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# The Review

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## Quick Hits

Curious about Hamtramck's financial road to recovery plan?

It's been several weeks in the making, and now Hamtramck Emergency Manager Cathy Square is ready to discuss her plan to eliminate the city's budget deficit and make it financially sound by this time next year.

You can read the highlights of the plan on the front page of this issue.

Next Wednesday (Aug. 21), Square will host a town hall meeting in city hall inside the council chambers at 10 a.m.

The public will also get to air their concerns and opinions as well.

# Tax delinquency may come back to bite mayoral hopeful

By Charles Sercombe

This could be a potential game changer in the mayoral election.

On Friday (Aug. 9), three days after Tuesday's Primary Election, it came to The Review's attention that leading mayoral candidate, Abdul Algazali, is apparently two years behind in property taxes for two buildings he owns on Jos. Campau.

According to the Wayne County Treasurer's online site, for the years 2011 and 2012 Algazali owes a total of \$9,498 for his building at 9222 Jos. Campau.

He owes another \$2,819 for the same years at 8557 Jos. Campau.

Both properties have been "forfeited" and are "subject to foreclosure," according to the county.

So, how does any of this po-

tentially alter the mayor's race?

According to the City Charter, on page 11, Section 6-08, any elected official who is in default

to the city will have their election votes be termed "void."

Section 6-08 says:

"No person shall be elected or appointed to any office who is a defaulter to the City or to any board, or office, or department thereof, or to any school district, county, or other municipal

corporation of the State, now or heretofore existing. All votes for the election or appointment of any such defaulter shall be void."

The charter does not define what being a "defaulter" means, but in a number of dictionary definitions it includes meaning being behind on financial obligations.

Algazali, who is currently a



City Councilmember and Mayor Pro Tem, Abdul Algazali



Mayoral hopeful Abdul Algazali owes over \$9,000 in property taxes for his building at 9222 Jos. Campau, according to the Wayne County Treasurer's Office. That could mean Algazali's primary election votes are voided, according to a provision in the city charter.

city councilmember and mayor pro tem, did not return calls for comment.

City Councilmember Robert Zwolak was a member of the Charter Revision Commission when that provision was adopted. He said it's likely it was taken from other city charters.

Asked what he thought the word defaulter means he said:

"Basically someone who has an obligation to the city that is past due."

Zwolak pointed out that when a business goes to renew its business license with the city clerk, all bills owed to the city, such as water and taxes, must be paid up before the license is issued.

As for Algazali running for

Continued on page 2

# Hamtramck Labor Day Festival will indeed make another return



You'll be able to get your polka on again this year at the Hamtramck Labor Day Festival, which runs Aug. 31-Sept. 2.

By Charles Sercombe

Yes. Yes, that is, there will be a Hamtramck Labor Day Festival this year, just in case you were wondering.

And it appears a lot of people have been asking if there is going to be a festival this year. Questions about the festival arose several weeks ago when word got out that the city administration was under a spending freeze.

That meant organizers were going to be required to produce up-front money to cover overtime police costs and any

other incidental costs to the city. The hold-up was figuring out what exactly were those costs.

Festival co-organizer Konrad Maziarz told The Review a week ago that everything was covered, and the festival was moving forward.

But then the next thing that cropped up was the question of who was going to cover the city's costs for helping set up the Polish Day Parade, which is held on Labor Day during the festival.

That's been taken care of as

Continued on page 2

# EM releases financial plan for recovery

By Charles Sercombe

Hamtramck city employees and property owners are going to have to give up a little to turn the city's financial situation around.

Emergency Manager Cathy Square released her "Emergency Financial and Operating Plan" for the city on Wednesday, and in it she details what cuts she proposes as well as a one-time only property tax increase to get up to speed on money owed to the employees' pension program.

First the bad news for property owners: Expect to pay an extra 7.25 mills on this winter's tax bill.

For the average homeowner, that will amount to \$150. The tax will raise a needed \$1.2 million to make the pension fund sound.

But here's something that should ease the pain: Four tax mills are coming off the tax bill because a basement flooding lawsuit award has been paid off. In total, property owners will only pay an additional 3.25 mills compared to the last few tax bills.

Another sensitive area is job cuts in the police and fire departments. However, there



Emergency Manager Cathy Square will present her financial recovery plan next Wednesday.

won't be any actual job layoffs since several positions in the departments have been left vacant.

Square said she was sensitive to what residents and community leaders told her what they wanted, and in preparing the plan decided to keep the police and fire departments instead of merging with another community.

"The things that are in the budget are the things the city

Continued on page 4

## 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.

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## Hamtramck Labor Day Festival will indeed make another return

Continued from front page

well, with the parade committee providing street barricades to block off side streets, and the Hamtramck Police Reserves are apparently donating their services.

