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# The Review Hamtramck

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## — HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

# In Hamtramck, the business of death barely hangs on

By Alan R. Madeleine

If you didn't know any better, you might think that the funeral home business in Hamtramck was, well, dying.

Over the past several years, some of the well-known funeral homes in the area have ceased to exist. Miller, Orłowski and Frontczak are among the prominent names no longer operating in Hamtramck, or at all in the trade.

Reached by telephone, City Treasurer Mike Wilk, of Jurkiewicz & Wilk Funeral Home, said he purchased the former Jurkiewicz and Sons business in 1975. A licensed director for 44 years, born and raised here in town, he says the business is much changed now.

"They (people) have a tendency to want different things," he said, a sentiment that was echoed virtually across the board by all the remaining directors.

For one, there has been a strong turn away from sitting funerals and formal body viewings, to cremations, often on the same day of death, according to Dave Krot, of Krot Funeral Home. He said that a certain segment of the popu-

lation seems to have also, perhaps, lost a modicum of respect for the process, as well.

"Still, it's a very gratifying profession," he says, straightforwardly. He handles public relations, while his brother

"If we did it wrong, we wouldn't still be here," he admits.

Nor is he suggesting that those places now out of business were doing things wrong either. For them, it seems simply to have been a matter

he operates out of the Wilk funeral home, with their assistance. His former parking garage was leveled some months back, and his old building has transformed, rather incongruously, into an Asian restaurant.

The former art scholarship student, lured to the trade by the potential income, shed a unique light on the change in Hamtramck's death industry landscape.

"With Mr. Miller, he was a single man, never-married, and had no one to really leave the business to, to carry it on," he said. "Orłowski had a son, meanwhile, but he wasn't interested in continuing the family work."

Also, he noted, Hamtramck's funeral homes went out of business simply because many people have moved out of the area over the last 20 years, to the northern suburbs and exurbia.

Chris Buhay, licensed director of the eponymous Buhay Funeral Chapel, has developed a unique approach to keep it going. His chapel serves, almost exclusively,



**Mike Wilk, of Jurkiewicz & Wilk Funeral Home, says that people's tastes in funerals have shifted.**

Don, recently unretired and back from Florida, is the licensed director in their operation.

Dave Krot touts doing things "right," and with attention to detail, as the keys to success in the business, and is quick to praise the remaining competitors as people who follow that edict as well.

of time.

Fred Hikade, whose last name is pronounced Hi-KEED, offers a perspective. Owner of the 93-year-old Skupny Funeral Home business since 1990, he may, on the surface, seem to have joined the ranks of the goners, but in fact he is simply hunting for another building. Meanwhile,

**Continued on page 4**



## Quick Hits

**Ah, spring. It's finally here, this Sunday, March 20.**

Has this been one of the toughest, coldest, snowiest, meanest winters or what? In fact, despite what the calendar says, it's still unseasonably cold. However, we saw one sure sign of spring: teenagers in shorts.

Unfortunately, we've read somewhere that we are in a La Nina, meaning more wild and unpredictable weather for the next several weeks. Come on summer.



## 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.

**"When they would dump big piles of donated crap they didn't want, I'd lug it to my dumpster. Frankly, I've had enough."**

## Weed and Seed program targets gang activity

By Ian Perrotta

If things go right for Hamtramck's Weed and Seed program, area gangs will have a lot more to worry about than who's wearing what color.

The community advocacy organization just completed an application for a three-year anti-gang grant.

Funded by the Department of Justice, the \$700,000 grant would begin in 2012 if approved. The timing couldn't be better, either, as it would just after the final year of the five-year Weed and Seed program.

Moreover, according to Weed and Seed Site Director Barbara Stachowski, the foun-

dation's accomplishments so far – particularly organizing neighborhood block clubs and the new radio patrol – has made the city an ideal candidate.

"The grant we applied for is very complementary in following Weed and Seed," she said. "Everything that has been done so far has allowed for the city's residents to become empowered to make a difference."

In order to apply for the grant, Stachowski had to first establish that the city does in fact have a gang problem. To do so, she enlisted the help



**Second generation immigrants from the middle east have taken up American ways by forming their own gangs like "Arabz."**

**Continued on page 6**

## Housing crisis? What housing crisis?

By Charles Sercombe

The housing market may be in the toilet, but you wouldn't know it by looking around Hamtramck.

How's that? The city is undergoing a massive housing development project that will eventually fill up almost every empty lot as well as refurbish a number of existing houses. For the past few months, the first leg of this project has been underway.

