both sides met last Thursday in Lansing under the eye of state Treasury Department officials, who are trying to mediate a settlement. Hamtramck is about to run out of money by mid-March if Detroit doesn't begin making payments.

According to Hamtramck

City Manager Bill Cooper, the meeting went well.

"We walked away with the feeling that something was going to work out here," Cooper said.

Detroit officials are spending this week, Cooper said, crunching numbers to see what kind of settlement and future payment plan would work out. A rumor going through town is that the state will forgive a multi-million dollar debt Detroit owes in exchange for a settlement with Hamtramck.

Cooper said that's not exactly right, but added that state officials conceded they will have to bring something to the table to get the deal done.

Normally, Hamtramck re-

ceives upwards of \$2 million a year from Detroit. It's not known how much Detroit will agree to pay Hamtramck. In the meantime, Hamtramck is racking up a \$3 million deficit, largely due to non-payments for the past two years from Detroit.

Cooper said that even if Detroit makes a payment soon, it's likely the city will still need to take an emergency loan from the state to meet employee payrolls and pay contractors. The city is applying for a \$2.6 million loan with an interest rate of less than 1 percent a year.

He said the city could immediately pay back the loan if Detroit comes through with a significant payment.

School district unveils plan to close down Dickinson West

By Charles Sercombe

The downsizing of Hamtramck's public schools is taking shape.

At last week's School Board meeting, Superintendent Tom Niczay made available a one-page outline of what is going to happen when the district closes down Dickinson West Elementary School.

The school is housed in the former school operated by St. Ladislaus Parish. The district began renting the school from the Detroit Archdiocese in 1992 when the district was short of classroom space.

Those days are long gone. Instead of worrying about where to put students, the district is fighting to retain and recruit students. Local charter schools have drained away public school kids,

which in turn has resulted in the loss of millions of dollars in state financial aid for the school district.

Closing down Dickinson West will save the district \$468,966 a year. The lease costs the district \$192,000 a year and \$276,966 on utilities. Although transferring the 600 students at Dickinson to other school buildings will be straining, the plan is workable, said Niczay.

"We're going to figure this out and make due," Niczay said.

Here's how Niczay plans to transfer the students:

Students in grades one through four will be housed in portable classrooms that have sat unused for several years on the grounds of Kosciuszko Middle School.

Those in grades five and six will be placed in Kosciuszko school.

Inside Kosciuszko, those in grades one through six will be in a separate part of the school building, away from seventh and eighth graders. And within that grouping, fifth and sixth graders will be located in the east end of the school with their own entrance doors.

An unused room in the school will be converted into a cafeteria for their use.

The closing down of Dickinson West will also mean laying off teachers and other school employees. Niczay said he does not yet know how many employees will be laid off, but said layoffs will start April 14.

Talk back ...

Ever wonder about the story behind the story in Hamtramck? It's not often we get a chance to pull back the curtain and let our readers in on some of the behind-the-scenes of events and stories we have covered.

By Charles Sercombe

It occurs to me that, after chronicling the happenings of Hamtramck now for over 25 years, I have a few police stories to tell.

But first, a note to the officers and detectives I have had the pleasure of meeting and talking to: Don't worry, your secrets and confidentialities are safe. Well, that is until someone offers me a movie deal!

I figure the best way to reminisce about my police beat days is to start at the beginning, when I was what we used to call a "cub reporter."

I had been on the job just a few weeks on one particular hot August day. I had never

seen a dead body before, nor had I given it much thought.

Since then, I sometimes gruesomely joke that I have seen just about every kind of dead body: stabbed, impaled, shot, suffocated, strangled, burned, hung, beaten, stomped, crashed, drowned, OD'd, old age, heart attack, suicide ... did I forget anyone?

On this day in question, I witnessed my first corpse, a fellow who was run over - crushed - by a car.

He was the victim of an elderly woman who lost control of her car while exiting the drive-through of what was called at the time the Bank of Commerce (today it's called PNC) on Jos. Campau at Caniff. The way it was explained to me, the woman couldn't stop her car or steer away and ended up driving across the street and straight into a male pedestrian, pinning him against the front of a building.