This year the festival runs Aug. 31-Sept. 2, and as usual there will be plenty of food vendors, beer and drinks.

Oh yeah, lots of bands as well. Following a long-established tradition, Hamtramck's favorite party band, The Polish Muslims, will play at their usual Sunday slot at about 6 p.m.

The rowdy "canoe" races will also take place before the parade on Monday, at about noon, on Jos. Campau closer

to Holbrook.

The parade kicks off at 1:30 p.m.

We recently asked the festival public relations contact, Ana Cukovic, for an update, and here's what she had to say:

"I have received news on the bands that will be gracing our stages this year: Festival favorites will return this year including Kresge Fellow Mike Hurtt's Haunted Hearts, hailing from New Orleans, and The Polish Muslims. As well as a solo performance by Joe Mazola (of the Detroit Cobras and the Sugarcoats), and appearances by new groups to the festival like Radio Burns, a high school-aged ILL Itches,

Jeecy and the Jungle and other promising young acts.

"We will also have craft beer from the following breweries: Motor City Brewing Works, Griffin Claw Brewing Company (GCBC), Saugatuck Brewing Company, Cheboygan Brewing Company

"Hatch is helping with the festival and they will have a tent for arts and exhibits.

"Boat Races are on Labor Day around noon. If any bars want to participate and build a canoe, they can contact me and I will direct them to the appropriate person.

"We also still have available

spaces for vendors and we also need volunteers.

"Please 'like' us on Facebook and check it out for any updates on the events, as we are still developing the program.

"We have Hamtramck Labor Day T-shirts available for \$15 at the following bars: Polish Sea League, Whiskey in the Jar, Kelly's, The New Dodge Lounge, Tight Fittin' Jean's Bar. More locations to be announced."

Anyone who wants to volunteer or become a vendor, contact Cukovic via email at: [cukovic.a@gmail.com](mailto:cukovic.a@gmail.com).

## Tax delinquency may come back to bite mayoral hopeful

Continued from front page

mayor and being behind two years in property taxes, Zwolak said "He's not a person who should be in a position to tell people what they can or can't do.

"He's an embarrassment."

Acting City Manager Kyle Tertzag said the city had been unaware of the delinquency, but the information has been forwarded to the city attorney for review.

"It's important that we follow the law, and we will do so," Tertzag said.

He declined to elaborate.

Mayor Karen Majewski, who finished 61 votes behind Algazali in last Tuesday's Primary Election and will square off against him in the November General Election, said that even if the city attorney decides

there is no action to take, Algazali is not going to look good.

"Anybody who owes the city money ought to be ashamed of themselves," she said.

Another lingering question is, if Algazali's election results are thrown out, does that mean the third-place finisher, John Ulaj, automatically moves up to the number two spot to face-off with Mayor Karen Majewski in the November General Election ballot?

(Disclaimer: John Ulaj is the owner of The Review.)

The charter does not speak to the issue of what happens after a candidate or elected official's election results are voided. Another possibility is that Majewski runs unopposed.

Algazali, a chiropractor, has consistently voted against tax and fee increase proposals while on city council, and in his campaign literature for the primary election prominently mentioned that.

(Want to review Algazali's tax record? You can look up the information at <http://www.waynecounty.com/treasurer/>

Once you get to the page, scroll down to the box that says "pay property taxes" and click the online button. You will then be asked two questions. Hit "enter site" on the first page that comes up and "accept disclaimer" on the next page that appears.

Once you get to the address finder page, type in the street address and for the street name type: jos campau - with no period after jos.)

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## This week at the library...

**Summer Reading Program Final Registration** - Wednesday, August 21 at 1 p.m. The regular session of the Summer Reading Program will start with Reasonable Facsimili Pirate Show. Games, contests and reading journal entries will follow. All children are invited.

**Pecha Kucha Night** - Wednesday, August 21 at 8 p.m. A touch of creativity in architecture, photography, fashion, interior design, painting and dance are some of the topics presented. Everyone is invited.

**Basic Computer Class** - Thursday, August 22 at 11:30 a.m. This week's class is on basic computer usage, Internet searches, e-mail and word processing. Registration is required, and new students are welcome.

**Reading and Writing ESL Class** - Thursday, August 22 at 12 noon. The reading and writing ESL class conducted by Ms. Latisha is free to the public (registration required).

**Citizenship and Naturalization Classes** - Thursday, August 22 at 5:30 p.m. This program, conducted by the International Institute, is free of charge to Hamtramck residents. It provides help with preparation of

documents and legal assistance, if necessary.

**Family Story Time for Children** - Thursday, August 22, at 6 p.m. Join your friends at the library for a reading of a storybook. This week's topic is "A Good Day."

**Teen Club Meeting** - Friday, August 23, at 2:00 p.m. Teens are invited to join us for summer meeting of the Teen Club. This week we will learn the art of weaving with Ann Schumacher.

