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50¢

The Review

Hamtramck

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— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

Today's lesson, class: It's easy to be green

By Alan R. Madeleine

Students at Dickinson East Elementary School have been getting quite a lesson on going green.

But first, let's get some background on what an extraordinary transformation that school has taken:

Just about five years ago, on May 21, 2006, Gov. Jennifer Granholm signed into law House Bill No. 5554, which took effect the following day, establishing the Green School designator program.

Introduced initially by House Reps. Joe Hune, Edward Gaffney and Leslie Mortimer, the bill lists 20 different things, from which the students, faculty and officials of

a school can pick. Upon completing at least 10 of these tasks, that school qualifies as a Michigan Green School.

Dickinson East was not only designated as such, they have actually been given, over and above that, the highest specific distinction a Michigan Green School can receive, that of an "Official Michigan Evergreen School."

We spoke with Principal Nayal Maktari, who in turn referred us to science teacher Jennifer Bradley. She provided the responses to the following questions.

When did everyone find out that you had been named a Michigan Green School, and
Continued on page 4



Dickinson East Elementary School students plant flowers, bushes and trees to make the grounds of the school more green friendly. The school recently earned a special designation from the state for its green efforts.



Quick Hits

Got a moment today to have some fun and support a good cause?

If so, stop on by New Dodge Lounge today (May 20) starting at 4 p.m. A fundraiser will be held to support various after school activities in the public school district, and celebrate HHS teacher John Rostek's "Climb for Success."

Rostek will attempt to climb Mt. McKinley this June, and he's asking people to donate a dollar for every foot he conquers. To summit, Rostek will have to climb 20,320 feet. His goal is to raise at least \$20,320.

At Friday's shindig, you'll get to munch on pizza, hotdogs and pasta and enjoy music from a live band and a DJ, too.

New Dodge Lounge is located on Jos. Campau just south of Holbrook.

Election outcome could be historical

By Charles Sercombe

And then there were 13. That's 13 candidates we're talking about who will be on the August Primary ballot for three seats on City Council. Two candidates, Don Kosin and Kathleen Bittner, dropped out of the race last week.

Not much is known about Kosin, but Bittner's withdrawal came as a surprise to some. Bittner is well-known in the community through her family's business, the Polish Art Center, and from her co-organizing last year's Hamtramck Labor Day Festival.

Bittner said that she realized that trying to organize this year's festival and run for council would require too much time.

"I just don't have enough physical time," she said.

The 20-something-year-old did say, though, she might give a shot at council in a few years.

"I might think about it," she said about seeking office.

So, with those two candidates out of the race, that leaves voters with the following to choose from:

- Abdul Algazali
- Dilshad Chowdhury
- Showkat Chowdhury
- Richard Fabiszak
- Cathie Ladzinski Gordon
- Mohamed Delawar Hussain
- Roger Lamm
- Abu Mahfuz
- Anam Miah
- Ian Perrotta
- Susan Dunn-Rahdar
- Steve Selim Shaya
- Robert Zwolak

All but four of the candidates have sought office before. The new faces include: Dilshad Chowdhury, Roger Lamm, Ian Perrotta and a candidate with the unique name: Showkat Chowdhury.

Councilmember Gordon is the only incumbent running. Councilmembers Catrina Stackpoole and Shahab Ahmed did not pull petitions to seek re-election.

Algazali and Zwolak are former councilmembers. Algazali gave up his chance to seek re-election two years ago and chose in-

Continued on page 2

Countdown is over for the new opening of a city landmark

By Alan R. Madeleine

The time was right. Little hands helped big hands. And so The Clock Restaurant finally – after months of false starts and speculations – threw open its doors to Hamtramckans and city visitors alike this past Monday morning.

The Review met with owner Manjola Vuktilaj on Wednesday, in the now-gleaming interior of the spruced up and partly redesigned icon on Jos. Campau. Tiled surfaces shown with a brightness long absent from the old establish-

ment. A small pile of expanded menus lay on the counter near the cash register, now smartly tucked back into an unfamiliar corner.

In the lull between lunch and dinner, about four tables held patrons. For someone who had visited there mostly in the wee post-bar hours, it seemed refreshingly quiet. But then, this new version of The Clock hadn't yet hosted a rowdy Saturday night 2 a.m. scene yet, either. That will almost certainly come this weekend.

