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 Volume 2 No. 48
 November 26, 2010
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Quick Hits

The holiday season starts next Thursday (Dec. 2) with Hanukkah.
 To our Jewish friends, we wish you happy and healthy Hanukkah.
 Christmas is just three weeks after that, so if you still need to get some holiday shopping done, better hurry up.
 These are trying times for many of us, and we hope things will improve in the coming new year. Good will and peace to everyone.

This week in history

- This speaks volumes about Hamtramck. In a very good way. Get this, in 1954, the public library issued its 50,000th library card. The city's population at the time was around that number.
- Hamtramck's very first mayor, Peter C. Jezewski, dies on Nov. 30, 1960.
- Federal's Department store opens in 1939 – which decades later became Shopper's World. Unfortunately, Shopper's World closed down a few years ago. Anyone in the market for a very large building located in the heart of Hamtramck's business district?

Source: Hamtramck Historical Commission

Happy Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving starts early and often around town

By Ian Perrotta
 The spirit of Thanksgiving was thick in the air this past week. It started last Friday with a Thanksgiving dinner at People's Community Services (PCS). A group of Hamtramck residents who call themselves the Melanics organized the meal as a way to give back to the community they live in.

Each year, the Melanics – whose name is derived from the word melanin, which gives pigmentation to skin – go to a different organization to provide a holiday meal to those in need. This year they chose to stay in the city, and in conjunction with PCS they were able to feed close to 200 people. Additional help came from members of the Hamtramck High wrestling team.

"We do it to share our blessings and help out the less fortunate," says Jalecko Whittaker, a member of the Melanics, "and to bring people together."

Flash forward to Tuesday afternoon to the after-school H.O.P.E. program at Holbrook Elementary

School, where a group of kids were trying out a few lessons: the history of Thanksgiving and its meaning, as well as proper dining etiquette.

They all received a turkey meal, complete with mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables and dessert. One student couldn't have summed it up better:

"It's so good I could slap myself," the boy said.

Caboose Wine Shop (at the intersection of Holbrook and Brombach) and its owner Ronnie Salem, PCS was able to provide 25 families with a nutritious Thanksgiving feast that included turkey, potatoes, green beans, corn and soup.

And though the paper went to press before these next two events, they're definitely worth mentioning. On Thanksgiving, the city's newest non-profit organization Making It To The Finish Line hosted their own event.

And at Walter's Party Store (at Carpenter and Caniff), the store owners once again hosted a Thanksgiving dinner for their loyal customers for the 10th year in a row.



The Thanksgiving spirit didn't end there. On Wednesday, PCS once again opened up its doors to the community to provide a holiday meal. This time, thanks to a generous donation from patrons of the Red



State and city officials to meet Monday

Topic: How to fix city's finances

By Charles Sercombe

Hamtramck has once again found itself in the eye of a media storm.

The city made national headlines last week and may well have become the national poster child for financially distressed cities.

Hamtramck stunned folks from here and to there for boldly asking permission from the state to file for bankruptcy. Normally, cities first go broke and are then taken over by a state-appointed emergency financial manager.

Hamtramck officials rewrote that script by seeking bankruptcy before the money dries up, which City Manager Bill Cooper has warned will be by the end of January.

So why the urgency to file for bankruptcy?

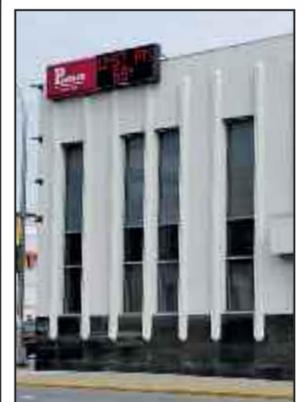
That move will allow city officials to tear up binding labor contracts, and to seek less expensive benefit packages and eliminate minimum staffing levels. Cooper said those moves could save the city upwards of \$3 million a year. Hamtramck's labor

Continued on page 2

Future of Peoples State Bank is up in the air

By Charles Sercombe

It now appears Peoples State Bank has taken a turn for the worse, financially-speaking.



The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. (FDIC) has downgraded the bank from "significantly undercapitalized" to "critically undercapitalized."

A call to the bank for comment was not returned.

The FDIC had previously ordered the bank to merge with

Continued on page 2

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Future of Peoples Bank is up in the air

Continued from front page

another bank, or look for investors. It is not clear how much time is left for either option. Bank officials now say they doubt either of those actions will occur any time soon.

In a previous interview, bank President and CFO Hank Thiemann said it would take time to find a partner to merge with, because so many banks are facing financial hardships. He said the bank got into financial trouble when a number of commercial loans faltered.

The bank lost \$741,000

in the first half of 2010 and lost \$3.2 million last year.

Peoples has been in Hamtramck for 101 years. There are 10 branches in the metro area, and the bank has 115 employees.

The City of Hamtramck recently pulled out \$6 million it had invested in the bank because of the bank's financial instability. All accounts are federally insured for up to \$250,000.

A story about the bank in Crain's Business suggested that Peoples stands a chance of being closed down.

State and city officials to meet Monday

Continued from front page

unions have refused significant contract concessions.