**ESL Class "News for You"** - Friday, August 23 at 3:30 p.m. This intermediate ESL class conducted by Latisha, free to Hamtramck residents, consists of reading news articles from a publication prepared for ESL called "News for You."

**Library Gardening Club** - Friday, August 23 at 4 p.m. Everyone is invited to join the library gardening club, with activities in the library community garden. Each week we will do a project in the garden and provide each member with a chance to get their own gardening plot, and grow vegetables, herbs or flowers to their liking. For more information see Ania or Kate.

**Toddler Time at the Library** - Monday, August 26 at 11 a.m. & 3:30 p.m. Join us for story time, arts & crafts, and games. This week's theme is "Beach & Water Day." (Children must be accompanied by an adult.)

**Polish Day Parade** - Monday, September 2, at 12:30 p.m. All parade participants are asked to gather at 12:30 p.m. at the parking lot at Jos. Campau and Holbrook to get ready for the parade. T-shirts and parade decorations will be distributed on site. Parade starts at 1:30 p.m. and will disband on Casmere and Jos. Campau by the Hamtramck High School Building. Everyone is invited to march with the library.

**Friends of the Library Meeting** - Thursday, September 12 at 6:00 p.m. FHPL President Kathy Kristy and Treasurer George Gorday invite all members and volunteers to participate in the regular monthly meeting.

**Meeting of the Library Board** - Thursday, September 12 at 6 p.m. Regular meeting of the Library Board will be held in the auditorium. Open to the public.

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

# Second Front Page

## New restaurant dishes up the real Middle Eastern cuisine

By Charles Sercombe

Hamtramck's restaurant scene continues to expand.

In recent years and months, there has been a burst of growth in restaurants. Now, save room in your tummy for one more.

Caniff Coney & Grill, featuring American, Greek and Mediterranean food, recently opened its doors at the former Kosciuszko Club.

Larry Shallal's family has been operating party stores for the past 15 years in town, and he has been working on the newest addition to their business investment for the past five years.

Before the restaurant opened, the Shallal family tried their hand in running a fruit market at this site. But an ongoing dispute with city officials over getting a curb cut to allow a driveway into their side parking lot put a dent in business.

For years, city officials have not allowed a driveway into the lot in the belief that it would increase traffic congestion and

endanger high school students walking to and from school located across the street.

Finally, however, city officials retreated from that position.

No hard feelings, Larry Shallal said.

From this point, he's more interested about talking up his



From left: Larry Shallal, Chef Salah and Larry's brother Wally have transformed the former Kosciuszko Club on Caniff into Hamtramck's newest addition to the restaurant scene: Caniff Coney & Grill.

restaurant and what makes it unique. At first glance, the décor and menu resemble a typical Middle Eastern restaurant that can be found all over the metro area.

But here, he said, the real Middle Eastern fair is being dished up – not the Lebanese style most consumers are familiar with.

More specifically, this is Chaldean food, something you can typically find in Baghdad.

"We know our food," said

rant apart is that all meats are halal. There is no pork served here.

"That's in respect to the Muslim community," Shallal said.

Besides Middle East food, the restaurant offers a wide range of foods, including a typical American style breakfast as well as burgers.

Shallal and family have also been sensitive to the area's income level and have priced items a few dollars less than other restaurants.

"Our prices are affordable for the community," Shallal said.

(Caniff Coney & Grill is located at 3124 Caniff.)

Shallal, whose family is from Iraq.

It's all about how the beef and chicken are prepared and served.

What also sets this restau-

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School Supply Drive at August Dinner

## Thieves are targeting motorcycles and gold necklaces

By Charles Sercombe

Hey bikers, better lock up your hogs.

The Police Department has received several reports in the last few weeks of the thefts of motorcycles, mostly taken from backyards.

"It's one of the few times that we have been hit hard," said police investigator Mike Stout.

Stout says he thinks someone, or possibly a ring, is driving around town in a tow truck or flat bed truck and stealing

the bikes.

So far, it's been mostly older models, bikes from the 1970s and 1980s, that have been targeted.

Stout said it could be that the bikes are being taken for parts.

He suggested bike owners take some precautions, such as parking bikes in a garage, if possible, or chaining them up to something secure.

Residents should also be on the lookout for people cruising the alleys and looking over

fences.

Also being stolen are mopeds. In an Internet search, it appears that motorcycle thefts are on a decline nationwide, with the exception of California. Hondas appear to be the favorite of thieves.

In other crime trend news, reports have returned that gold necklaces are being snatched from people who are out walking on the streets.

Police Chief Max Garbarino was asked about the latest string of reports at Tuesday's city council meeting.

"We have a lot of leads on that," he told the council. "I think that will be breaking up soon."