Thanks to a \$15 million gift from the Obama administration, Hamtramck also gets a two-for-one.

The housing development serves to put a final end to a 40-year-old housing discrimination lawsuit filed against Hamtramck by a group of black residents who, back in the 1960s, accused city officials of targeting their homes for demolition, all in the name of "urban renewal."

The black residents said "urban renewal" was more about getting rid of African-American residents rather than



**The "Sarah Garrett" housing project is part of the final development that will result in the construction and rehabbing of 104 housing units.**

making improvements to the neighborhoods. The city eventually agreed to build 200 housing units to resolve the lawsuit, but that agreement was long in coming.

It wasn't until about 10 years ago that a development agreement was completed, and it won't be until another two or three years for all of the housing units to be constructed. About 96 houses have been built so far.

**Continued on page 2**

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# Housing crisis? What housing crisis?

Continued from front page

The latest development plan calls for building or rehabbing 104 houses. The first leg of construction comes under the auspices of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority. MSHDA is building 22 dwellings, most of which are two-family structures. Four existing houses will be renovated. The project is aptly called "The Sarah Garrett Homes" – named after the woman who came to symbolize the housing lawsuit.

This part of the development project is perhaps the most unique. They will remain rental dwellings for 30 years, and the structures will be maintained through a contractor, which includes replacing broken windows, removing snow and cutting grass.

The units already have tenants lined up.

The next two phases of the development involve the city

and Wayne County. The city will be building or rehabbing 39 dwellings. The county's portion is 30 houses.



Both the city's and state's houses will be sold at a super-low price of about \$50,000.

The three separate development projects are spread all throughout the city. The state's portion is mostly focused in the area of Yemans, Evaline

and Belmont near Alpena.

In all three development projects the plaintiffs – and their descendents – of the housing

lawsuit have first dibs on the houses.

The history of the housing lawsuit has taken many twists and turns over the years. After the first round of houses was constructed a few years ago, city, county and state officials

held a ribbon ceremony celebrating the closure of the lawsuit.

Even the retired federal judge who oversaw the case, Damon Keith, attended the ceremony.

Perhaps, it could be said, the celebration was premature. It won't be until these last three development phases are completed that it can be said that the lawsuit is finally over.

Regardless of the lawsuit, its ugly history, and the painfully long time it took to even pound the first nail into the first house, the end result is more people will be moving into Hamtramck, and they will be able to own a home at an affordable price.

On Yemans St. at Alpena, three new two-family houses are going up. Saad Almasmary just purchased a brick bungalow next to the houses. Just

weeks ago there were garbage strewn lots around Almasmary's house. Now there are houses going up all around his neighborhood.

"This is beautiful," Almasmary said standing in front of his house. "We want to see Hamtramck rise. All of these houses going up will bring new business. They will bring people to Hamtramck also."

## In a community of immigrants, another group's tale of struggle is told

By Ian Perrotta

Hamtramck is full of immigrants, and each has their own story to tell. But while this Thursday's (March 24) presentation at the library won't be about any of them, it will certainly be worth attending.

In order to raise awareness about the plight of North Korean refugees, the Hamtramck Public Library is hosting a screening of the movie "Hiding." The film – created by Liberty in North Korea (LiNK) – exposes the struggle North Korean refugees must go through in China to find freedom.

The documentary features the stories of those still living in hiding in North Korea and

tells the struggles and plights of their everyday lives, and also explains ways that people across the globe can help in bringing them to freedom. Additionally, the film screening will help raise the funds necessary to help rescue more North Korean refugees currently in hiding.

As for the reason the Hamtramck Library is showing a documentary about a population with little ties to the area, Library Director Tamara Sochacka explained that it is important to highlight humanitarian crises regardless of who is affected. She said that in order to prevent similar situations from happening in the fu-

ture it is paramount that we address them in the present.

"Many of us here in Hamtramck are from countries that were communist and totalitarian, and many people who are here suffered the same conditions," she said. "It is important for people to become aware of this humanitarian crisis. We think that the efforts of LiNK are worthwhile and we want to let others know about their work."

"Hiding" will be shown at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 24 in the Hamtramck Public Library. The event is free and open to all, and after the film's screening LiNK will provide additional information and resources.

## This week at the library...

**ESL Class for Beginners** - Saturday, March 12 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, March 19 at noon. All children are invited to library storytime. This week we will be celebrating St. Patrick's Day with reading and arts and crafts.