I'm not sure how I found out about the accident because at that time, a certain editor of the former Citizen newspaper, which was just down the street, was dead set against having a police scanner in the office.

Go figure, but suffice it to say, I was down at the scene soon after it happened.

It was a long, hot wait for a tow truck driver to arrive and move the car. During that time, the body of the man was out of sight, under the grill of the car. Being a newbie reporter I figured - assumed - the cops had things, you know, under control.

But in that heat, and after an exchange of words, something began to gnaw at me.

How did they know the guy was dead? How did they know he wasn't just unconscious and couldn't have been saved? No ambulance came, nor was one called.

Why didn't the cops just back up the car and check him out? Heck, why in the world was there no friggin' ambulance?

We continued to wait and wait for a tow truck driver.

Yet, that gnawing away didn't stop: How did they know he was dead?

That day still puzzles and infuriates me. It also drove home the cliché: never assume.

But there we were, and I couldn't help but feel a growing sense of incompetence at play in front of my eyes, or worse - apathy.

Having said that, there was a good chance this guy was indeed dead.

But then again - never assume.

When the tow truck driver ar-

rived and pulled the car back, the man's body was limp and slumped down. There was no blood or disfigurement. Here was a guy just moments ago walking down the sidewalk.

Who would ever think a car would come suddenly up the sidewalk and smash into you?

To this day, I make it a point to glance around when I'm walking down there. I learned a lot that day, at the expense of some poor guy. In Hamtramck, you have to ask a lot questions because making assumptions here can be deadly - in more ways than one.



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Hamtown's movers and shakers...

By Ian Perrotta

Who she is:

Though she's no longer the city's Special Events Coordinator due to budget cuts, the party is still going strong for Hamtramck resident **Eve Doster Knepp**. These days she keeps plenty busy as the owner of the public relations firm Norwegian Blue PR and as the coordinator of the Hamtramck Blowout, but she was still able to take a moment from her busy schedule to chat with The Review.

You've been known to put together some pretty awesome events - either your parents must have went away for the weekend a lot when you were in high school or you're just incredibly gifted at what you do. How exactly did you get into your current line of work?

Doster: Becoming an event coordinator just sort of happened naturally out of the confluence of a lot of weird, unrelated factors. In terms of doing music events specifically, that just sort of happened out of my natural proclivity get people to con-

gregate (yes, I have been throwing sanctioned and non-sanctioned shindigs since I was a kid) and my love for live music.

I have a fairly abiding devotion to the Detroit music scene; I've lived all of my late-teen/adult life within it. It's my privilege to work with this terrific sub-society of incredibly talented people. Detroit's creative sector is the best in the world, if you ask me.

Also, there's no doubt that the five years I spent writing for the Metro Times had a lot to do with why I opted for PR. I didn't have the right personality to pursue music journalism any further, but I had all these connections from years of working as the listings editor — not to mention countless years before that bartending at fairly popular music venues (never underestimate the value of a good bartending job), touring, playing in bands, etc — so organizing music events was a fairly organic transition.



It must be interesting to do the same type of job but for different people and companies. What was one of your most favorite events to plan? And what about the least?

Doster: I don't think I have a preferred type of event. They each have their own set of advantages and drawbacks. Diversifying with corporate, political and entertainment events is the best way to learn how event planning really works.

You'd think that because of my love of music that I'd prefer music-related events, but that's not the case. In fact, sometimes being on the planning end of something you love can sort of distort it for you.

More than anything, having a challenge and a clean slate to create something enormous excites me. I love the possibility that comes with producing — you start with nothing; and if everything comes together, you work your tail off, and you have a little luck, some magical things can happen.

It doesn't hurt that I really like people and I enjoy seeing them enjoying themselves. That being said, I've decided that this is going to be my last year booking the Blowout. I have some big changes coming up this year, and it feels right to sign off in 2011.