He also noted that police are on top of a break-in crew working the city.

About the recent crime wave, Councilmember Tom Jankowski noted: "People are scared."

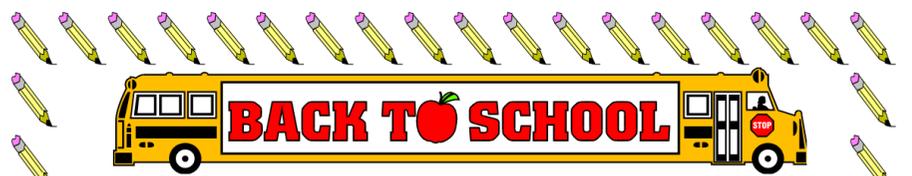
Chief Garbarino encourages anyone who sees something suspicious to not hesitate and call 911 immediately.

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A parent or legal guardian must also be present to receive a ticket.

Dates for receiving tickets for Grades 1-12 at the Hamtramck Community Center:

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Sept. 2 - Walk in Hamtramck Labor Day Parade

Sept. 14 - Soup Kitchen 2-4 p.m.

Sept. 21 - Polish Dinner 4-7 p.m.

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## EM releases financial plan for recovery

Continued from front page

indicated it wanted," Square told The Review.

Several city employees and contractors will be let go in the plan as Square is proposing to outsource code enforcement and the Income Tax Department.

"This is all of us working together and sacrificing," Square said of the cuts and proposed tax.

One thing that won't happen, Square said in the report, is the city filing for bankruptcy.

The city has a \$3 million budget deficit. The savings outlined in the financial plan will total \$4.7 million by the time everything kicks in – which should be in about a year.

"By the time I leave, you won't have a deficit," Square said.

Here is a snapshot of the proposed budget savings and revenue increases made by Square:

Sell city lots (there are 400 potentially up for grabs): \$200,000

Rental dwelling registrations and inspection fees: \$178,000

One-time property tax for pension fund: \$1.2 million

Reduce budget for mayor and council: \$32,000

10 percent salary cut and elimination of various financial perks for the fire and police departments: \$847,000

Reduce 10 total full-time positions in the police and fire departments: \$1 million

Eliminate the Downtown Development Authority Director and Community Economic & Development Coordinator: \$77,500

Health insurance change for active employees and retirees: \$534,000

Eliminate dental, optical and life insurance for employees and retirees: \$176,000

Reduce workers compen-

sation and liability insurance: \$39,000

Outsource Hamtramck and Highland Park income tax collection: \$84,000

Reduce various operating supplies and contractual services: \$87,000

Reduce street lighting and utility costs: \$252,000

Square left room to further tinker with restructuring the police and fire departments, depending on how contract renegotiations go with the unions.

Mayor Karen Majewski gave the plan a lukewarm reception.

"Parts of it are distressing," she told The Review.

In particular, she was concerned about eliminating the DDA director, saying it could jeopardize programs in place.

She also objected to slashing city employee jobs because many of those employees live in the city and invest back into it. Plus, she said, "It's going to dismantle city government."

Square defended outsourcing jobs because compared to years ago, there are many companies and private contractors now available who specialize in providing these services.

"It used to be only governments did this kind of work," she said.

Majewski said she's open to hear more from Square.

"I just want to make sure what comes out of this one year from now makes us stronger," she said.

The public is invited to weigh in on the plan at a special town hall meeting with Square that will be held next Wednesday, Aug. 21, at 10 a.m. in the City Council Chambers (which is located in the second floor of city hall).

Square will also be making a presentation on her plan.

## Spending freeze puts a halt to city lot maintenance

By Charles Sercombe

City Councilmember Cathie Gordon may have lost her bid to become mayor, but don't expect her to fade away.

"I am not going to be a lame duck," she told The Review.

As proof, she is threatening to take matters in her hands and get rid of tall weeds that are growing around a city-owned building on Jos. Campau and Goodson.

The building is a failed loft development that the city acquired. The Community & Economic Development Department is currently figuring out what to do with it.

Gordon said weeds not only make the building look bad, it's blighting the area.

"It makes the whole block look like crap," Gordon said in



**Because of a city spending freeze, city-owned lots and buildings are not being maintained. The city acquired this building at Jos. Campau and Goodson where weeds are out of control.**

her own blunt style.

She also said that city-owned lots have become overgrown and weed-infested. It's hypocritical, Gordon said, to have city code enforcers ticketing property owners for allowing their lawns to be overgrown

while the city is just as guilty.

"How do you penalize people when we do the same thing?" she said.

Now that the city is being run by an emergency manager, the council has no say in how to budget city finances for lot

maintenance. But the council did have an opportunity to fund a program to keep lots clean and trimmed.