Continued on page 2



Mayor Karen Majewski (far right) cuts a ceremonial ribbon marking the grand opening of the new Clock Restaurant on Monday.

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.

"Everything now is a what-if."

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Countdown is over for the new opening of a city landmark

Continued from front page

Obtained from the previous owner and then subjected to an intensive six-month renovation, the eatery seems poised to redefine itself as a better, 2.0 version of that gritty old grub slinger. Walls were power-washed in what seems like an almost symbolic cleansing. Snazzy neon track lighting was added. The effort shows.

"My kids couldn't stand it when we first walked in here," laughs Vuktilaj. "They made faces."

The menu holds some real promise now. Similar in ways to Maine Street a cou-

ple of blocks to the north, the two places, in tandem, create their own little row of Albanian/Macedonian tinged American dining. Some items, like the sub sandwiches, seem like real bargains in the \$5 to \$6 range.

Asked what hasn't changed, Vuktilaj responded, "The name." The answer seems appropriate, given that it was certainly time to modernize what she says is the original Clock Restaurant location in the area.

As with any business trying to reinvent itself, there

can be obstacles. A Google search for "Clock Restaurant" Hamtramck leads first to yelp.com claiming the place is still closed, and then, three results down, to Detroit.citysearch featuring an iffy review of the old establishment front and center. Also, given what was spent to renovate the place, there isn't yet the money to do much advertising.

And then, there's Ice Bar (also formerly known as Shadow Bar) directly across the street, whose throngs of patrons used to routinely jam up the Clock's parking lot. Vuktilaj says they're for-

mulating a plan to deal with that, should it start up again.

For fans of Hamtown's bar scene, it will be nice to have a centrally-located, and now much-improved, 24-hour diner wherein to satisfy the drunken hungries once again. For the average lunch and dinner crowd, it's always nice to have another choice. And for city old-timers, historians and the just-plain nostalgic, it's certainly fun to have a city icon back in business, and seemingly better than ever before.

Time to eat!

Election outcome could be historical

Continued from front page

stead to challenge Karen Majewski for the mayor's position. He came close, losing by about 200 votes.

Mayor Majewski said she's not surprised by some of the candidates running, describing them as "predictable and perennial."

She said she is "sorry" that Councilmembers Stackpoole and Ahmed, who sided with her on many issues, are not running again.

"Their leadership has been marked by a deep sense of responsibility and willingness to work through wrenchingly hard issues," Majewski said. "We've gone through these hard times together, so I understand their decision to focus their talents elsewhere, and I know they'll continue to work for the good of Hamtramck in ways other than elected service."

Out of the field of 13 candidates, only the six top vote-getters will move on to the November General Election, and out of those candidates remaining three will be elected.

This Primary Election will also be a test on whether the Bengali community is still the most powerful voting bloc in the city. There are five Bangladeshi-American candidates on the ballot.

Algazali is a Yemeni-American and appeared to win over a number of Bengali voters in his run for mayor.

There are now three Bengali-Americans on the current council. Besides Ahmed, there are also Mohammed Hassan and Kazi Miah. Councilmember Miah was the highest vote-getter in the last council election.

If past election results in the last few years are any indication, the Bangladeshi-American candidates are poised to sweep the upcoming election. This would signal the end of the long-standing control – heck, call it an ownership – by Polish-Americans of Hamtramck's government.

For social and political observers, this election has the makings of a major historical moment in Hamtramck.

City's financial surplus this year is nothing to celebrate

By Charles Sercombe

In what could be called a twist of fate, Hamtramck is going to end its fiscal year with a \$2 million budget surplus.

But that surplus will be short-lived.

It just so happened that with another month to go in the fiscal year, which ends June 30, Hamtramck just received \$3.2 million from Detroit. That money is part of a settlement agreement with Detroit over how much tax dollars are owed from GM's Poletown plant.

Hamtramck had been feuding with Detroit over the payment and finally reached an

agreement several weeks ago.

Although city officials can breathe easier now that there is a cash reserve, there is much riding on what kind of city employee contract concessions will be agreed on – if any – and whether a number of other financial matters fall into place.

If the city receives no contract concessions, by this time next year there could be a \$1 million budget deficit, said City Manager Bill Cooper. "Everything now is a what-if," Cooper said over whether hoped for savings come through.

