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Volume 3 No. 29 July 29, 2011 **50¢**

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Quick Hits

Happy Ramadan.

The holiest month of the year for Muslims starts on Monday, Aug. 1, and runs until Aug. 29. During this time, all able-bodied Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. It's a time for families to get together, a time for prayer and the reading of the Koran as well as a time for spiritual reflection.

We wish our Muslim community a healthy and fulfilling Ramadan.

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.

"I really don't want them in the central business district."

Only **22** Days

Until our Labor Day Festival FUNDRAISER PARTY on August 20th in The Review Office Courtyard. (See our ad on page 10.)

Mayor recaps a year of many ups and downs

By Alan Madeleine

Perhaps you're perfectly fine with your city as it is. Perhaps you've got no complaints at all. Perhaps, for you, it's a bed of roses. Nirvana. Heaven on 2.2 square miles of earth. That might go a ways toward explaining why you weren't there for the single most important political speech of the year, every

year. That being the mayor's State of the City summation. You weren't there – were you? Perhaps it could all be blamed on the fact that it was held on a sunny Sunday summer afternoon. Perhaps that would also explain why the only current city councilmember present was lame duck Catrina Stackpoole, who (in her capacity as mayor

Continued on page 4

It's a secret who bought St. Lad's former school

By David Piestrzynski
Special to The Review

There's no need to wonder whether the former St. Lad's school will become a rotting, empty building. With the closing of Dickinson

West Elementary School a few weeks ago, which had been located in St. Lad's building, city officials were concerned about the future of the structure.

The Review learned this week
Continued on page 8

Believe it or not, there is an election

By Charles Sercombe

Psssst ... Don't tell anyone – especially those pesky voters – but there's an election here in Hamtramck next Tuesday (Aug. 2). YOU SAY WHAT? Hey, quiet we said. But anyway, yeah, there's an election, a Primary Election to be exact, to whittle down the field of 13 City Council candidates to six. The top six vote-getters will square-off in the November General Election to see who wins three seats on the council.

Jeez, has this town seen such a lackluster campaign season? There are hardly any campaign signs out, and there's been precious little noise coming from the candidates.

Besides "Meet the Candidates Night," at which four of the candidates boycotted it – how lame is

Continued on page 2

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Believe it or not, there is an election

Continued from front page

that? – there's hardly been a peep.

Case in point, right before Tuesday's council meeting, Councilmember Tom Jankowski, who is not running in this election, sarcastically questioned a reporter: "Hey is there an election coming up?"

We don't know Tom, go ask a candidate, if you can find one.

A few weeks ago we called this campaign season a "stealth campaign." We were hoping that would remain a joke, but apparently candidates really have gone underground to rally support.

And here's another strange twist. Last Sunday evening, word got out that a candidate get-together was being held at Aladdin Café – but just the Bengali candidates were invited.

Candidate Robert Zwolak was told about it and went there and was invited to say a few words.

We called the organizer, Akikul Shamin, to explain why only the Bengali candidates were invited.

Shamin, said he limited the forum to only the Bengali candidates because none of the other candidates have campaigned in Bengali neighborhoods, and that one of the Bengali candidates

told his community to vote only for him.

Shamin said he wants Bengali voters to know they can vote for three candidates.

We're not sure if non-Bengali candidates are being selective about what doors they are knocking on, but imagine if the non-Bengali candidates held a forum at

the exclusion of the Bengali candidates.

Wouldn't there be a howl of protest in the community?

But even a stunt like Sunday's didn't stir up attention, except from some of the candidates not invited who spat out a lot of venom but declined to speak on record.

Without a doubt this election could make history here

in Hamtramck. The Bengali community could possibly take five out of the six seats on the City Council, giving that community a first-ever majority in city government, and thus ending a decades-long dominance of Polish-Americans controlling city government.

The times, they could be changing.

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CITY OF HAMTRAMCK, MICHIGAN ORDINANCES 2011-4 and 2011-5

Ordinance 2011-4, amends the Hamtramck Zoning Ordinance by adding section 13 to article IX, General Provision. The ordinance provides regulations for the cultivation and processing of medical marihuana in homes and other structures, establishes regulations for medical marihuana collectives and compassion clubs and provides for their location, operating conditions and standards.