Aww, bummer - you'll surely be missed. So what does the future hold for you?

Doster: I'm leaving for no reason other than I feel like it's time to let someone else, hopefully someone a little younger, take over. This year feels like the right time to step aside. I adore my bosses at the Metro Times, and booking the Blowout for four years has been a privilege. But ... I am beginning a new chapter in my life, which means I need to start streamlining. I have complete faith

that the Metro Times has this one under control.

That's good to know. Switching topics, you're originally from Royal Oak but you choose to live here in Hamtramck. What is it about the city that made you want to come here, and why do you stay?

Doster: Royal Oak was a wonderful place to grow, but, I pretty much left town at 19 when wanderlust came knocking. In fact, I moved around a lot until I finally found my home here in Hamtramck back in 2001.

Hamtramck is, in my opinion, one of the greatest cities in the country. It is literally a haven for creative people. Also, it is a close-knit community in an urban setting. Yes, we have our foibles, and let's be honest, some downright idiotic things go down here sometimes; but Hamtramck is, to me anyway, the antithesis of suburban stasis.

I love that I can walk to my grocer, my baker and my butcher. I like that our town is peppered with family-owned ethnic restaurants and mom-and-pop stores — not soulless strip malls and hideous, cheap architecture. I like our dollar stores and our old man bars. I love that on any given night a great musician is probably performing at one of our music venues.

I like that places like Public Pool and Pops Packing are on par with initiatives happening in any major city in the world. I like that our mayor is a woman I aspire to be more like.

Speaking of great musicians in the area, your next big event is the Hamtramck Blowout. It's now in its 14th year - how exactly did it get started, and do you think has another 14 years in it?

Doster: The Hamtramck Blowout started back in 1997 by two phenomenal guys — Chris Handyside and Brian Boyle. The idea was to create a SXSW-style event, in Hamtramck, specifically in celebration of the then-burgeoning Detroit Music scene.

This took place during the earliest stages of the Garage Rock explosion so the event gained popularity fairly quickly. As the years went by, it sort of evolved into an event that kicks off the new music year. It has also become a great place for new/

unheard of bands to get exposure on a level they normally might not.

I know that the Metro Times is committed to keeping this event tasteful and local — and if you ask me, you can't beat that model. The Blowout will be around for a long, long time.

What can we expect for this year's Blowout? And are there any bands in particular that you're looking forward to seeing?

Doster: Metro Times' Managing Editor Brian Smith described this year's Blowout perfectly, so, to quote him from metrotimes.com:

"Of course, it's the music that matters. And the Hamtramck Blowout music festival, which turns an unruly 14 years old this year, is a mad collage of genres that matter right now.

"The whole thing is celebration by design. Hundreds of bands and thousands of Michigan State music fans — including others from such faraway lands known as Berlin, Wis., and Dublin, Ohio — descend on nearly 20 old-man bars in the beautifully flawed town of Hamtramck. They'll discover a brilliant cross-section of tacky and genius, of indie ironies and girl-boy anti-harmonies, as well as tatted riff-a-rama. They'll unearth super word-fly hip hop, Casio pajama pop, velvet-tongued soul and, perhaps, if lucky, deranged Hamtown polkas fueled on jezynowka. In short, they absorb what's best in up-to-the-moment Michigan-created music."

I can honestly say I am excited about every single one of the bands. I'm especially eager to re-see Hamtramck-based band, The Beekeepers (very Frank Zappa-esque) and a ton of great new bands from Ypsilanti. I could literally go on for pages about how much I respect these artists.

Now that you've answered all of our questions, is there anything you'd like to say? Go for it.

Doster: I would just like to take this opportunity to give shout outs to the hundreds of volunteers who keep the ethos of this town alive. It is my sincere hope that these people are truly appreciated. Without volunteers we are a dead town. We can all do better in this department.