The state, however, was not thrilled with that plan. Instead – in a surprising move – state officials offered loans to survive another year or so.

Cooper rejected that counter-offer because he said it would only put off the city's financial troubles, plus increase the city's debt load as well.

City Attorney James Allen submitted a four-page letter to Gov. Jennifer Granholm urging her to think creatively.

"We live in a brave new world," Allen wrote, "one where the old stigmas cost less than they used to."

Allen stressed that the loan

won't solve anything.

"The Department of Treasury's loan offers are appreciated, but they do nothing to get at the problems we face," Allen said. "In fact, because these are obligations that must be repaid, they only push off into the future the problems we failed to confront today – and they rob us of our ability to pay future obligations."

The solution, Allen said, is lowering the city's labor costs, which he said consume 80 percent of the city's \$18 million budget.

Cooper said that by the end of January, the city will be \$3.3 million in the hole and without cash on hand to meet

employee payroll or be able to pay bills.

Hamtramck is far from alone in this predicament. Because of shrinking tax collections from the loss of manufacturing jobs and plants, the state has been forced to scale back on what it contributes to local communities.

Also, in the face of this economic slump, the housing market collapsed and housing forfeitures shot up.

In short, there is less and less money to go around. State officials said they are refusing bankruptcy for Hamtramck because it would open the "floodgate" for hundreds of other communities to follow the same path.

But these are changing political times. Gov. Granholm is leaving office at the end of December and incoming Gov.-Elect Rick Snyder said one of his first priorities will be forcing public employees to make sacrifices.

Snyder's appointee for the position of state treasurer is Andy Dillon. Dillon and other Treasury Department officials will meet this Monday with Cooper and city officials to discuss Hamtramck's financial condition.

The thinking locally is, that, if Snyder is sending his appointee, there might be a chance that Hamtramck will be allowed to file for bankruptcy.

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Street Life

At Public Pool, count on having a party

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

By Walter Wasacz

Whenever Public Pool, the high-quality art and performance space on Caniff, has an

opening reception or a special event, it's a party. We mean a real good party, where the music flows, kids of all ages break out spontaneous dance moves, old friends get together, and new friendships are made.

At last Saturday's opening of Hamtramckan Jessica Frelinghuysen's "In the Neighborhood," the temperature started hot and just kept rising on a chilly November night.

The art is locally-produced and splendid. You can see it every Saturday, 1-6 p.m. and meet the artist through Dec. 18. Make sure you make a point to stop in. But back to the party. Well, you missed it. When we got there, poet-translator-publisher Richard Wohlfel, also a Hamtramck guy, was spinning garage 'n' soul 45s, whooping and clapping, while people

danced and hung around his turntables and mixer. We got a copy of his book of poems, Explorations of a Page: A Story of Love, Space and Form published on his Lo & Behold imprint. Highly recom-

mended. Then we danced some more.



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opening reception or a special event, it's a party.

We mean a real good party, where the music flows, kids of all ages break out spontaneous dance moves, old friends get together, and new friendships are made.



Also on the dancefloor: Kresge Art Fellowship winners Steve Hughes and Cedric Tai; and college students from Poland, France, England and Denmark – yes, folks, they are here and coming in greater numbers to get a glimpse of the urban post-industrial future in places like Hamtramck and Detroit. We saw a group of German kids at another opening earlier in the nearby Russell Industrial Center. Exciting times.

Later, the party moved to Skipper's Bar on Conant, where chef/bartender/entrepreneur John Lopez (many of you will remember him from Union Street, Agave and Atlas

Continued on page 4

This week at the library...

ESL Class for Beginners - Saturday, December 4 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, December 4 at noon. All children are invited to children's storytime at the library. This Saturday we will be reading a story by Natasha Wing, "The Night Before Thanksgiving," and afterwards everyone will make a centerpiece for their holiday table.

Computer Classes for Beginners - Tuesday, November 30 at 11:30 a.m. Basic instructions on computer use for beginners will be held on Tuesdays. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

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

Math Club Meeting - Tuesday, November 30 at 4 p.m. Mr. Nuo is the instructor for the math club and math tutoring.

Movie Wednesday - Wednesday, December 1 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, December 2 at 11:30 a.m. Adults with basic computer skills can enhance their computer literacy each Thursday at the library. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

Fall Teen Club - Thursday, December 2 at 5 p.m. Members of the Teen Club will be making

fall decorations for the library. Everyone is invited to join.

Jeopardy at the Library - Thursday, December 2 at 4 p.m. Sign up and participate in Jeopardy games held on Thursdays at the library. Compete against friends, win prizes, have fun developing your knowledge skills.

Santa Arrives at the Library - Saturday, December 11 at noon. All children are invited for the lighting of the Library Christmas Tree and arrival of Santa at the library with presents for all.

Meeting of the Library Board - Tuesday, December 16 at 6 p.m. Regular meeting of the Library Board will be held in the auditorium. Open to the public.

Holiday Concert "History of Black Madonna" - Friday, December 17 at 6 p.m. Holiday concert with musical history of Black Madonna will be presented by local musician and historian, Kazimierz Jedralczyk. Everyone is invited. Refreshments will be served.