Even if Hamtramck survives

2012 financially intact, Cooper said fiscal year 2013 will put the city in a "critical situation."

Hamtramck is far from being alone in keeping the budget balanced. Gov. Rick Snyder and his fellow Republican legislators have made severe cuts in state revenue sharing to cities and public school districts.

Snyder is also demanding that communities force their public employees to agree to 20 percent co-pays to their health insurance plans.

If public employee unions – which include police officers and firefighters – refuse to make concessions and com-

munities can't balance their budget, the governor could appoint an emergency financial manager to take over. EFM's have recently been given expanded powers that include allowing them to rip up existing union contracts and rewrite them on their own terms – whether union employees like it or not.

This week at the library...

Movie Screening "Tony & Janina's American Wedding" - Friday, May 20 at 7 p.m. A deportation love story produced by Ruth Leitman, based on a history of a family torn apart after establishing roots in America over many years. Admission is free.

Registrations for Summer Reading Program: All children are invited to register for the Library's 2011 Summer Program series which will start on Wednesday, June 29 with a 1 p.m. party for all who have registered.

ESL Class for Beginners - Saturday, May 21 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, May 21 at noon. All children are invited to library storytime. Join us for arts and craft and learn how make your own folding crocodile friend, and hear a story from a book "Do You Want to be My Friend?" by Eric Carle.

Computer Classes for Advanced Users - Monday, May 23 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.

Get Smart About Money - Money Builder Workshop - May 24, 12:30 - 3 p.m. Free workshop organized by Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency for library patrons. To register, call (734) 824-6999 ext. 220, or the library at (313) 365-7050.

It's Your Money - Keep it - Money Builder Workshop - May 24, 4 - 6:30 p.m. Free workshop or-

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.

ganized by Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency for library patrons. To register, call (734) 824-6999 ext. 220, or the library at (313) 365-7050.

Math Club Meeting - Tuesday, May 24 at 4 p.m. Mr. Nuo is the instructor for the math club and math tutoring.

Computer Classes for Beginners - Wednesday, May 25 at 11 a.m. Basic instructions on computer use for beginners will be held on Tuesdays. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

Movie Wednesday - Wednesday, May 25 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.

Math Kangaroo Award Ceremonies - Tuesday, June 7 at 5 p.m. Please join us for the award ceremonies of state and national Math Kangaroo Test award winners for 2011. Refreshments will be served.

Special Thanks to: Margaret Czarnik for books and magazines; Sylwia Stepien for books; Willie Morgan for books; Mike & Joyce Puppant for books; Beverly Johnson for books

"Animals of Hamtramck" Photo Contest - If you want to share a unique beauty of your pet or any other local animal join us by taking photos of your furry friends. Submit no more than three pictures to the Library before Memorial Day. Contest winners will be announced on Saturday, June 4 at 2 p.m. during the opening of the "Animals of Hamtramck" photo exhibit.



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Today's lesson, class: It's easy to be green

Cont. from front page

then beyond that the highest form of Green School, an Official Michigan Evergreen School? Was that a two-part process, or did they designate you all at once? How were you informed? Was there a ceremonial thing from the state, or was it more low-key?

Bradley: We found out that our application to be a Wayne County Michigan Green School was accepted on March 14, 2011 from Nancy Gregor, who is the Wayne County Michigan Green School Co-Coordinator. We were invited to attend the Green School Recognition Ceremony on May 12th, but we were not able to do so, due to a prior commitment. We did get the news that day that we had received the highest distinction a Michigan Green School can receive: we are an Official Michigan Evergreen School!

Senator Martha Scott per-

sonally delivered the news, in fact, as well as the certificates, and she shared that we are the only school in her district to have yet received this prestigious recognition. We were given two evergreen trees to place in our gardens. We received a large banner as well, and both that and the certificate of our new status are on display at our school.

Was there a conscious effort on the part of the school, or more specifically someone at the school, to strive to become a Green School, and if so, who was mostly responsible for that direction?

Bradley: Once, there was a tree on our school property that was destroyed by (the 1997) tornado, which left us with not one green plant on the schoolyard!

Sarah Dajani, Nayal Maktari and Jennifer Bradley made a decision to help our school,

not only so that it would become more beautiful, but also so they could use the opportunity to teach about re-using, reducing and recycling — to instill the importance of taking care of our Earth! NEHS (National Elementary Honor Society) students and Dickinson East staff, parents and students are working hard together to beautify our school, and to make recycling a priority here as well.