Rather than insisting, "You know what you should do to make this better?"...we should instead challenge ourselves to instead ask, "What can I do to help?" I am biased, of course, but successful events and specialty shopping are a large part of the reason Hamtramck is still on the map — we should appreciate the people who make huge personal sacrifices to keep it all going (this means you: Kathleen Bittner, Rachel Srodek, Konrad Maziarz, Raymond and Joan Bittner, Tom and Cindy Cervnak, Greg Kowalski and countless equally deserving others).

That being said, I love you Hamtramck and I'm beyond proud to call you my home. Keep calm and carry on — everything is going to be OK.

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Street Life

City's cultural life about to explode wide open

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

By Walter Wasacz

Earlier this week at The Review office we were talking about what's going on around town the next few weeks. Sure, a lot is going on in the political and economic front, with anticipation building on how the governor's budget will impact the city and all of us in it. The cuts will affect plenty across the state, not just Hamtramck.

As ever we soldier on in search of cultural refreshment and positive buzz that enriches our community life. Hamtramck has plenty of it, of course. It makes us what we are: a social organism made up of over 20,000 residents and probably more fans from outside the city's borders. All roads lead here, we like to say.

But the next few weeks are slim pickings. Call it the calm before the storm. In the weeks ahead in early March, 14 city bars and lounges will host the Hamtramck Blowout, one of the country's

largest and longest running street level indie rock festivals.

A few days later is Paczki Day, our version of Fat Tuesday, the day that Catholics traditionally stuff themselves with food and drink, having too much fun if they're lucky, before undertaking a fast of their choice for Lent. The Lenten season lasts until April 24, Easter Sunday, another festive time in Hamtramck. The Polish stores in the city are usually packed with shoppers the week before, creating a holiday glow that compares to – and some say exceeds – Christmas.

Squeezed in between are special events, like a closing party for Public Pool's great winter show, Automobiles: Shaping our landscapes, designing our lives, which opened with a bang last month with a toy car crash spectacle that took place in a frigid Bozek's parking lot.

On Feb. 26, the artist known as Toybreaker (better known to her friends and family as artist-designer Bethany Shorb) performs along with various writers



doing personal readings based on accidents.

Should be a smashing night of gritty art fun.

In late March, an installation and solo exhibition by Marcelynn Bennett-Carpenter opens at the 2739 Edwin gallery. We'll have a bit more to say about these events as the dates draw closer.

So consider the rest of February as a time to rest up and re-charge for some end-of-winter and early spring action. Enjoy the weather. It looks like some warming trends are breaking. Get outside and take a walk. We'll look for you down on the street.

Gardener's Corner ...

By Kathleen Wojcinski

You know you have cabin fever:

If, your nose print is permanently etched on the window.

If, your carpet has a path worn down from the window to the couch.

If, your couch has a permanent fanny groove.

If, your remote channel but-

ton is worn off.

If, you're beginning to think George Lopez is handsome.

If, your huge selection of flavored tea is down to "Red Rose" black tea.

If, you find yourself dancing to the Beach Boys while wearing a Hawaiian shirt.

If, you get an overwhelming desire to run out for ciga-

rettes, then realize you don't smoke.

If, you get an overwhelming urge to attend a City Council meeting.

Well, have no fear, spring is near. Really. Watch the wil-lows. They let you know first by turning bright yellow, and then getting greener each day. Cheer up!



Murder suspect has record of drugs and violent behavior

Continued from front page

unrelated Detroit homicide. Detroit police have interviewed Jarvis about the homicide. No charges have been filed in that alleged incident.

Ward had an undisclosed disability, which is why she was allowed to live in the federally-subsidized senior apartment building.

Her mother became concerned about over her whereabouts when Ward failed to answer the phone over the weekend. The family went to the apartment building on Monday, and asked for a staffer to open the apartment door.

Upon entering, the staffer saw Ward's body on the floor and blood on the walls.

Crachiola said that even though the beating occurred around 6 p.m., no one reported hearing anything, other than a stereo.

Ward had picked up Jarvis earlier in the day from a halfway house where he was staying. He is on parole for felonious assault, drug dealing and the illegal use of a gun.