Friends of the Library Meeting - Thursday, Dec. 23 at 6:30 p.m. FHPL President Kathy Kristy and Treasurer George Gorday invite all members and volunteers to participate in the regular monthly meeting and election meeting of the FHPL.

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

For more information about events at the library

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

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Second Front Page

Cosmos wrestling team is ready for action

By Ian Perrotta

It may be the world's oldest sport, but this year's Cosmos wrestlers are relatively young and inexperienced. No matter – they're always up for a challenge.

Although the first match of the season isn't until Dec. 2, when Hamtramck goes on the road to take on Warren Lincoln High School, the team has already been hard at work practicing over the last month. Each day after school, the team meets for three hours, with the first hour devoted to homework and studying and the last two to



This year's Cosmos Wrestling Team might be young and inexperienced, but Head Coach Adam Mused says they've got what it takes to be champions.

year.

On the mat, the team captain is senior Ahmed Fahdel, a returning conference champion in the 112-pound weight class and one of just a few with prior experience. Other wrestlers who are expected to perform well this year are senior Sana Gardner – a returning conference champion in the 151-pound weight class who will rejoin the team in January – and Shahruh Muhammediyev, a 130-pound wrestler who speaks little English but knows lots of moves.

At a preseason scrimmage event last weekend at Hazel Park, the team was able to walk away with a respectable win-loss-tie record of 17-9-2. If it's any indication of where the season is headed, it's a good sign – especially for such an inexperienced team. "They're young" says Mused, "but there are flashes of athleticism. If they work hard they'll do well this year."

conditioning and technique.

This year's squad of 31 is led by Head Coach Adam Mused, a Hamtramck High School (HHS) graduate who wrestled as a student. He is assisted by Jason Sernick and Pawel Aftyka – two HHS graduates and teammates of Mused's who recently returned from tours of duty as marines – as well as Kyle Liechty, a coach from last

Carjacking victim was not about to stand by and watch

By Charles Sercombe

An owner of a Jeep wasn't about to let a carjacker get away on Monday afternoon.

A man returning from Peoples State Bank saw another man in his parked car swinging a hammer at the Jeep's steering column, said auto theft investigator Greg Collins. The Jeep's owner approached the man and tried to haul him out of the car.

The suspect then began trying to stab the Jeep owner with a screwdriver, missing, and then switched to going after the man with the hammer.

The Jeep owner finally backed off but was able to get a call into the Police Department. When police arrived, the carjacking suspect had just peeled out of the bank's parking lot. Police followed but called off the chase at Holbrook and Brombach.

As officers were returning to the bank, they noticed a cloud of smoke coming from the I-75 service drive area.

The carjacker had crashed into another car with such force that the other car's rear end was sheared off. An 8-year-old girl in the car was slightly injured.

Witnesses pointed to the direction where the suspect ran off. He was found in a building, hiding.

The suspect, Travis Jordan Handley, 30, of Wyandotte, has a long criminal history, and admitted he is a heroin addict, Collins said. He was arraigned on Wednesday (Nov. 24) in Hamtramck 31st District Court on 12 felony charges, including being a habitual offender, and faces a maximum sentence of life in prison.

His bond was set at \$1 million cash.

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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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Suzy's Bar: Chat with owner Suzy – one of the best local bar owners; 2942 Evaline; (313) 872-9016; Free WIFI.

Turtle & Inky's Place: Small and cozy 2656 Carpenter.

Whiskey in the Jar: There's likely few Irish folks to be found here, but there is plenty of blarney. Seriously, though, a great dive bar and the fellow drinkers are easy to chat up, 2741 Yemans.

Street Life

Continued from page 2

Global Bistro) served up a buffet and Jennifer Paul and I rocked a few more tunes.

It was all good. Better than good. Here are some pics to whet your appetite for the next one, a show provisionally called "CRASH!" – calculated to deliver more controlled mayhem in January.



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Name: Joan
Age: 62
I like Hamtramck because...

I was born here in a house on Denton street and the house is still there. I lived in it was in my family from 1907-2009 and now some of the things to keep it alive. I stay here because I can walk anywhere and have a lot of memories. My son favorite place is Cafe 1423, have away from here.

Non-residents turn up in voter inquiry

By Charles Sercombe

It appears Hamtramck indeed has voters who really don't live here.

According to the city's Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko, a number of people who voted in the 2009 General Election failed to file income taxes. He said a number of

those voters told his department that they don't actually live here.

Nazarko couldn't provide more details because of privacy laws. He also said that he will not forward the names of those who said they don't live here to another agency to investigate voter fraud. He said

federal law bars him from divulging that information unless he is subpoenaed

He said it is up to another agency to further investigate the matter – including Hamtramck's own City Clerk Office.

Nazarko said he will further cross-check voters with state income tax records. The state has been providing Hamtramck with records from those who say they live in Hamtramck. Those records are checked to make sure they also paid local income taxes.

He also said a number of people he sent letters of inquiry to failed to respond. A second round of letters is being sent out.

If that second letter is still ignored, Nazarko said he will file a complaint in Hamtramck 31st District Court. If those in question ignore a court date, an arrest warrant will be issued for them.