That was back in June, before the EM arrived and the council still had a voice in financial decisions. At that time the council was voting on a new city budget that included a special fee that would have been tacked onto water bills and raised \$100,000 a year.

That money would have been set aside for lot maintenance, but the council decided against the fee and withdrew that plan.

Emergency Manager Cathy Square has since called for a spending freeze. It's unclear if money will be freed up in the near future to tackle the problem.

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# Review: Opinion Page

## Algazali's disgrace is continued disrespect to holding office

It's not surprising that City Councilmember and leading mayoral candidate Abdul Algazali is two years behind on property taxes.

He owes over \$12,000 on two buildings on Jos. Campau, and the county now considers them "forfeited."

It's no surprise because Algazali has consistently voted against reasonable tax and fee increases to help balance the city's budget. Apparently he's so anti-tax he refuses to pay them.

This could come back to bite him since there is a city charter provision (Section 6-08) that says an elected official who is a "defaulter" to the city will have the votes cast for him or her voided.

That could mean Algazali's win in the primary election will be thrown out. As we went to print Thursday, the city administration was still mulling over this charter provision and trying to figure out if being two years late in

property taxes equals being a defaulter.

The city charter does not define the word defaulter.

The dictionaries we looked at defined being in default as being late in payments.

Whether or not Algazali gets kicked out of the election is not the point. It's his defiance in being responsible that offends us. Property taxes are the life blood of any community.

If everyone followed Algazali's example, the city would be financially crippled and unable to continue providing services.

It's also a slap in the face to the many people who — despite these tough financial — times still pay their taxes on time.

Algazali has shown his disrespect for public office before. During his term on council he has missed repeated council meetings without explanation. He had the gall to finally ask his col-

leagues on council to excuse his absences after the fact, which they rightly refused.

And for those supporters of Algazali who think this issue is all about allowing John Ulaj, who finished a distant third in the mayoral primary, to make another run for mayor, think again. The charter does not speak to the issue of what happens to election results if a candidate's votes are voided.

It could be that in this case no one moves up and that Mayor Karen Majewski could run unopposed. These are uncharted waters.

And even if Ulaj faces off with Mayor Karen Majewski, who finished in second place, the primary election results are pretty clear that Majewski would win hands down.

It's interesting — and telling — that Algazali's supporters are silent when it comes to addressing the issue of him not paying his property taxes.

## Gail Kobe: Hamtramck's shining star

By Greg Kowalski  
Special to The Review

"Seventeen-year-old Gail Kobe is as excited as any young teenager is expected to be. She is embarking on a new adventure to California."

That was the lead of a story that appeared in The Hamtramck Citizen on Sept. 1, 1949.

By that time Kobe had already established a reputation locally as a dancer and actress. She had started performing as a child in the Mlody Teatr of Hamtramck and by the time she was a student at Hamtramck High School she had won the prestigious Oxford Dramatic Achievement Award and was named the most outstanding drama student at the school.

The article continued, "Eventually the brown-hair, brown-eyed Gail would like to become a full-fledged actress."



Gail Kobe on the set of the 1960s-era "Dr. Kildare" television series.

She did, and accomplished so much more before her death on Aug. 1, 2013.

Through the years, Hamtramck has produced a number of Hollywood stars, but none maintained ties to their hometown like Gail Kobe did.

She came back to Hamtramck to visit her sister, Bea Adamski, who was long-time director of the Hamtramck Public Library. And she often ordered

items from the Polish Art Center on Jos. Campau. Recently she donated her Hollywood memorabilia to the Friends of Historical Hamtramck to be included at the new Hamtramck Historical Museum.

She was tiny, sweet, kind and a powerhouse of energy. In Los Angeles her career blossomed. She was discovered by famed director Cecil B. DeMille at a studio cafeteria eating lunch. He gave her a small role in the film The Ten Commandments.

From there she starred in TV shows including The Outer Limits, Twilight Zone, Hogan's Heroes, Bewitched, Gunsmoke and Payton Place among literally hundreds more. One of her most memorable roles was in an episode of the show Dr. Kildare entitled "Immunity," for which she won great praise — and an Emmy nomination — for her sensitive portrayal of a Polish doctor.

Significantly, one of the items she donated to the museum was her working script from that show.

In March, 1958, she was featured in TV Guide in an article entitled "All This and Courage, Too." It focused on how as a child she took up dancing to overcome a mild case of polio, and as a teen she switched to acting when she developed a slight heart murmur.

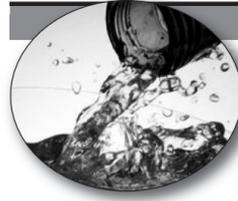
In the mid-1970s, Kobe shifted to the other side of the camera, producing a variety of top-rated soap operas like The Guiding Light.

She won numerous awards including receiving a star on the Palm Springs Walk of Stars in 2008.