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

**Computer Classes for Beginners** - Tuesday, March 22 at 11 a.m. Basic instructions on computer use for beginners will be held on Tuesdays. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

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

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

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

**Jeopardy at the Library** - Thursday, March 24 at 4 p.m. Sign up and participate in Jeopardy games held on Thursdays at the library. Compete against friends, win prizes and have fun developing your knowledge skills.

**Special Screening of a LiNK Documentary**

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

**Meeting of the Library Board** - Thursday, April 14 at 6 p.m. Regular meeting of the Library Board will be held in the auditorium. Open to the public.

**Friends of the Library Meeting** - Thursday, March 24 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.

**Piano Recital** - Friday, April 1 at 7 p.m. Matthew Walczak, a young Polish pianist, will present his music program featuring works of Mozart, Chopin and Debussy.

**Special Thanks to Mr. J. William Gorski** for his continuous efforts to compile the "Index of Hamtramck Obituaries". Recently the index of 1960's was donated to the Library and can be accessed on HPL web page in local history section.

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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WAYNE COUNTY TREASURER



# Second Front Page

## Cut in education funding puts further strain on district

By Charles Sercombe

One by one, public school teachers in the metro area agreeing to salary cuts to help defray budget deficits.

River Rouge teachers recently agreed to a 15 percent pay cut.

Teachers in Oak Park are taking a 5 percent hit, while teachers in Bloomfield Hills, Lake Orion, Oxford, Walled Lake and Waterford have agreed to give up planned salary increases.

In Hamtramck, there is no indication teachers will agree to a cut. The district faces a \$4 million deficit, which will only get worse with a \$470 per pupil cut in state revenue sharing.

Hamtramck Superintendent Tom Niczay said that when you factor in other expenses, the loss in state aid equals \$700 per student. Add it all up, Niczay said, and the district is facing a loss of \$1 million in revenue in the coming year.

Niczay said he has no idea how his district will survive that financial blow.

One thing is for sure, Niczay said: the teachers' union has to agree to contract concessions in order for the district to survive.

But there seems to be a communication problem within the teachers' union. Several teachers have spoken privately with The Review about their concern that their union leadership has not informed them of the offers being made.

Union President Bo Karpinsky hasn't been clear on this matter, saying the union leadership has rejected past contract concessions. Apparently, those past offers were not put up to a full vote of the teachers.

Niczay said formal contract negotiations will begin April 6. If the district fails to balance its budget, the state can step in and appoint an emergency financial manager.

A state-appointed emergency financial manager now has the power to rip up union contracts and write new ones. An EFM can also decide to dissolve the district

and merge it with another.

Gov. Rick Snyder's cuts in education funding have led to accusations from union leaders across the state that he is purposely setting up school districts for financial failure. Snyder's critics say the

change in the law governing EFM's to allow union contracts to be dissolved is an attempt to break unions.

There is now growing opposition to Snyder, and an on-line recall drive has begun.

## Business owner has plenty of trash talk over neighbor

By Ian Perrotta

They say one man's trash is another man's treasure. Just don't expect that sentiment from Sean Kowalski.

For the past 15 years, Kowalski says he has had problems with the inhabitant of a stand-alone garage located at the intersection of Bernard St. and the alley behind Holbrook. According to him, the structure's occupant, Lutheran Social Services (LSS), has failed to maintain the property and has repeatedly left large piles of trash and other debris lying on the side of the building.

"I have always shoveled, mowed, cut ghetto palms, swept, etc.," he says. "When they would dump big piles of donated crap they didn't want, I'd lug it to my dumpster. Frankly, I've had enough."

As a co-owner of Café 1923 and the owner of a nearby home – both of which are situated near the garage in question – Kowalski said that after years of getting the runaround from LSS he finally grew tired of the problem and decided to alert the media.

When LSS was initially asked about the issue, a woman by the name of Judy who answered the phone denied having any knowledge of the building. She also said she was unaware of the issue until this week.

"We don't have any facilities in Hamtramck," she said. "In fact, other than a voicemail I heard this morning, this is the first I've heard of any problem."

However, Kowalski insists that is not the case. He says that in the years during which LSS never mowed any grass, shoveled any snow from the sidewalk nor made any efforts to clean trash from the property, through the course of trying to rectify the situation he learned that the building was operated by the Refugee Services division of LSS.

Upon calling the head of Refugee Services, Belmin Pinjit, The Review was told by him that it was "not possible" that the building had been a source of problems for the past 15 years, stating that their Refugee Services had not been around for that time-frame.