Last year's election proved to be a major turning point for the city. That's when the Bangladeshi-American community established itself as the largest voting bloc.

Nazarko would not identify whether it appeared that the voters in question are Bangladeshi-Americans.

Tight Fittin' Jeans

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Review: Opinion Page

Despite savings, Hamtramck still needs contract concessions

Get a loan or go bankrupt. Those are the two choices facing Hamtramck. Gov. Jennifer Granholm doesn't want Hamtramck to file for bankruptcy because it would likely open the floodgate for hundreds of other financially distressed communities in the state to do the same.

Hamtramck officials don't want a loan, saying it only puts off the city's underlying financial problems. The main problem is that our city employee union contracts cost too much money.

One thing that needs immediate changing is providing employees with a less expensive health insurance coverage. The city's unions have refused to budge on that or make significant changes in their contract. Yes, the firefighters did agree to a wage freeze, but that's a mere drop in the bucket.

We don't mean to harp on employees, but if the com-

munity wants to keep its own police and fire departments, then concessions must be made.

The police officers' unions have pointed out that through their efforts, hundreds of thousands of dollars have been saved through grants and special programs. Yes, that's great, and the officers deserve credit.

But guess what? Despite all that extra income, the city is STILL broke. It's doesn't matter how much money the cops brought in because the city still can't afford them.

Gov. Granholm doesn't want to take leadership in this issue and instead is letting incoming Gov.-Elect Rick Snyder wrestle with it.

By all indications, Snyder is going to be more receptive to allowing Hamtramck to file for bankruptcy. He has already said that public employees are going to have to

accept sacrifices. We read that to mean that public employees are going to have to accept less expensive benefits and possibly even see some benefits go away.

Times have changed in Michigan. A number of public employees refuse to recognize this new reality. We are no longer a wealthy state, buoyed by major car manufacturing. The tax revenue has dried up. As a state, we are broke.

If public employees don't like this reality, we suggest they look elsewhere for employment. It's not pretty out there.

Like it or not, Hamtramck is leading the way in how the state is going to deal with this issue. If city employees want to keep their jobs, albeit with some major changes to their benefits, it would be best to help avoid bankruptcy and agree now to concessions.

Odds & Ends

Donation drive ... Here's a heads-up, dear readers. The annual Hamtramck Goodfellows drive will officially kick off next Friday (Dec. 3) with the street sales of a special edition of The Review.

Goodfellows volunteers will also meet this Friday (Nov. 26) in front of City Hall at 10 a.m. for the annual group photo.

The Goodfellows have their work cut out for them this year. The economy is still in the dumps and one could say that folks are hurting a lot more than even last year. In other words, there are a lot of needy families out there who are going to be hard-pressed to come up with enough money to put out a holiday meal.

The Goodfellows need to raise several thousand dollars real quick.

If you want to get an early start, send a check to city hall. Make it out to "Hamtramck Goodfellows" and mail it to City of Hamtramck, Treasury Department, 3401 E. Line, Hamtramck, MI 48212. Your donation will go a long way to make sure no kid goes hungry this holiday season.

Scratch that ... Speaking of Goodfellows, we're sorry to say that our plans to hold a fundraiser for the organization has been scrapped. Although we can't host the fundraiser, you can bet the office will be helping out in other ways. Unfortunately, our plan to host the party under heated tents in The Review's court-

yard became way too expensive and complicated. Sorry for any inconvenience.

Check us out ... Our website, www.hamtramckreview.com, will be sporting some holiday greetings starting today (Nov. 26), so be sure to visit. Another change is that we will no longer offer all of our back issues.

That print edition file has simply become too large for our server. So, we will now offer only the last four week's worth of The Review online.

However, if anyone needs a back issue, we can get that for you. As always, feel free to email us at news@thehamtramckreview.com, or call us at (313) 874-2100.

A doggone good job ... Congratulations goes out to local resident Chris Lesinski and his dog Max, who recently



took second place at an Obedience and Personal Protection competition in Atlanta, Georgia. Lesinski and Max, a

German Sheppard, participated in competitions that included obedience drills in the wake of distractions like gunshots and fighting off attackers. The two have been working together for the past four years and train at the Sun Dog Training Facility in Romeo.

What goes around comes around ... Don't forget to help support the Detroit Area Agency on Aging's (DAAA) "Holiday Meals on Wheels" Program, which provides meals to homebound seniors during the holidays. To raise money to support the effort, the DAAA is selling holiday greeting cards for \$5. The money from each purchased card - 100% - goes toward providing a hot, healthy and nutritious meal. For more information contact the Detroit Area Agency on Aging at (313) 446-4444 or visit their website at www.daaa1a.org.

Hoop dreams ... Be sure to keep your calendar clear on Wednesday, Dec. 29 - the Hamtramck High boys varsity basketball team will take on Oxford High School in a special game at the Palace of Auburn Hills at 3:30 p.m. For just \$50 you can get a ticket to watch both the Hamtramck team and the Pistons, who play the Celtics later on that night. Also included in the cost of the ticket is a commemorative T-shirt. Tickets are being sold by the Hamtramck High Student Council, as well as the basketball team, with the proceeds being split between the two. For more information, or to purchase a ticket, call Toni Coral at (313) 892-7505.