But she never forgot Hamtramck. And Hamtramck never forgot her. In 1966 the Common Council proclaimed March 10 as "Gail Kobe Day."

She is gone now, but her star has not faded. She still can be found, as fresh and vibrant as ever, on DVDs of the various shows she starred in.

And she will live in the hearts of all who knew her.



## TOAST of the TOWN

When it comes to good food and great times, Hamtramck has plenty to offer. In this col-

umn, we'll talk about what's happening at our bars, restaurants and other events that can be found throughout the city.

Brad was referring to a mini-music festival. The bar has an enclosed lot next-door, and

We had the most fun just taking photos. Wow, what a photo gallery that turned out to be.

Not that we're trying to poke fun or anything.

Thanks for the invite Brad, and see you on Aug. 24 for the Dead Last rat rod show after-party.

### Poker run ...

Once again the loose association known as Hamtramck Bars is holding a Poker Run this Saturday (Aug. 17).

It's a cool way to kill an afternoon, meet new people and get to meet new people and see the city in a fun, unique way.

It starts with a check-in from 1-2 p.m. at Head Coach



um, we'll talk about what's happening at our bars, restaurants and other events that can be found throughout the city.

that's where the barbecue was set up, 'natch.

Little known to us was that the music portion was all

### By Charles Sercombe

Weekends have been hopping in Hamtramck lately.

A few weeks ago we hit the town for two art exhibit openings and a night of bar hopping.

On one recent Saturday evening we headed over to Pulaski Park for some fine barbecue at the annual "Community Reunion Picnic."

Some longtime Hamtramck families and friends came out for food, getting back in touch and grooving to tunes.

We liked the part where they had invited "all past,



heavy metal bands, including a Black Sabbath tribute band.

The event was called Q-Ski Stock.

Now, I'll be honest, heavy

Bar, located on Conant and Commor. It costs \$5 to participate and the proceeds go toward making the bar association a real non-profit group.



present and future Hamtramck residents."

Afterward, we took a breather and then headed over to Kelly's Bar on Holbrook.

Three weeks ago owner Brad Ruff said to us:

"Come by next week, we'll have bands and a barbecue."

metal is not my cup of tea. But what the heck, Kelly's is one of our favorite bars in town, and the crowd was a lot of fun. Spotted in the crowd was Rachel May, a Hamtramck native, and music writer for the Detroit Free Press.

Talk about people watching.



Details of how the game is played will be explained, but it's a good bet that after visiting bar after bar it won't matter who the winners are.

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### Metro news ...

It's said that whatever happens to Detroit, so goes Hamtramck. If you were to rely solely on the local mainstream media, you'd think Detroit is no more than a crime-infested wasteland. Well, we're here to say that isn't so. Our friends over at modelmedia.com and metromode.com have been reporting on fascinating development projects for the past few years.

With their permission, here is an edited version of this week's story:

The day before we get together to talk about her honeybees, Bette Huster calls to tell me she's lost one of two hives she keeps in the city. "It's colony collapse," she says. "A few days ago, there were more than 10,000 bees. Now they're mostly gone. There are still a couple hanging around, but production has ceased, if you will."

We visit the hive the next day and sure enough, the scene before us is entirely different than the one at her other hive a few miles away, which teems with the purposeful, collective labor of thousands of bees. Here, it's still and quiet. We can see five or six bees crawling on the outside, but also flies – a bad sign.

I ask Bette what happened. Where did all the bees go? She shrugs. "I have a theory." An industrial operation nearby recently cleared a neighboring field of dandelions. If the bees ingested the chemicals used to kill the dandelions, their "GPS system," as Bette puts it, might have been damaged. After that, "maybe one set of bees went out foraging, and they couldn't find their way back. Then another went out, and they couldn't find their way back." But that's just a guess.

Research into the causes of colony collapse disorder (CCD), which has been drastically reducing honeybee populations in North America and Europe since 2006, is ongoing. One likely cause seems to be an increase in the use of neonicotinoids, pesticides chemically related to nicotine. (So likely that just a few months

ago, the European Union began enforcing a two-year ban on the chemicals.) There are other possible (and possibly interrelated) causes: mites, parasites, malnutrition, habitat loss. In large-scale commercial beekeeping, which has been hit especially hard by CCD, the cultivation of crop monocultures is a suspect.

But even before anyone had started talking about CCD in earnest, honeybees in North America were having a hard time. Roger Sutherland, the president of the Southeast Michigan Beekeepers Association (SEMBA), tells me that the problems started in the 1980s. That's when the varroa mite and nosema parasite began wreaking havoc on honeybee colonies; 30 years later, both remain a serious threat.

In Michigan, harsh winters have been another significant problem. Honeybees stick around when the cold weather settles, burrowing deep inside their hives to keep each other warm. There are ways that beekeepers can winterize hives, but some loss is almost inevitable. The feral bee population, meanwhile, is particularly susceptible to winter loss.