However, he did concede that the building had been in use since he had come to the country as a refugee in 1996. He also contended that the structure has been unused since 2006, when another facility was obtained in Madison Heights, and that in 2007 all remaining furniture that could be salvaged was moved to the Madison Heights location.

Additionally, Pinjit claimed that the garage has been locked for the last four-to-five years, and that any trash or debris left in the area was a result of a failure by Waste Management to pick it up. He said that his organization is sometimes called to collect donations from people who are actually just trying to get some furniture removed from their houses, and the main problem is that when his organization leaves a pile for Waste Management sometimes others pick through it and leave the

Continued on page 6

## CITY OF HAMTRAMCK NOTICE OF MEETING OF BOARD OF REVIEW FOR 2011

I hereby give notice that the Board of Review for the City of Hamtramck will meet in the Hamtramck City Hall at 3401 Evaline in said City on Monday, March 21, 2011 and Thursday, March 24, 2011 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and also on Wednesday, March 23, 2011 from 1 p.m. To 9 p.m. for the purpose of examining, reviewing and correcting The 2011 Assessment Roll and hearing complaints of all persons Interested herein considering themselves aggrieved.

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# Talk back ...

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

**By Charles Sercombe**

Back in the 1980s, covering the police beat was pretty laid back, compared to what we go through these days to get information from the department. I don't mean that in a critical way, but way back when, things were a lot looser. I could regularly get the OK from the front desk sergeant at the old police station, which used to be a dormitory for nuns, to go upstairs to talk with the detectives.

I'd go door-to-door asking each detective what's new.

One of my favorite stops was at the office of Detective Don Milewski, who is now retired. He had a great sense of humor, which comes in handy when you regularly deal with the gritty side of life.

One day I walked into his office and went to sit down as usual but was hurriedly told:

"I wouldn't sit there." Don said that a little too late because I had already made contact.

And why not sit down? Well, there splayed out on the chair was a bullet ridden pair of blue jeans. With wet blood.

Don cackled like a maniac. I had the look of being pranked.

That's one heck of a way

to start the day.

The story, from what I remember all these years later, was that a drug dealer was shot to death while driving his car, a Mercedes, down I-75. It just so happened the portion of I-75 that the shooting took place was in Hamtramck.

The poor guy died in a hail of bullets. Drug-related murders were common in the 1980s. And from what I remember, no one was ever arrested in this case. Such a waste of life.

Having covered dozens and dozens of these deaths, I had become detached from the human part of these victims. Each death became just another number. This may or may not explain what happened next.

After Don's mad laughing quieted down, I started thinking. Huh, the guy's dead, he won't be needing his Mercedes. And the car was still in good shape, except for the bullet holes. It had gently rolled to a stop on the highway. At the time, I was driving a piece of crap (and I continue to drive a piece of crap). To my thinking, driving around in a Mercedes that was riddled with bullet holes had a peculiar Detroit street cred.

"Is the Mercedes going to be for sale?" I asked Don.

"No, you don't want that," was his reply.

I can't remember why Don said that, and I didn't pursue the subject. Just as well. I'm sure it had plenty of bad ju-ju.

At least I got a "good" story that day. And for a moment, I had imagined myself tooling around town in a Mercedes! But before I could type up the story, I first had to stop home for a change of clothes. Remember? The wet blood?

# In Hamtramck, the business of death barely hangs on

Continued from front page

the metro area's Ukrainian community. Opened in 1947, such specialization has enabled the business to continue into its second generation seamlessly enough. Virtually everyone he buries, he knew.

"We just had a Polish service. I can't remember the last one before that, that wasn't Ukrainian, but I think it was about eight years ago" he laughs over the phone. He, too, cites the biggest factor influencing the trade, at present, as the shift toward no-muss, no-fuss cremations.

Helon Rahman, of Rahman Funeral Home, just up Jos. Campau into Detroit, is using the same strategy to grow her operation, serving the area's

burgeoning Bangladeshi and other Islamic communities.

"I also do pre-need, pre-planning work" with the community, she said. Her incipient business seems geared to succeed, given the area's demographic shifting.

So, would these who remain recommend working in, or owning and operating, a funeral business to others? Dave Krot's face drifts down ever so little.

"It's rewarding. Personally, at our age, most of us (local funeral directors) have experienced these family losses ourselves, to some extent. We've all been in it a long time. We know what to do and say, to make (those grieving) as comfortable as possi-

ble." Mike Wilk noted, "Every person is different, in terms of the way they handle grief."