The Amazing **CYNICALMAN** by Matt Feazell

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Coming Events

DECEMBER 21, 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.

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

Obituaries

WINOGRADZKI

Leonard S. Winogradzki, 71, died November 21, 2010. Mr. Winogradzki served in the Army and was a member of AmVets, PLAV and the VFW. He was retired cement contractor. He was preceded in death by his parents, Stanley and Sophie. Mr. Winogradzki is survived by his brother, Henry Sandler. Funeral arrangements were made by Jurkiewicz & Wilk Funeral Home, and funeral services will be held on November 27, 2 p.m. at the Great Lakers National Cemetery with Deacon Paul Stevens officiating.

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Goods and Things, more or less

By Alan R. Madeleine

Mike Kapusniak has seen plenty of Hamtramck's recent history.

Born at St. Francis Hospital (now the City Hall building) here in town; a grad of the old Hamtramck High (now the Glory Market complex), Class of '66; a former member of the Charter Commission; the city still courses through him, even though he finally moved out of Hamtramck six years ago.

He looks a bit wistful, seated behind the counter in his recently opened thrift store at the northwest corner of Jos. Campau and Caniff. It's a Tuesday afternoon, and as he observes the hubbub resulting from the government's in-store phone giveaway, a woman inquires about a coat on the wall. Given a price, she shuffles off to ponder it from the deeper recesses of the large resale space – the former Campau Carpets & Linoleum Company.

So, how's business?

"I made \$15 yesterday – all day," he grumbles. "I thought this might be a good line to get into. Maybe I should have you put 'Fire Sale' in my ad."

He's kidding, but then there are times like that in this town for most everyone these days. He grouses that a com-

petitor down the street is selling things for "two or three dollars." Still he keeps trying to drum up ideas, to get business flowing more steadily.

"The City Council's been doing a good job, but the city's in bad shape," Kapusniak laments.

So what does he think of their recently proposed ordinance (since defeated) that would have required all second-hand stores to record substantial information about any merchandise they receive?

"I blame it on the pawn

everyday," he states flatly, continuing "I won't buy anything off of anyone unless I know 'em personally."

Asked to name the oddest item he's been brought lately, he ponders a moment before answering in bemused question form, "Computers? A wooden ladder?" He shakes his head at the recollection.

The free-phone queue shows little sign of abating. And yet, for all the people in the store, it's not translating into any business for the resale shop, at least not yet.

Kapusniak sighs, resigned.



Mike Kapusniak

shops in town. They never should have been licensed," he sniffs.

For his part, he claims not to let anyone shady looking into the store, advising them to move on down the Campau line.

"They're coming in here

In tough economic times like these, a business that sells used items for used item prices should have them packing the place. Meanwhile, signs adorn the building's façade, indicating the space as for sale.

One thing that should generate some additional revenue is a nice selection of timely holiday items, most quite reasonably priced. Clearly the hope is that, once in the store and looking, shoppers will discover other items to purchase as well.

For Kapusniak, as for so many local merchandisers, it can't come soon enough.

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City Hall Insider ...

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

By Charles Sercombe

The City Council met on Nov. 23 with all councilmembers in attendance. The meeting ran for over two-and-a-half hours.

Whoa. Did someone spike the water cooler? The meeting descended into a ball of confusion almost from the get-go, but more on that later.

First up was a moment for the public to speak about anything on the agenda. As usual, former city official Robert Zwolak had something to say. Zwolak said in light of Councilmember Kazi Miah's previous request to be excused from three meetings, the council should look at the unexcused absences of other councilmembers.

"You're either going to be here or not be here," Zwolak said.

(Hmmm ... how Zen, Bob.)

He said he wouldn't mention names, but that if some councilmembers can't make the meetings they should resign.

(Editor's note: Go grab your decoder rings, kids. Bob is actually referring to Councilmember Shahab Ahmed, who has missed a few meetings and a number of work sessions. Well, that's our guess.)

It was not immediately clear how this topic was related to any of the topics on the agenda.

A public hearing was held on yet another issue regarding the redevelopment of a four-story building on Jos. Campau and Belmont. This hearing officially designated the building as a special district where property taxes would be frozen at the current level for the 12 years.

The deal helps offset costs for the development of the building, which calls for a soul food restaurant on the ground floor and office and loft space in the above floors. Councilmember Cathie Gordon said later in the meeting that she was hesitant to "give away" money for the project.

It was pointed out that there is no giveaway of city money.

Robert Zwolak questioned whether the building will be exempt from possible future court-ordered tax judgments regarding police and fire pensioners. City Manager Bill Cooper later said that will have to be researched.

Long story short, the council unanimously OK'd the tax deal.

A proposal to allow a building located at 8526 Lumpkin to be used as a market store took up a large chunk of time and stirred some passionate debate. The building had once been a party store but closed

five or six years ago.

Technically, since the building is located in a residential area, the new owner of the store has to get permission for a "special land use." Community Economic & Development Director Jason Friedmann said using the building as a market is an acceptable usage for a residential area.