Jarvis had been in prison for several years.

Ward's mother told police who her daughter was dating. Investigators then went to

Jarvis' family to find out which drug house he could be found in. Police staked out a neighborhood just east of Hamtramck's border with Detroit and found him driving Ward's car.

Jarvis is facing several felony charges besides first degree murder and, if found guilty, will spend the rest of his life in prison. A \$2 million cash bond was set. Jarvis' preliminary examination is Feb. 24.

This is Hamtramck's first murder of the year, and the first murder ever in the history of the Senior apartment building.

Hamtramck Housing Executive Director Kevin Kondrat said the building's security cameras captured Ward and Jarvis entering the building, and then Jarvis coming back and forth, as well as him taking Ward's car.

Joan Barrios, who lives in the apartment building, said she knew Ward, and described her as pretty but also as having trouble with men. She said she also ran into Jarvis several times.

"He could be nice and he could be rude," Barrios said.

"You never know what goes on behind closed doors," Barrios added.

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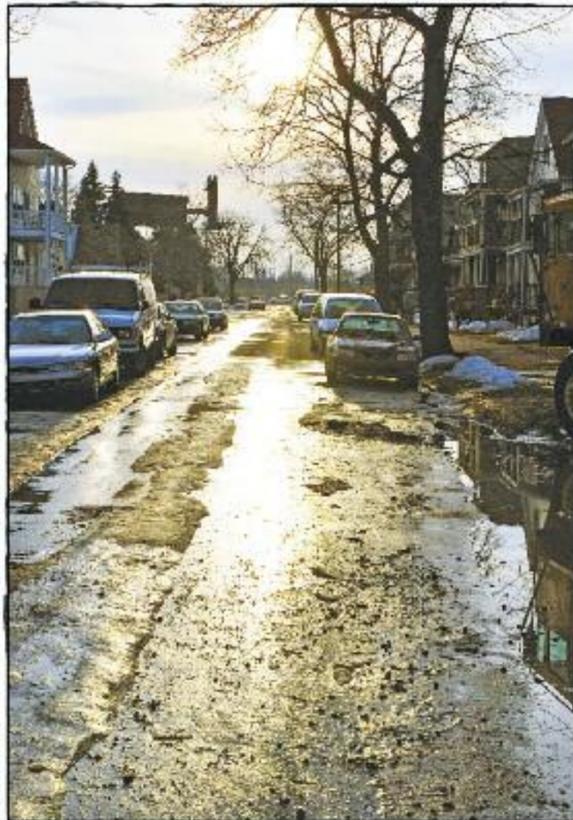
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Capo Lounge: No Cover Charge. Tuesdays – Karaoke, Thursdays are Thirsty Thursdays Ladies Night live DJ; Dress to Impress. Fridays and Saturdays – Live DJs. Sunday is SEXY SUNDAY live DJ 11625 Jos. Campau (313) 365-CAPO (2276).

Carbon Lounge: 11474 Joseph Campau.

Celina's Sports Bar: Lots of TV's, sports and hot women, 11667 Jos. Campau; (313) 365-4194.

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Ice Nightclub: Michigan's largest gay bar and the only bar with a 4 a.m. dance permit. Open Friday & Saturday, 10 p.m. 18+ welcome. Cover \$5 & \$10. DJ Lt. Dre Fridays. DJ Chico Saturdays, \$2 well drinks and domestic beer until 11 p.m. 11425 Jos. Campau, (313) 365-1446 www.icedetroit.net

Motor City Sports Bar: Great burgers and beer – \$1 domestic beers every Tuesday, draft beer \$1 every day, \$2 well mixed drinks every day, best char-grilled burgers, hands-down – put us to the test, karaoke every Thursday, 9122 Jos. Campau (313) 875-4710.

Painted Lady: Mondays – \$1 beer night w/ Todd. Tuesdays – B-movie Night. Wednesdays – Opium Den; Thursdays – Honky Tonk/Ladies Night, \$2 wells; 2930 Jacob; (313) 874-2991

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