Ordinance 2011-5, amends Title XI of the Hamtramck City Code adding Chapter 121. The ordinance provides for the licensing of medical marihuana collectives and compassion clubs, sets forth the application requirements for the receipt of such a license and the conditions under which such a license may be granted. The ordinance provides for an appeals process to Hamtramck City Council for the denial of such a license by the City Clerk, and the imposing of a penalty for operating a medical marihuana collective or compassion club in violation of this or any other applicable ordinance of the Hamtramck City Code.

Complete copies of the ordinances are available in the City Clerk's office.

Enacted: July 26, 2011

Published: July 29, 2011

T. Edwin Norris, City Clerk

Hamtramck, Michigan

This week at the library...

The Home Suite: Coming To Hamtramck - Friday, August 5, 2011. Event celebrating release of a DVD with music and projection of parts of the movie will be held on Friday, August 5 at the library. Everyone is invited. Refreshment will be served.

Computer Classes for Advanced Users - Monday, August 1 at 10 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

Summer Reading for Toddlers – Lion Day: Monday, August 1, at 11 a.m. Come to the library and ROAR like a lion with your friends. To scare away bad dreams we will make a lion door hanger for your room.

ESL Class for Beginners - Monday, August 1 at noon. Christine Templin is the instructor for the ESL class for beginners. Everyone is invited. Free to the public.

ESL Summer Reading - Tuesday, August 2 at 5 p.m. ESL for reading will be reading book, "The Little Prince" by Antoine Desaint.

Math Club Meeting - Tuesday, August 2 at 4 p.m. Mr. Nuo is the instructor for the math club and math tutoring.

Computer Classes for Beginners - Wednesday, August 3 at 10 a.m. Basic instruction on computer use for beginners will be held on Wednesdays. Number of participants is limited to available computers.

Michigan Wild Life with Randy Baker - Wednesday, August 3 at 1 p.m. Mr. Baker will bring many of his wild animals to the library for a hands-on learning experience.

Summer Reading Travelogue to Australia - Wednesday, August 3 at 1 p.m. Do you know which continent is not only an island, but also a country? Find out at the library.

ESL Class with Christine Templing - Thursday, August 4 at 5 p.m. Intermediate ESL class conducted by Christine Templing, free to the public.

Cooking and Nutrition Class - Thursday, August 4 at 4 p.m. Gleamers Food Bank is sponsoring cooking and nutrition classes taught by a chef and dietitian at the Library. Classes are free to the public. Sessions last for two hours. Participants will receive free cookbooks, free groceries and secret recipes from the pros. Number of participants is limited. You must register ahead of time. All spaces filled on first come first serve basis. To register call the library at (313) 365-7050.

Summer Reading Program for Teens - Friday August 5 at 1 p.m. Regular session of the Summer Program for teens.

ESL News for You - Friday, August 5 at 3:30 p.m. ESL reading and discussion class with Latisha Edge. Free to the public.

Meeting of the Library Board - Thursday, August 11 at 6 p.m. Regular meeting of the Library Board will be held in the auditorium. The meeting is open to the public.

Friends of the Library Meeting - Thursday, August 18 at 6 p.m. FHPL President Kathy Kristy and Treasurer George Gorday, invite all members and volunteers to participate in the regular monthly meeting.

Special Thanks for Donation to Frank Stock for books; and R. Lattuca for books.

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

For now, Hamtramck's Post Office is not on the chopping block

By Charles Sercombe

Hamtramck's Post Office has dodged another bullet.

The Postal Service announced this week that it is thinking about closing 3,700 postal branches throughout the country. Hamtramck is not on that list.

But there are several branches in Detroit on the list as well as Highland Park's only branch.

Two years ago, postal authorities announced Hamtramck's branch would be closed, but a public outcry from residents apparently did the trick in preventing that.

At that time Russ Gordon of Zinow St. organized a petition drive to stop the closing. He handed postal officials a petition with 1,200 names.

The Hamtramck Post Office

has a significant historical meaning for the city. It was built in 1935-36, during the height of the Great Depression. When it opened, the city held a parade in celebration.

But a lot has changed since then.

The Postal Service is bleeding millions and millions of dollars and has been forced to not only close branches but also lay off over 100,000 workers.

The cause of the financial crisis is the rise in people turning to email instead of writing letters.

"Our customers' habits have made it clear that they no longer require a physical post office to conduct most of their postal business," said Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe in a recent state-

ment to the press.

The plan now is to transfer some of the postal service duties into grocery stores and other retail outlets.