Opposition to the proposal came from the owners of Metropolitan Baking Co., who through their attorney, Steven Grobbel, said that the previous party store was a nuisance to the neighborhood.

The company is located across the street from the site in question.

Grobbel said people would hang out in front of the store, drink and harass bakery employees and vandalize the property.

"It became a magnet for trouble," Grobbel said.

He added that allowing the store to operate as a market and sell beer and wine will be "déjà vu all over again."

(Editor's note: That's a phrase originated by baseball legend – and accidental Zen riddler – Yogi Bera.)

Resident Hillary Cherry questioned that if a market was not an acceptable use for the building, then what was.



Yogi Bera

The store owner, Mary Alawfi, defended her store, saying she will have security cameras and security. She urged the council not to judge her store on the reputation of the previous store owner.

"This is a new owner," she said. "I just want to open my store. Give me a chance."

Councilmember Catrina Stackpoole questioned whether there was a need for a store in the area. Friedmann said several residents indeed said they wanted a market.

Councilmember Cathie Gordon said that if anyone is concerned about liquor sales at the store, that decision is not up to the council and is not what is being considered at this point. She said the only issue in front of the council is whether the building can be operated as a market.

Gordon also noted that there are several other neighborhood markets in the city.

Councilmember Tom Jankowski said he is against the store, saying the proposal is not part of the "intent" of the city ordinance regarding special use. He did not elaborate on that point and how exactly it doesn't square with the ordinance's intent or what exactly he means by intent.

Jankowski further said that there have been problems when party stores operated out of this building in the past, and there are other problem party stores in the city.

He also noted that people praised American Axle for buying up and demolishing party stores near its plant years ago. He said that was viewed as "cleaning up" the city.

(Editor's note: American Axle recently fired nearly all of its union employees and transferred production work to a plant in Mexico. Maybe the company just wants to empty out the city and its factory. Just saying.)

Jankowski said that you can't rely on the police to respond to potential trouble at the market.

"I'm going to play it safe on this one and not vote for it," Jankowski said.

Councilmember Mohammed Hassan said he is concerned about liquor sales at the market.

Councilmember Kazi Miah said he supports small businesses.

"This is not a social ill," Miah said. "Small businesses drive our economy."

Miah also pointed out what if developers were listening to this conversation and what would they think of trying to open a business in Hamtramck.

"We're not sending the right message," Miah said.

Councilmember Ahmed said what happened in the past cannot be held against the new owner.

"We should give her a chance," he said.

Councilmember Stackpoole said this decision was a "tough one" because other neighborhood party stores are problems. She also pointed out that there is a major supermarket three blocks away from this site as well as several smaller markets in the area.

"I don't see the need for it," Stackpoole said.

Mayor Karen Majewski weighed in on the matter, say-

Continued on page 7

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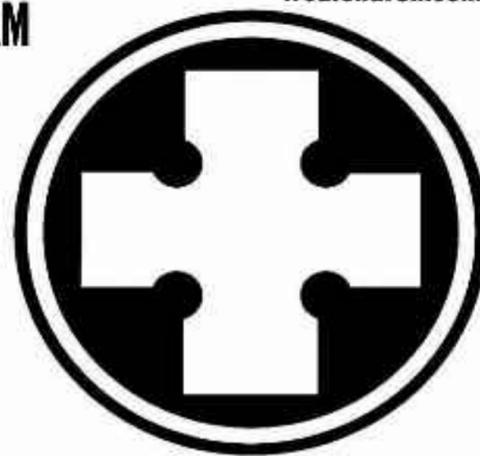
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City Hall Insider ...

Continued from page 6

ing people want to be able to walk to a local, neighborhood market. She also said that Metropolitan Bakery is missing out on a marketing partner. She said the store could carry the company's bread and make sandwiches, which drivers for the bakery might want.

That prompted the owner of the bakery to say out loud: "They (drivers) don't want to get shot."

In the vote to approve the store, only Councilmembers Hassan and Jankowski were opposed.

Normally the purchase of a police car – especially from a funding source other than the general budget – is a slam dunk. Oh no, not at this meeting. The subject was the jumping off point for Councilmember Jankowski to go on a series of sharp attacks on City Manager Bill Cooper.

Money to pay for the police vehicle was slated to come

from the Police Department's drug forfeiture fund — in other words, free money. But Jankowski took issue with the fund, questioning how much money is in it and how the fund is controlled.

He also said he wants an inventory of the Police Department's vehicles.

On the drug fund, Cooper said he did not know offhand how much is in it, but pushed by Jankowski to ballpark the figure, he said about \$1 million – give or take \$100,000.

As for the inventory, Cooper said it's being worked on. That response didn't sit well with Jankowski, who snapped back at Cooper, saying: "Your administration is slow."

He accused Cooper of having lost control.

"Someone's in charge but no one is in control," Jankowski said.

(Editor's note: Is that Zen?) Jankowski was not done yet.

He continued to admonish Cooper, saying he needs to



Controversy has rose up on whether to allow this building on Lumpkin St. to be used as a market. The building has been vacant for five or six years, and opposition to allow it to re-open has come from Metropolitan Baking Co., located across the street.

work with council as a team, and that he has been too slow in providing requested information.