Chris Buhay survives because the (Ukrainian) community has survived.

"It's never easy, though - even after 33 years," he states.

Fred Hikade, of Skupny, sums it up succinctly. "It's a good line of work. It's just tough to start from the ground up."

Like so many professions, and for so many cities, the animal called change keeps the players on their toes. Even in this case - where those toes may come with a tag.

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--	---

\* These gatherings replace our Sunday events in Hamtramck.  
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# Review: Opinion Page

## Elections indeed have serious, long-term consequences

Just when it looked like Hamtramck was going to pull out of a financial crisis, along comes Gov. Rick Snyder.

You know Snyder, the guy who got elected to office without telling anyone what he would specifically do once there. He's the guy the Detroit News and Detroit Free Press editorial boards endorsed without knowing what Snyder planned to do, besides "reinvent Michigan."

In short, Snyder is the guy who got a free pass from voters and newspaper editorial boards. Well, guess what? It turns out Snyder is about to push

most of the state's municipalities and school districts into bankruptcy. He's doing this by slashing state revenue sharing by one third and making cities compete for a smaller pot of money by how well they are able to merge services and perform other budget tricks. His budget for public schools calls for a reduction of \$470 per pupil.

Merging services is something that has to get done in Hamtramck in light of the new economic reality we face. But this isn't a possibility for a city like Hamtramck. What, merge with Highland Park or De-

troit? That would be the end of our stable neighborhoods.

Snyder says he wants to reinvent Michigan government. It sounds to us that this so-called reinvention will be done on the backs of small communities that have their hands tied.

At the same time we are all being asked to make sacrifices, yet Snyder is giving tax breaks to the super rich and businesses.

All we can do is shake our heads and remind folks that elections have consequences. The next time a candidate runs for office and refuses to say what he or she will do,

## City inspectors will soon be back on the job

By Charles Sercombe

For a brief period, Hamtramck was without building and housing code inspectors.

Hamtramck's City Council was forced to eliminate the budget for inspectors because of the city's financial crisis. But then the city's Community and Economic Development Department came up with a way to save the program, and possibly reinvent it.

Thanks to a federal grant the city receives every year for community development projects, a supervisor and two part-time inspectors will soon be back on the job.

Jason Friedmann, the director of the Economic Development Department, said

inspectors will first focus on the commercial district.

"We're not going to put up with 40 signs in store windows, and we're not going to put up with not shoveling the snow," he said.

Friedmann said he's aware times are tight for business owners, but the city has to get tough on bringing buildings up to code. He said warning letters will be issued first and if

no action is taken, tickets will come next.

"We don't want to give people tickets, we want them to comply," Friedmann said.

Inspectors will also target residential areas, particularly rubbish in the alleys. He said that despite a successful city-issued garbage can program, there are still some households that simply throw out loose trash.

## Odds & Ends

**Get wasted ...** Well, not that kind of wasted. We mean it's time to start spring cleaning in your yard. The city will resume yard

waste collection on Monday, March 28.

The program continues every Monday through Nov. 28.

## Other Voices: Guest Editorial

### The deadline to pay 2008 property taxes is March 31. Let's Talk!

By Wayne County Treasurer Raymond J. Wojtowicz

Over my more than 30 years as Wayne County Treasurer, I cannot recall a more challenging time for so many property taxpayers.

Like the rest of the country, Wayne County is experiencing record numbers of property tax foreclosures. As county treasurer, I am required by state law to collect property taxes; taxes that pay for government services that we all want including police and fire protection, schools for our children, and much more. I know many who are having great difficulty paying their bills. Please don't ignore the problem; the time to act is now.

Please note; March 31 is the deadline to pay or make arrangements to pay 2008 delinquent taxes. With this deadline just a few weeks away, I encourage those with delinquent taxes to contact our office right away. We realize there are many reasons people have not paid their 2008 taxes. Please understand, we do not want your property, we need your payment and we are here to help. If the situation is not addressed you stand to lose your house to foreclosure.

We recognize these are challenging times for so many and have put in place programs to assist you. Several years ago

I instituted the Taxpayer Assistance Department designed specifically to reach out and inform those with delinquent taxes about payment options they may use to keep their property. We offer a payment plan that will allow you to budget your payments over the year and avoid foreclosure. If you live in the home and own the home we can offer a hardship extension to give you additional time to pay. It is essential to act now as time is running out.

Our outreach is simple, "Let's Talk." Our goal is to encourage people to contact us and not panic.