Customers of Hamtramck's Post Office can breathe easier. Postal officials say the office is not on a list of branches to be closed.

There is also a proposal to stop Saturday delivery. And postal officials say that in 15 years home delivery could be reduced to three days a week.

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- Prior business owner and team manager
- Devoted to saving hamtramck through cost cutting, revenue generation and accountability



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After months of haggling, city officials OK med pot law

By Charles Sercombe

Get your hydroponics and grow lights ready all of you medical marijuana growers and caregivers.

Hamtramck is open for business.

After several months of

haggling and fine-tuning, the City Council approved two ordinances and a permit fee schedule to allow caregivers to set up shop and for commercial growing facilities to open their doors.

Before anyone can go into business, you will have to wait two weeks from today (Friday, July 29) for the law to officially go into effect.

There are, of course, restrictions for caregivers operating at home and for caregivers operating in a commercial facility.

For those growing plants for others at home, you must get a city home business license. Plants can only be grown in an area that is no more than 25 percent of the total size of a house.

For example, if the house is 2,000 square feet, the growing area must not exceed a space of 500 square feet.

Caregivers who grow only for themselves do not have to apply for a home business license.

Commercial operators have a whole host of restrictions and requirements, one of them being each growing space has to be sectioned

Continued on page 4

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Kindergarten - **September 9**
Grades 1-8 - **August 23**
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Hamtramck Public Schools



Hamtramck Public Schools
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Mayor recaps a year of many ups and downs

Continued from front page

pro tem) still cared enough to be there.

Granted, this was not a City Council function – but wouldn't you think they'd still want to be there, given the range of issues that the town faces?

Nor was the rest of the city well represented, beyond City Manager Bill Cooper. Curiously absent were a number of other top city officials.

Disc golf? Beach blanket bingo? Making castles in the sand? Where, oh where had they gone?

For those few who were there, whether in official capacity or as interested citizens, there were impassioned words aplenty from the mayor, who – it stood out, particularly in an emotional ending – still does care, and very much.

Or maybe we're being too harsh. There's no way to tell.

Nevertheless, despite the sparseness of the audience, the speech did indeed commence around 1:07 p.m., and lasted about 40 minutes. To begin, the mayor gave a multi-cultural welcome, and talked briefly about what

makes the city what it is – the people that comprise it, of course.

She then acknowledged a number of police officials who had retired in the past year.

After that, it was on to a

"most walkable" (by a website called walkscore.com).

She noted the town's festivals, each individually, and the people who make them work, beginning with the Paczki Day Fest, the brand-new Harvest Festival, the



Mayor Karen Majewski gave her yearly "State of the City Address" on Sunday in which she recapped a lengthy list of activities.

lengthy recap of those past 12 months. She mentioned the new Historical Museum, and the grants that brought it to fruition. She also noted the Veterans Park grandstand, and the fact that the city was just rated Michigan's

Blowout, then mentioning St. Florian's Strawberry Fest, the Bangladeshi and new Arab Festivals in turn.

She saved special mention for the longest-running of the bunch, the famed Labor Day Festival, and singled out com-

mittee co-chairs Kathleen Bitner and Rachel Srodek for their work to keep it going where, before last year, it actually seemed in some danger of not happening at all.

She moved on quickly thereafter to some of the bigger news stories and challenges, particularly the resolution of the interminable GM plant revenue-sharing battle with Detroit. She singled out City Manager Bill Cooper, Finance Director Nevrus Nazarko, and City Attorney Jim Allen for their yeomans' duties on getting a legal deal done. She also noted the new vehicles, including the Chevy Volt and the upcoming Malibu and Impala models, which are (or will soon be) manufactured there.

On a similar, yet opposite, note, she acknowledged the loss of American Axle, but reassured listeners that the city remained very active in trying to court, and keep, businesses both old and new. She singled out Kowalski Sausage (with their seemingly endless threat to bail on the city), who once again was moved to stay when a new location fell through.

The mayor then went on to cite some of the businesses that have either expanded or opened, including Day's Fashions, European Market, Maria's Comida, Hamtramck Recycling, the Hanley Interna-

well as Kopytko's Market, which also shuttered up for good during the past year.

She mentioned other exciting projects as well, notably



the long-stalled Hausner Building project, as well as the Vet Park Lofts.

Other highlights included an imminent \$1 million grant from the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, an independent city website just for economic-related news, and a future streamlining of the city's application and permit processes.