The state's list of 20 activities toward being "Green" is a rather diverse one – again, was there a conscious process of selecting which of these the school would try to do, or were you already doing some of these things anyway? It seems like it would've taken a lot of documenting – who kept track of it all? Was there one faculty member or school official recruited to be the point person on the project, or was it a group-type effort?

Bradley: Mrs. Dajani, the school's Restorative Practices Coordinator, was already recycling #2 plastics (and turning them into beautiful benches), when Mrs. Bradley, a Science Teacher, found out about the information and application process to be a Michigan Green School.

Discussions of how to be more energy-savings conscious throughout the entire school were already happening, and just needed to be implemented. Together, Sarah Dajani and Jennifer Bradley, along with the school's Principal, Nayal Maktari, have kept track of Green School grant writing, fundraisers, opportunities and future projects we can establish here at Dickinson East.

Recycling is now also happening in the lunchroom with cereal bowls and Capri Sun packages, and in our Hall of Science, with cell phones and ink cartridges.

Classrooms were encouraged at the Earth Day Festival on April 29th, 2011 to be an energy saving classroom. They can do a few simple things in our school to help save not only energy, but water as well.

Currently, we are cleaning up our gardens and playground, and we are going to add some more Michigan native plants, some birdfeeders and birdhouses. We have added indoor and outdoor plants to our porches and hallways to make the school a more beautiful and enjoyable place to learn.

Do you have to requalify every so often, yearly or whenever, for this, or once it's given is it a permanent thing they don't take away? I wasn't real clear from the language of the bill.

Bradley: I am unsure of the re-qualifying (process). I believe that, as long as you are showing new progress and growth with the programs and activities you are doing, you remain a Michigan Green School.

We have a couple of items that we still need to get in place, like a schoolwide classroom energy audit.

We will look at our bills from past months, make some changes to the way we operate on a daily basis, and then see if those changes are reflected in the bills in future months.

We have benches ready to go on the playground for an Outdoor Classroom – along with the many life-long environmental lessons – that our students can use in the future.

we have two classes who are painting birdhouses, both for display and for our gardens.

The students are very excited. We went outside as part of an Urban Bird Study, and found many different species of birds, some of which we were surprised to see in the inner city.

Were there any hindrances that were caused by, for example, being in your specific building, or in Hamtramck? I'm not sure when Dickinson East was built exactly, but it seems that every era of building has its issues, whether it's lead paint or asbestos or formaldehyde. Do issues like that impact whether a school can have the Green designation?

Bradley: The only hindrances we have currently are lack of money, space and time!

This school will be 100 years old in 2014, I believe, and yet we have very few problems with the actual

structure of the building. We plan on doing as much as we can with the limited resources we have.

Anything else that you would like to add to what I've asked you? Feel free, go ahead – open forum!

Bradley: We have written numerous grants, and received one this year from MSTA (the Michigan Science Teachers Association, which Mrs. Bradley is a member of), which was for \$1,000. A bench is placed outside to thank, and remember, them for their donation.

We currently have a grant proposal with GEF (Green Education Foundation) to receive more money for gardens on our playground, a shelter for our Outdoor Classroom, a compost bin, and more.

Well, Jennifer, best of luck, and thanks for your time!

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Review: Opinion Page

Beware of candidates promising to cut taxes

This year's field of candidates vying for three seats on City Council offers some hope for the future.

We see some worthy candidates, but at the same time we see some of the same tired old faces that run in each election. We're also disheartened that Councilmembers Catrina Stackpoole and Shahab Ahmed decided to not seek re-election.

They have been key players in moving this city forward despite heated vocal opposition from those in the community who have no clear understanding on what it takes to run a city.

But we're optimistic that

those we think would serve the city well will make their positions clear and easily understood as the election season moves on. We'd also like to sponsor a candidate night forum earlier in the election season than in the past.

Hamtramck's financial future will be touch and go in the coming years. We will need strong leadership to ride this one out.

It's frustrating that some of our current councilmembers think that by doing absolutely nothing, somehow the city will survive. Or worse, some councilmembers and candidates insist there is more in the city

budget to cut.

Do they realize that a majority of costs are controlled by contract obligations, or are out of the hands of the city to control? Cut what? Where?