By contacting the Taxpayer Assistance Department you will speak with a trained member of our staff who will take your information and work with you to explore available options. Please know that your privacy will be fully protected and all personal and property data is shredded to ensure confidentiality. We cannot guarantee that everyone who contacts us will be able to save their property, however, we will do all that we can to advise you of your options.

The 2008 tax year and any taxes prior to that is what needs to be paid or payment arrangements made before March 31. My office stands

ready to help. Through our extensive educational and informational awareness efforts, we are using every resource available to reach delinquent taxpayers to help them resolve their property tax issues. We have partnered with over 20 community organizations to assist you in this time of need.

Let me restate, those with delinquent 2008 taxes can pay their taxes in person or online, arrange a payment plan, or apply for a substantial hardship extension which will allow through the end of the year to pay the back taxes.

The payment plan option is an agreement that requires the taxpayer to pay 20 percent of the delinquency by the end of March, 20 percent by May 15, 20 percent by August 15, and the remaining balance by the end of 2011. More information about these two programs can be found on our website at [www.treasurer.waynecounty.com](http://www.treasurer.waynecounty.com), or by contacting our Taxpayer Assistance Department at [taxinfo@co.wayne.mi.us](mailto:taxinfo@co.wayne.mi.us) or (313) 224-6105.

Due to extreme volume our phones are often overloaded. Also our offices will be extremely busy the end of the month so I urge you to act now. If you have delinquent taxes, don't give up. Help us help you. Let's Talk.

## Letters • Letters

### 'Blowout' organizer responds to critic

In regard to last week's story about the "Hamtramck Blowout" and quotes from Cathie Gordon, normally, I do not respond to this sort of misinformation, because more often than not, it only further confuses the topic. However, there is so much misleading information in Gordon's quotes, I feel the need to speak up.

1. Attendance: attendance was not down this year.

2. Cost of Attendance: The Metro Times has not raised the price of Blowout tickets since it started in 1997. The MT wants people to only pay \$20, which is why pre-sale tickets were pushed strongly this year. Pre-sale tickets were available for \$20, several weeks before the event (and also online at [metrotimes.com](http://metrotimes.com)) at several small businesses in suburbs like Royal Oak and Birming-

ham and also at the Pre-Party on Wednesday, March 2. The \$25 wristband fee (good for three days of music) was only incurred by those who waited until Thursday to buy their wristbands. Note: Gordon was given an opportunity to be the only venue to sell wristbands at her venue, but was a no-show for the meeting/wristband exchange.

3. The cost of sound has not increased for anyone except the Gates of Columbus and even then, the increase was negligible. Many of the venues who already have a sound system, and those who needed to rent one for the weekend, paid \$200-\$250/night. This is average. (Sidenote: if you are not making more than a couple hundred dollars in alcohol sales during Blowout when your bar is packed, something is wrong on your end.)

4. Cathie Gordon only scheduled one bartender to work during the Blowout and wait time for drinks was 10-15 minutes.

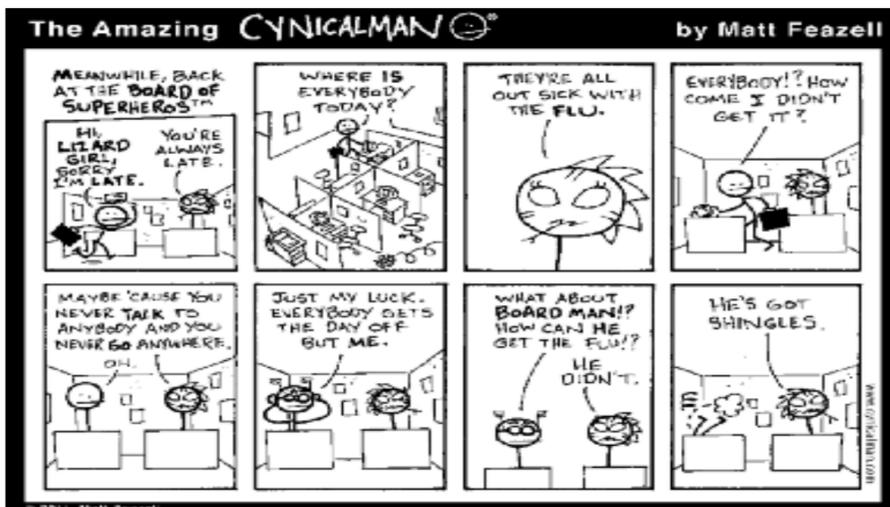
5. If someone's planning on drinking at a music event, they need much more than \$5 to do so. That five bucks equals one drink, maybe.