The long and short of it is that apis mellifera, the European honeybee that was brought to North America by English colonists in 1622 and has thrived here for centuries, is in trouble. And over the decades, as honeybees' health has become more and more threatened, the practice of small-scale beekeeping has declined, especially in cities – until now.

"We're seeing a real resurgence in urban beekeeping," Roger Sutherland tells me optimistically. "It's not new, of course. We're just returning, as a society, to some of the agricultural practices we had in cities in the 1930s and 1940s. But in the last 10 years, people in cities like New York and even Paris are really bringing it back."

Detroit has some skin in the

game too.

Rich Wieskie, who has been raising honeybees in the city for more than a decade, currently maintains 100 hives in Detroit, give or take, with about 30,000 bees calling each home. He estimates the total number of hives in the city to be somewhere between 500 and 600. (It's hard to know for sure, though, since beekeeping is not exactly legal in Detroit at the moment. It's not exactly illegal, either. More like...extralegal.)

"When we get back up to 2,000 hives, the number Detroit had in the '30s," Rich says, "then I'll retire. Or take a vacation."

12 years ago, when he started his work as a beekeeper ("apiarist" is the technical

Continued on page 7

## Pitch in to help the new Hamtramck Historical Museum

If you've been by the old storefront on Jos. Campau next to the Polish Art Center you probably have seen the activity going on there lately – and maybe noticed the old Prohibition-era still standing in the front window.

But you may not know that this is the site of the new Hamtramck Historical Museum, which plans to open to the public soon. The building is being renovated now, displays are being put in place and operating procedures are being prepared.

But even as the museum

opens, there still is much to do. And all of this costs money.

A key fundraising drive is being held now to raise money to restore the front of the building. The museum is holding the fundraiser through the Power2Give website. The goal is to raise \$10,000, and there still is long way to go.

Your help is needed. Simply go to the Hamtramck Historical Commission website – www.hamtramckhistory.org – go to the bottom of the page and click the Power2Give

link. It will take you directly to the donation site. Follow the simple steps there to complete the donation process.

The new museum will be an asset to all of Hamtramck, but it needs the support of everyone. For more information, call Greg Kowalski, Historical Commission chairman, at (313) 893-5027, or e-mail gkowalski@ameritech.net.

And please remember, this is your museum. Help it grow.

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### By Charles Sercombe

This week's Crime Log covers Aug. 6 through 12.

#### Tuesday, Aug. 6

• A man reported that his 2002 Chrysler minivan was stolen while parked in the 9400 block of Latham

• A woman reported that someone tried to steal her 2001 Jeep while it was parked in the Auto Zone parking lot on Jos. Campau.

• A woman was found asleep in her car while parked at the Mobil gas station on Caniff and the I-75 service drive. The woman was taken to Detroit Receiving Hospital.

• A woman reported to police that an unknown man has been calling her since July complaining that she is making too much noise.

• A resident on Yemans St. reported someone broke into her flat and stole money.

• At 3 a.m., a pedestrian was arrested after refusing to get out of the street while at Caniff and Brombach.

• Two Detroit residents reported being assaulted by a taxi cab driver. The driver filed a counter-claim against the two Detroit residents saying they threatened him.

• At 4 a.m. a man living in the 5000 block of Yemans St. reported he saw a man break out the window to his van and then run away.

• A person reported being bitten by a dog. The dog was taken to the Michigan Humane Society for observation.

• An Edwin St. man reported his son's bicycle was stolen from the Community Center.

• Wayne State University police arrested a Grosse Pointe Park man on a Hamtramck income tax warrant and transported the man to the police station.

• A Belmont St. resident reported his son's bicycle was stolen from his yard.

• A McDougall St. resident reported that an unknown person broke into her house while she was at work. There were no signs of forced entry on the house.

• An Evaline St. man reported that his vintage motorcycle was stolen from his backyard.

#### Thursday, Aug. 8

• A Mitchell St. man reported someone stole his 1971 Honda motorcycle from his residence.

#### Sunday, Aug. 11

• Officers responded to a disturbance in the 11400 block of Jos. Campau. Once there, officers found an unruly group of people and ordered them to disperse.

• A resident living in the 1900 block of Evaline St. reported their car was damaged. A couple of hours later, another resident on Evaline reported someone attempted to steal their car.

• A mother reported her 19-year-old daughter has been missing since Aug. 5.

• A resident living in the 3400 block of Edwin St. reported their 1998 Plymouth Voyager was stolen.

• Officers responding to a call about an open door at a house in the 2400 block of Commor determined the house was abandoned. A witness told officers that two women were seen leaving the house before police arrived.

• A teen told police he was assaulted by another juvenile.