Voters need to beware of candidates who say they would make more cuts. They don't have the foggiest notion of what they are talking about. Anyone can promise to slash taxes or not raise them.

Those kinds of promises are empty-headed and geared solely to win votes.

Stay tuned voters, this election cycle is one of the most important ones in recent years.

GM Poletown hiring will bring extra revenue for city

By Charles Sercombe

You've probably heard by now, but if you haven't, last week GM announced it plans to hire 2,000 workers at its Poletown Plant.

Good news, right?

Well, if you consider that Michigan lost over 100,000 manufacturing jobs in the last few years, the figure 2,000 is a mere drop in the bucket.

But there is a gain here for Hamtramck. Since part of the plant straddles into the Ham-

tramck side of the Detroit border, the city gets one-third of all taxes collected from the plant.

That includes income tax and a tax on equipment in the plant.

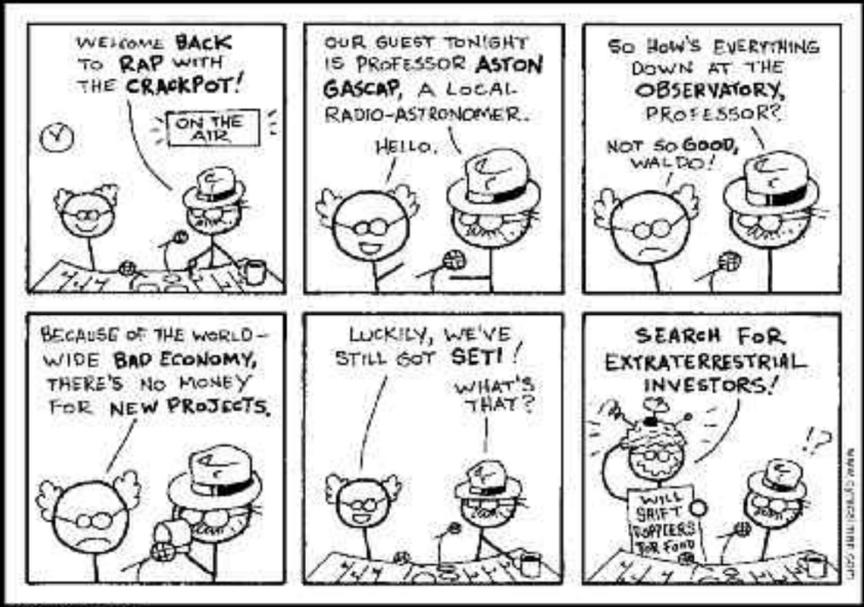
City Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko said that while the income tax bump up will be small, the potential for new equipment needed for expanded production could produce a more significant windfall for Hamtramck.

GM also plans to install a

field of solar panels in a portion of the plant's sprawling grounds. That will mean an additional source of equipment tax revenue. GM hopes to provide its own energy for the plant.

So, while not a major income increase at this point, the return of some jobs – any jobs – is encouraging. But before that happens, GM plans to close down the plant for four weeks and lay off employees there.

The Amazing CYNICALMAN™ by Matt Fezell



Letter from the Publisher

By John Ulaj

I would like to remind you of the publication of our 2011 Hamtramck City Directory, in which we are showcasing the city's soon-to-be-opened Historical Museum.

We are happy to support this valuable asset to the community by premiering the museum and helping to market it. Hamtramck is on the verge of becoming the next Renaissance City, and this begins with creating destination spots like the Hamtramck Historic Museum.

I am delighted to have collaborated with the chairman of the Historical Museum, Greg Kowalski, on this special venture. I would also like to thank Councilmembers Catrina Stackpoole, Shahab Ahmed, Tom Jankowski and

Mayor Karen Majewski for taking the initiative to support the museum – for believing in this special cause.

The 2011 City Directory that you have received, or will be receiving very soon, will truly serve your informational needs. This book lists every local business in the city, along with every available resident phone number. Likewise, it is being delivered to every business and residence both in and near the city of Hamtramck.

It is essential that everyone in the city try to patronize our local businesses. Tell them that you saw their ad in the Directory, and this, in turn, will encourage us to keep producing this City Directory annually.

Patronizing the small businesses is what keeps any city prosperous. Without local businesses there can be no city. We would like to thank all the businesses who give their commitment to The Review newspaper. We are confident that they will reap tangible benefits by being featured in this book.