"We keep waiting, waiting and waiting," Jankowski said.

Councilmember Gordon said she doesn't want to dip into the drug fund just for the sake of avoiding spending from the general fund. But then she asked if more salaries could be offset by the drug fund.

"Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa," said Cooper.

very strict rules. I wish we do," Jankowski said.

Jankowski added that the city's financial troubles are accelerating fast and that Cooper is too slow in providing financial information to the council. "There's almost a contempt," Jankowski said to Cooper.

Jankowski then proposed to delay purchasing the vehicle in order to review the drug fund in full. It was pointed out that the vehicle in question is currently being leased by the Police Department and that lease runs out on Nov. 30, at which point the car has to be returned.

The council split on the vote to hold off on the purchase, with Councilmembers Gordon, Hassan and Jankowski voting in favor to wait and Councilmembers Ahmed, Miah and Stackpoole voting to move ahead with the purchase.

The split vote required Mayor Karen Majewski to cast the tie-breaking vote. She voted to go ahead with the purchase.

What came next can only be described as a "riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."

(That's a Winston Churchill quote, talking about the Soviet Union, which is now Russia and which is still very much a riddle.)

Councilmember Gordon placed on the agenda eight items from the previous council meeting in which she requested an amendment to each issue.

But she did not include what exactly she wanted to amend, leaving her fellow councilmembers puzzled over her intent.

How can one amend a previous resolution without having a specific amendment to amend? Later in the meeting the council figured out how to make both a specific amendment and also amend nothing.

(Editor's note: Ah, we are getting very close to a perfect Zen moment.)

Gordon stressed that was not how she worded her request to the City Clerk. But later, she kind of said that was her intent.

A long discussion followed with City Attorney James Allen jumping in to give some guidance. Allen pointed out that the agenda items can be amended simply by stating what it is that needs to be amended.

Simple, right?

Well, that concept took some time to sink in.

Gordon said her intent in "amending" the issues was simply another way to say she wanted to discuss them.

The agenda items in question had to do with previous requests to end non-essential overtime, a detailed report on the Police Department's drug fund, its 911 fund and the traffic patrol program, eliminating vehicles assigned to staffmembers, a cost savings analysis to merge the police and fire departments together, and to contract those services with another community or contract them out, end all non-essential services, have departments cut 20 percent of their budgets, end furlough

days for appointees and find out how much the city can save by switching to another health insurance plan.

To say the least, it was a lot on one plate.

The discussion broke down, though, in an ongoing attack on Cooper and how he prepared the requested reports. Jankowski called them part of a "big dance" by Cooper.

Cooper said he could have more financial information on hand if councilmembers asked him before the meeting.

On the subject of eliminating non-essential overtime, Gordon asked if that included the police traffic patrol program. The program not only pays for itself but brings in a substantial amount of money through traffic fines, Cooper pointed out. And the answer to Gordon's question was yes, the cut in non-essential overtime includes the traffic patrol program.

Except it wasn't cut, Cooper said, because it was his understanding that the council wanted to keep the program, which he gleaned from Gordon in discussions after the last council meeting when the OT cut was issued by the council.

And that prompted Jankowski to question why Cooper would not impose the restriction since it was a council directive.

Ouch.

The upshot, though, was the council agreed to allow the traffic patrol program to continue. So all you speeders and reckless drivers consider yourself warned: the cops are still writing tickets.

The question of overtime didn't go away quite yet. Jankowski further pressed the issue, asking if ALL (his emphasis) non-essential overtime has been eliminated. Cooper said there is some overtime in the Police Department that is paid through special grants.

That was an Ah-ha! moment for Jankowski, who said that when the council directed ALL non-essential and non-emergency overtime to be cut, it meant ALL. Despite the fact that some OT is paid by grants, Jankowski said it's time to "draw it back in." He said the council needs to get a handle on how much money is spent and what "procedures" are in place to determine when and how money should be spent.

City Hall Insider has to take a break here because our publishing deadline has been pushed a day ahead and there is just too much more on this subject to report and not enough time. So ... stay tuned for part two next week.

But for now, let's go back to the "ball of confusion" theme and cue up one of our favorite Temptation lyrics:

"Just a ball of confusion, That's what the world is today, hey.

Fear in the air, tension everywhere,

Unemployment rising fast,

The Beatles new record's a gas,

And the only safe place to live,

Is on an Indian reservation, The band played on."

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The sounds of the city, captured in cans

By Ian Perrotta

Here's a good way to entertain the family this weekend – take them to Public Pool's latest exhibit "In Your Neighborhood."

The newest installation at the Caniff collective features the work of local resident Jessica Frelinghuysen, a multi-talented artist who moved to the city last October. Since then, she's been collecting the sights and sounds of Hamtramck and compiling them together to create a multimedia docu-

mentation of life in the area.

"It's kind of like a sound portrait of the neighborhood," she says. "There's everything from church bells to people speaking Polish at the bakery."