6. The Metro Times and their sponsors go out of their way to support the city of Hamtramck. I know this first hand.

So glad the 2011 Blowout was a success, and I appreciate the opportunity to set the record straight. Don't believe everything you hear, folks.

Much love to Hamtramck.

**Eve Doster**  
Hamtramck Resident  
Talent booker for the  
Metro Times' Blowout



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Editor/Publisher: John Ulaj Editor: Charles Sercombe

Copy Editor: Ian Perrotta

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# Weed and Seed program targets gang activity

Continued from front page

of Weed and Seed's community organizer Raphael Thurin and police liaison Sgt. Walter Tripp to secure letters from the community acknowledging the problem.

Altogether, 14 letters of support were collected from residents and community organizations. Those agreeing that the city faces a problem include the Mayor Karen Majewski, Police Chief Mark Kalinowski, Hamtramck Public Schools Superintendent Tom



Above - Bloods graffiti will often have a five-pointed star.

Left - TAZ in blue representing the Crips painted over the ABE (bloods) to disrespect and lay claim to disputed territory.



Though the problem in Hamtramck has not reached epic proportions, Stachowski says that one of the key components of the grant is the non-reactionary steps it takes to prevent gang involvement before it happens. She explained that it utilizes tools like Restorative Justice practices and other proactive measures and would be crucial in keeping kids in the vulnerable 7-14 age group off the streets and out of gangs.

If awarded, the grant will pay for the administration and oversight of the program, which includes both a Site Director and an Outreach Director. Additionally, it would fund a juvenile police officer and pay for prevention and after-school education programs.

"Whether or not Weed and Seed is successful in getting the grant, our success is in applying for it," said Stachowski. "Because of our work, we are now in a system that will allow us to apply for more funding in the future."

Niczay and the leaders of the city's block clubs.

Their letters of support will work in conjunction with the evidence of gang-related activity collected thus far. This includes anecdotal verification as well as graffiti that indicates the presence of Bloods, Crips and other ethnic gangs.

# Business owner has plenty of trash talk over neighbor

Continued from page 4

area a mess.

Regardless of the problems of the past - which Pinjit said he was unaware of - Pinjit said that if the trash was not picked up this weekend he would see to it that the debris is removed. He maintained that Kowalski could have contacted him directly and added that after seeing the pictures Kowalski took of the trash pile, he noticed an inordinate amount of tree branches on city-owned property. He said he was told by Kowalski that the city was broke and that individual residents took it upon themselves to clean up the city. Upon being told of the

Clean Sweep by a Review reporter, Pinjit agreed to join in.

Though the situation appears to have been diffused, Kowalski says he won't be satisfied until the structure no longer poses a problem. For now, he'll be keeping one watchful eye on the property and another on Lutheran Social Services.

"I am shocked and appalled that an organization which claims a vision of 'Communities of service that meet the needs of people, upholding human dignity, advocating equality and justice' willingly treats my neighborhood with such glaring disrespect and in-

## Obituaries

### SWETECH

Mary Swetech, 90, died March 8, 2011.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Alexander.

She is survived by her daughters, Loretta (Doug) Bowlin and Joan Swetech; sons, Dr. James (Silvana) Swetech, Dr. Stephen

(Grozda) Swetech and John (Debra) Swetech; grandchildren, Samantha, Alex, Melissa, Jonathan, Maria and Laura.

Funeral arrangements were made by Buhay Funeral Chapel, and funeral services were held on March 12 at St. Ladislaus Catholic Church.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of Hamtramck is accepting bids from licensed contractors for the following:

Vacant lot cleanup; Tree trimming and tree removal; Lot mowing and clean up; Boardups; Street sweeping; Water service repairs and Internal sewer line maintenance.

Please contact the Public Services office at (313) 876-7700 for more information.