We here at The Review take pride in our community, and I must say that this is indeed one of our most special endeavors, and especially this year because of the important tie-in with the Historical Museum. Lastly, we would like to thank you for your continuous loyalty and dedication to your city's paper of record, The Hamtramck Review.

Obituaries

MOORE

Earl Edward Moore, 63, died May 11, 2011.

Mr. Moore was an employee with Logghe Stamping and a member of the Blue Angels Motorcycle Club.

He is survived by his wife, Karen; daughters, Shelly, Nicole and Felicia; sons, Edward, William, Charles and Joseph; sisters, Cindy and Judy and 13 grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were made by Krot Funeral Home, and funeral services were held at May 15.

WDOWYN



Michael Wdowyn, 67, died May 1, 2011.

Mr. Wdowyn was born June 8, 1943 in Ellwangen, Germany to loving parents, Michael and Anna.

Sadly missed by his sister, Helen, nieces, Lisa, Tamara and Rachel, and their children, Ryan Thomas, Brianna Katherine, Alyssa Diana and Ryan's daughter Anna Pauline, Tamara's children Terra Kandace, Summer Sophie and baby Cassidy Anne, born on the same day that Mike passed away, May 1.

Also survived by his son, Michael Anthony (Tara) and his grandson, Michael Anthony, and also his dog, Buddy.

We had many happy memories growing up on Trowbridge St., going to Pulaski, Copernicus and Hamtramck High School, just going on Campau, Farnums, Martha Washington, the "spot" on Caniff, Sweetlands, Belle Isle and Pontiac Lake.

Mike's funeral was May 5 from Immaculate Conception Church (with Fr. Daniel officiating), handled by Buhay Funeral Chapel. He was laid to rest near his beloved mother whom he loved with all his heart and his father at Sacred Heart Cemetery in Roseville, MI.

Many thanks to Mike Pelak from Turtles Bar who so graciously held the wake. It was deeply appreciated. Thank you to all who helped and to his friends, Harry, Steve, Wally and son, Joe, Eddie, Moe, Jack Dog, Dennis, Irene, Don K, Billie, Tony and Greg.

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TOAST of the TOWN

When it comes to good food and great times, Hamtramck has plenty to offer. In this column, we'll talk about what's happening at our bars, restaurants and other events that can be found throughout the city.

By Charles Sercombe

We only have a short round-up of things happening this weekend. First up is a rare visit by hometown favorite Art Lyzak, one of Detroit's most notorious rock and rollers. The former Mutants singer of songs (and our favorite teenage band, The Rockin' Levis), will be holding court for all fans and friends at Mario's of Troy tonight (May 20) and at Susie's Bar on Saturday (May 21) at 9 p.m.

Art and his family are the former owners of the highly missed and beloved Lili's 21

Club. Their mom, Lili Karwowski, is also much missed. She passed away several years ago.

Stop on by, share a laugh and a beer and rejoice in all that is good in the world. Lili, dear, we miss you so much.

Also tonight (Friday, May 20), we can't think of a better local cause to support – maybe the cause of the decade – than Hamtramck High School teacher John Rostek's attempt this June to conquer and summit Mt. McKinley.

He's not only taking on a mountain, he's also seeking to raise \$1 for every painstaking foot he takes in effort to build up a nice budget for the public school district's extracurricular activities. Imagine this: Kids who can't afford simple admission to places like, say, a

field trip to the Henry Ford Museum or the Detroit Zoo will be able to go for free thanks to your contribution.

Rostek would like to raise \$20,320, which is another way to say that scaling Mt. McKinley requires climbing up 20,320 feet.

Hey, this is no walk in the park. So, want to help? If so, stop by the New Dodge Bar starting at 4 p.m. where for whatever donation you can muster up you'll get to enjoy pizza, hotdogs and pasta.

There will also be raffles and prizes and a band and a DJ and all sorts of fun stuff. Go Cosmos!

Also coming up, if you are in town on Memorial Day weekend – especially you techno fans – head over to Skipper's Hamtown Bar on Conant at Evaline on Saturday, May 28.