Partnered with the sounds are visual representations of the community, a concept that culminates in the center of the exhibition space where a tree has been constructed from wood found in the city's alleys. Hanging in the tree from strings are tin cans—meant to evoke the



Local artist Jessica Frelinghuysen recently opened a new exhibit at Public Pool. Here she is seen collecting some of the sounds of Hamtramck.

childhood memory of tin can phones – imbedded with speakers that contain some of the collected stories of the city. As the exhibit runs, more cans with stories will be added to create an oral history of Hamtramck.

Every Saturday from now until the end of the show's run on Dec. 18, Frelinghuysen will be at Public Pool to interact with visitors and answer any questions they may have. Additionally, she'll be recording people's stories to add to the exhibit, which means that each week it will evolve into something different. And along with the chance to record your voice for posterity, on the walls there will be questionnaires about the

city that can be filled out as well.

At the conclusion of the exhibit, Frelinghuysen plans to combine all of the collected sounds together into what she calls a "soundscape," which she will then turn into a podcast that will be available to experience on the Internet. Overall, the exhibit parallels her desire to fit art into regular life, taking it out of museums and institutions and integrating it into everyday experiences.

"There are some interac-

tive elements that make the experience of going to the gallery more fun," says Frelinghuysen, "and the subject matter is something that you'll recognize from living in Hamtramck."

"In Your Neighborhood" runs every Saturday from 1 to 6 p.m. at Public Pool, located at 3309 Caniff. For more information, or to set-up a recording session to tell your story, contact Jessica Frelinghuysen at inyourneighborhood@yahoo.com.

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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 modeld-media.com and metromode.com have been reporting on fascinating development projects for the past few years. With their permission, here is a round-up of their reports from

the past week:

This publication has covered the tastes of Southwest Detroit Putnam Weekley before (see The Detroit Who Ate (and Drank) Everything). Well, he's making news again, this time with a new business: Detroit Wine Truck, a service that will deliver his personally curated bottle packages to any Detroit doorstep. Weekley has honed his chops working for wine shops, departments and wholesalers in the suburbs and Ann Arbor for about

a dozen years. Like many kinds of retail in the city, he found options back home to be lacking – stalwart Cost Plus in Eastern Market and new kid MotorCity Wine notwithstanding. "With such a diverse set of products, you could have have 20 wine stores next to each other, all with different products," he says. "Detroit has historically had less of those kinds of things than some suburban places." With thoughts of opening a storefront long on his mind, Weekley decided a delivery busi-

ness was a good entry point. "I can learn who is drinking wine in Detroit, what they are interested in," he says. Added bonus: giving city dwellers "more access to a subject near and dear to me." Packages range from the value-priced – six bottles of three French red varieties for \$66 – to a pricier pair of Italians for \$55. Deliveries began last week and, as he suspected, the lower cost packages have been the most popular. "Ten dollars is a lot of money to spend on a beverage," says Weekley. "But

to make interesting wine, it is hard to deliver that to market for much less – at least to the standards I apply when judging wine." He pledges that he will offer no wine, no matter the price tag, that is "formulaic or mass-produced." Other "foodie" businesses popping up around town – Beau Bien, Neighborhood Noodle and Corridor Sausage, to name just a few – point to a critical mass of thoughtful eating and drinking choices in Detroit. Weekley sees this as positive for his enterprise. "If you're an adventurous

eater and trust your own palate, and you taste the wines...intuitively (there is) something delicious about them, satisfying and memorable," he says. "You might want more – and then maybe, I have a business that will sustain itself." To schedule delivery call (313) 450-2420, twitter Putnam100 or email putnamweekley@gmail.com.
Writer: Kelli B. Kavanaugh

Police chief says he is indeed reviewing department policies

By Charles Sercombe

Last week's editorial in this paper urging Police Chief Mark Kalinowski to review department policies to weed out the bad ones didn't go unnoticed.

Kalinowski said that since he took the job last June, he has updated over 30 policies out of about 150 the department relies on.

Why the fuss over policies? The department was cast in an embarrassing light recently because of a WXYZ Channel 7 investigative story

by reporter Scott Lewis. In the story, Hamtramck police officers refused to investigate a hit-and-run accident because a department policy barred taking reports if accidents happen on private property.

The incident occurred in a gasoline station on Caniff at Dequindre. There are two witnesses, a video tape, and one of the witnesses got a look at the driver and her license plate number.

But while traffic accidents are one thing, hit-and-runs are a criminal matter and require

police departments to investigate them. And had the officers investigated the matter, Lewis pointed out, they would have found the driver of the hit-and-run has a lengthy record of violations, is wanted on two arrest warrants and in fact had her driver's license revoked.

Kalinowski said he had just come back from vacation when he got a call about the incident from Lewis. Kalinowski told Lewis he would review the policy.

He wasted no time in throw-

ing that policy out, he told The Review last week.

As for the other policies he's had to time to review, he said most just needed a little tweaking here and there.

"They needed to be updated to today," he said.

One police policy regarding disciplinary procedures, for example, referred to a city Civil Service Commission. That commission was eliminated several years ago. It's now up to the chief to determine what disciplinary actions should be taken.

Kalinowski stressed that no matter what the policy is, officers and their commanders have to exercise flexibility on when a certain policy doesn't

quite fit a specific situation. He said the hit-and-run incident is a clear example of officers being too rigid in their interpretation of a policy.



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