Sealed bids will be accepted until time on bid cover page, on March 30, 2011 and should be submitted to: City Clerk, City of Hamtramck 3401 Evaline, Hamtramck, MI 48212

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Hamtramck, Conant-Yemans area, 2 Br. upper, living room, dining room, \$400/month + security, must have good credit, no pets, 586-945-0317. 4/8

Hamtramck, 2 Br. upper, close to shopping and Jos. Campau, appliances included, no pets, for appointment call 810-210-4994. 4/8

Hamtramck, upper 3 Br., \$575/month + security deposit, references required, 313-801-4001. 3/25

Clean flats for rent, 11449 Fleming St., \$425/month, 11427 Fleming, \$475/month + security, call Kim 313-682-2928. 4/8

Belmont St., 2 Br., between Conant and Gallagher, stove-fridge, clean, call for appointment 586-604-0553. 4/8

Hamtramck, 3 Br. upper, no pets, security deposit, 313-739-5721. 3/18

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Hamtramck-Detroit, 2-3 Br., newly remodeled, super clean, nice area, no pets, 586-634-2502. 3/25

3 Br. upper, 2603 Holbrook, living room, dining room, kitchen, newly painted, hardwood floors, no pets, no loud music or noise, 313-871-2118, 313-892-8963. 3/18

Hamtramck, Casmere St., furnished, brand new apartment, 1 Br. upper, immediate occupancy, washer-dryer, fridge, microwave, very clean, 586-873-8510. 3/18

Upper 2 Br., Hamtramck, stove-fridge, water included, ask for Jimmy, 586-536-0440, 586-943-8814. 3/18

Hamtramck, 2331-35 Edwin St., 2 Br. lower, \$500/month, 3 Br. upper, \$500/month, appliances, hardwood floor, 248-805-3038. 3/18

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# Coming Events

**Friday March 18, 4-7 p.m.** Fish Dinner at Holy Cross Parish 2311 Pulaski at Fleming. Dinner includes hand battered fish, coleslaw, fries, dinner roll, and beverage, adult \$8, children \$3. Also two choices of soup available for purchase. Carry out available.

**MARCH 20, Sunday, 11:30 a.m.** – Transfiguration Parish, 5830 Simon-K, Detroit, is holding a card & bunco party, featuring a hot meal, refreshments, door prizes and table prizes.

Admission is \$9. For tickets, call Terry at 586-558-0173 or the Rectory at 313-892-1310.

**MARCH 23, Wednesday, noon** – The Daughters of Isabella Mystical Rose Circle 736 are holding a "Baby Shower Card & Bunco Social," featuring a lunch, door and table prizes, raffle and share the wealth, admission is \$7 or a new baby item valued at least \$7, at Queen of Apostles' Activity Center, entrance on Harold St., fenced parking. Baby clothes go to Children's Hospital for babies with illnesses.

**APRIL 3, Sunday, 2 p.m.** – The Holy Cross Parish Mission Committee will host a bowling fundraiser to support the Hamtramck Friendship House. The event will be at Universal Lanes, 2101 E. 12 Mile Rd. in Warren. For more information and tickets, call (586) 558-7321 or stop by Srodek's Campau Quality Sausage at 9601 Jos. Campau. Ask for Maggie Srodek.

# Classifieds

## HELP WANTED

Cleaning lady wanted, Polish speaking preferred. Call 586 943-4721.

Medical assistant and receptionist needed for new clinic in Hamtramck, preference to speak Polish or Arabic, fax resume to 248-648-8931, cell, 248-725-7280. 3/18

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# Deadline for classifieds for next week is Thursday at Noon

\$15 for one week  
\$25 for two weeks  
\$35 for four weeks  
Call (313) 874-2100

# Street Life

## HATCH building gets a redo by students

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

By Walter Wasacz

A few weeks ago I had the privilege of attending a design charrette at HKS Architects, a worldwide firm with Detroit-area offices in Northville.

I was invited to comment on a project that was part of

work being done by students in architecture, interior design, urban design and fine art who'd qualified for an HKS design fellowship.

The project? The redesign of the former Hamtramck Police Station (and before that, a residence for nuns connected to St. Francis Hospital) into studios, exhibition and performance spaces for HATCH, the community arts



organization founded in 2006.

The group bought the building – on Evaline St. across from City Hall – for \$1 from the city and is now renovating the site.

HATCH founder Christopher Schneider was at the charrette to lend an insider's perspective on the group, the building, the neighborhood and what he called an explosion of art-related redevelopment projects in Hamtramck and other nearby sections of Detroit.

There was a tight focus on the students' work by several judges from art & design programs in southeast Michigan: U of D Mercy, Lawrence Tech and the University of Michigan among them. Sharp critiques and ideas circled the large room, where dozens of professionals and students sat and stood.

The design work and the physical work at the HATCH building are ongoing. We'll revisit the progress of this exciting project as we get updates. Meanwhile, take a

look at some pictures from the charrette. Models and drawings of the building were created by students selected for the HKS Detroit Fellowship.



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