• A Hamtramck resident and a Detroit resident were arrested for breaking and entering after they were seen entering a house in the 2300 block of Commor.

#### Monday, Aug. 12

• A resident living in the 3800 block of Belmont St. reported that someone threw a brick through their living room window and at their car. Later in the night, the same resident reported the suspects were relatives.

• A Dyar St. woman reported being assaulted by her ex-boyfriend.

• At 3:30 a.m. officers responded to a break-in alarm at a business in the 10000 block of Jos. Campau. Once there, officers observed a broken window and a broken door lock. Surveillance cameras, however, recorded the suspect.

• A Grand Haven St. woman reported her 1998 Dodge was stolen.

• A man was arrested for stealing money from a tip jar at Café 1923.

• A man reported that his grandmother kidnapped his three children.

• A Klinger St. man turned over a pair of glasses and a bike he found.

• A Mitchell St. resident reported money had been stolen from his residence.

• A Rockford resident reported his vehicle was broken into at Gallagher and Trowbridge. He said items were stolen.

• Two residents reported that while at Mackay and Botsford, three men confronted them and that one of the men had a handgun.

• A woman reported that a man grabbed her purse and ran while she was at Gallagher and Trowbridge.

• A Warren resident reported his vehicle was stolen while it was parked in the area of Fleming and Zinow. Police discovered that the car had already been recovered in Detroit.

**Deadline for classifieds for next week is Thursday at Noon**

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### Metro news ...

term), Rich made mead, also known as honey wine, and was looking mainly for an inexpensive honey source. These days, meadmaking is well behind him; he's too busy taking care of his "sweeties," as he calls his bees, as well as teaching beekeeping classes and mentoring beginner apiarists throughout the region.

Rich is passionate about the fundamental role that honeybee pollination plays in a healthy, diverse urban ecosystem.

"Honeybees are nature's perfect ecological warriors," he says. "They do no harm to the environment. They promote biodiversity. You have bees in an

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urban environment, you get more plants, more flowers, more fruit, more nuts, cleaner air. All that in return brings more insects, more bees, more mammals. It's this whole circle. Ecologically, there's probably nothing better than bees: what they give and what they do to sustain life."

Rich tells me a story about a friend he helped start raising bees some time ago. She had a Japanese cherry bush in her yard, and before she started beekeeping, "she had just a few cherries on the bush. After the bees, she had so many that she could make pounds of jam

Continued on page 8

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**Metro news ...**

Continued from page 7

throughout the season." Bette Huster tells a similar story. She has only recently started raising bees in the city; before that, she tried her hand on a few acres up north.

"There were always wildflowers on the land," she says, "but once the bees started pollinating, the wildflowers got explosively prolific. I went from having around 200 Canada anemones to something like 10,000."

While Rich has made a career out of beekeeping, Bette, like most apiarists in Detroit, is a hobbyist. (By day she's an attorney, working out of the same Cass Corridor office that she has since the 1970s). When I ask what draws her to beekeeping, she says she's come to think of it as a kind of meditation.

"When you start working in the hive, you have to go small. You have to be really careful as you put yourself in this whole other world. Plus, the bees are just fascinating: how they organize themselves, how they reproduce, how they collect and use pollen and nectar. There are so many different kinds of insects around, after all, it's nice to have the opportunity to really get to know one." (Bette also finds artistic inspiration in her honeybees. Check out the beekeeping-themed holiday card she made in the gallery on the left.)

Rich shares Bette's take on the meditative quality of beekeeping. "For me, it's therapy. It's very calming. When you work with bees you have to be in a kind of zen state. You can't be frenetic, because if you are, they'll let you know they're not

happy with you. Beekeeping also puts you more in tune with the natural world. It encourages you to think of the environment in a more holistic way, a healthier way."

It's not exactly intuitive, when a honeybee buzzes by on the sidewalk or lands on a flower in the garden, how connected we are; the bee does its thing, we do ours.

But according to the Rodale Institute, an influential organic agriculture research organization, "our current food system is balanced precariously on the back of the honeybee. More than 70 of the 100 crops that provide 90 percent of the world's food are pollinated by bees. Blueberries and cherries are 90-percent dependent and almonds entirely dependent on the honeybee for pollination."

Globally, it's clear that we need honeybees to keep essential crops productive. Locally, we need their help to make Detroit greener, more biodiverse, more literally fruitful. And individually, my conversations with local beekeepers suggest, honeybees have the power to help us find focus, stillness, and a sense of real connectedness to the natural world.

In return, the bees need our help to survive. And, with a little luck and a lot of care, to thrive.

Want to know more about honeybees & beekeeping in Detroit? Get started with our Urban Beekeeping resource page. Green City Diaries is a co-production of Model D and the Green Garage Urban Sustainability Library.

By Matthew Piper

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