That's when there's going

to be a multi-art event and plain old good vibes. There will also be a fashion show from Laurette Designs. Oh, heck, we're not quite sure what it's all about but it seems to have all the ingredients for a great night out on the town and a good place to keep the downtown "Movement Festival" going. From 8 to 10 p.m. it's free to get in. After 10 o'clock, a \$10 cover charge will be collected.

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

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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

Here is the second part of the City Council meeting that was held on May 10.

The city's traffic patrol program will soon be back on the road, and it will have a new enhancement. The council agreed to allow the purchase of more "e-ticket" machines for the department's patrol cars.

The device will allow officers to upload ticket information instantly to the Hamtramck 31st District Court, which will help cut down on some tedious labor for court employees.

The machines will be paid through the city's 911 grant.

And there's an added benefit: Police Chief Mark Kalinowski said it will free up officers to get back on the road to issue more tickets. See? Everyone wins.

With the Downtown Development Authority soon to hire two new code inspectors, who will be assigned to concentrate

only on the Jos. Campau business district, Councilmember Tom Jankowski suggested having the inspectors be introduced to the public.

And they will at this Tuesday's Council meeting (May 24).

In the public input portion of the meeting, council candidate Robert Zwolak urged the council to allow voters to decide on whether to increase the city's property tax rate to its legal limit.

Previously in the meeting the council, in a 4-2 vote, agreed to raise the city's tax rate by 2.2 mills. By law, voters are not required to approve this tax increase. But any amount over that would require voter approval.

Despite that, Zwolak said voters should still weigh in on the matter.

"Let's make this a full-fledged community debate," he said.

Candidate Zwolak also said

that council has failed to look at "structural" changes to the city's budget. He did not elaborate on what he meant by "structural" changes.

He also pointed out that \$3.5 million a year is spent on "legacy" costs, or more directly, pensions. It was unclear what his point was.

Another candidate for council, Steve Shaya, had nice things to say about Councilmembers Catrina Stackpoole and Shahab Ahmed and their service to the community. Both councilmembers declined to seek re-election this year.

Candidate Shaya also questioned the decision of doing a job performance review of the city manager in a closed meeting.

"Everything gets done behind closed doors," he said.

He also added that a job performance review is not on the same scale as something more serious, or felonious in nature.

"It's not murder," he said.

(Editor's note: By law, the city manager can – and did—demand the review be held in closed session. That decision was out of the council's legal authority. And by law, murder trials are held open to the public in court.)

Shaya also added that given the city's budget shortfall, minor repairs to the water system should be delayed, although he conceded that the water system has deteriorated.

Another council candidate spoke. Roger Lamm said he's good at math and he's calculated that it would be better management to split the cost of the water service: one for the actual cost of water and one for cost of repairs to the system.

He also said he's looked at the possible option of contracting police service to Detroit and dismissed it because it would result in poor response time. He said it would be the "same difference" with the Fire Department.

Lamm added that if a merger of the police and fire department is made, half of the city's residents will move out.

Lamm said it's also his calculation that the city needs to raise its property tax rate by six to 10 mills to make up for the decrease in property values. He said ultimately the city needs to make deeper cuts to its budget.

Another candidate for council spoke forth. Mohamed Delawar Hussain said that the council should not have increased both the water and sewer rates. He said the council should not have increased the sewer rate, but he was OK with the increase of the water rate.

(Editor's note: The council increased the water rate by 7 percent and the sewer rate by 4 percent. The increases were imposed by Detroit, which supplies water and sewer service to Hamtramck as well as about 100 other communities.)

After the council meeting, we caught up with Hussain and asked why he was opposed to the increase of the sewer rate. Hussain explained that whenever sewer repairs are made, Detroit is not the one doing them.

It was explained to him that Detroit provides the service of processing sewage from Hamtramck.

Hussain: "Oh. Well they should say that."

Another council candidate spoke. Abdul Algazali said the council should not have increased the city's property tax rate until "the fat lady sings."

"A tax increase is a tax increase no matter how you put it," he added.

(Editor's note: It sounds sweeter when the fat lady sings it.)

Algazali said the council should have first waited to see if the police and fire unions agree to contract concessions before passing a tax increase.

As for those councilmembers who voted for the tax increase, he had this to say: "We know who you are."

(Editor's note: Just in case you don't know who they are, they are: Councilmembers Stackpoole, Ahmed, Jankowski and Cathie Gordon. Councilmembers Mohammed Hassan and Kazi Miah voted against it.)

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