The mayor also touched on the physical condition of Hamtramck, from planter boxes, to trees, to sprinklers and more related to the beautification, safety and general desirability of the city. A \$15-plus million HUD grant to help buy, get rid of, or otherwise manage older houses and structures was made

mention of.

It was in her closing paragraphs that she dug in, acknowledging "the cycle of drama we regularly face (that

drains our people of good will and motivation, and keeps us just one step ahead of the bullet," and suggested "changes to the organization and conditions of employment in our city departments" to "make best use of the talent, skill, and dedication that resides there."

She went so far as to suggest the need to also "think... about new ways to share some services, processes, and capacity with other units of government or service providers," perhaps a veiled reference to the very real possibility, which looms over the city, of a second dance with a state-appointed EFM. Or perhaps a call to remember how much that cost the city last time?

In the end, she had to pause and collect herself to remind the faithful that, despite everything that's been thrown at us, we are still here...live and kickin'... still Hamtramck."

If only everyone cared as much.

(The full text of Mayor Majewski's State of the City 2011 speech is available on our website, www.hamtramckreview.com.)

After months of haggling, city officials OK med pot law

Continued from page 3

and walled off from another section.

There was debate on whether to prohibit commercial operations from locating on Jos. Campau, the city's main business district. Councilmember Cathie Gordon had been insisting on that restriction but she received no support.

There was also talk of limiting the number of licenses, but that also fell by the side.

Commercial operators must pay a one-time application fee of \$1,500 and a yearly permit fee of \$1,500. The yearly fee was initially set at \$5,000, which Councilmember Catrina Stackpoole objected to, saying it was "cost-prohibitive."

That led to a lengthy discussion and a few votes on what fee to set it at.

City Manager Bill Cooper said the yearly fee should be set no lower than \$2,500 to cover the record-keeping costs the city's new zoning law requires. The council decided to require the city to cross-reference the medical

numbers of the patients with the state to make sure unqualified people are not purchasing marijuana.

The state law covering medical marijuana does not require local communities to take this step.

Councilmember Stackpoole said it was included to prevent illegal operations from starting up.

In past votes on the subject the council voted unanimously in favor of the ordinances. This time around, however, Councilmember Shahab Ahmed had second thoughts and voted against the laws. Ahmed said he became concerned that illegal operators would set up shop and that shootings would erupt.

The issue us far from settled outside of Hamtramck. Some state and federal officials say marijuana, whether it's considered "medical" or otherwise, is still illegal in the eyes of federal law.

Maybe you can sing this to the judge if you are ever busted:

"Oh, have you ever met that funny reefer man?

Oh, have you ever met that funny reefer man?

If he says he'll swim to China

And he'll sell you South Carolina

Then you know you're talking to that reefer man.

Have you ever met that funny reefer man?

Have you ever met that funny reefer man?

If he says he walks the ocean

Every time he takes the notion

Then you know you're talking to that reefer man.

Have you ever met a funny reefer man?

Have you ever met a funny reefer man?

If he takes a sudden mania

Wants to give you Pennsylvania

Then you know you're talking to that reefer man."

Reefer Man - Baron Lee and the Blue Rhythm Band



tional Academy, and Hamtramck Hoard House.

She had saved the most appetizing businesses for last, as she then made special mention of the many eateries that likewise started (or re-started), many of them Bangladeshi (ZamZam, Al-ladin, Bonoful, and the soon to re-emerge Taj Mahal) or Arabic/Middle Eastern (Sultan Café, Conant Café), as well as The Clock's rebirth, and the upcoming Ootie's.

And, she mourned the loss of the venerable Under the Eagle Polish Restaurant, as

Coming events

JULY 30, Saturday – Holy Cross Parish Youth Club, 2311 Pulaski at Fleming, is having a sub sandwich sale fundraiser. Six inch meat and cheese subs are \$3 each or 2 for \$5. Meatless option available. Please order your subs now, call Mrs. Marsh at (586) 731-6937. Pick up orders at the church between 12-2 p.m. pop and snacks also available.

AUGUST 6, Saturday, 1-7 p.m. – Former and current Hamtramck residents are invited to a Hamtramck Reunion Picnic at Pulaski Park, food and refreshments available, no alcohol allowed. For more information, call Mr. Michael (Boss Man) Wimbush at (313) 310-8129 or (313) 883-4889.

St. Louis the King

31st Peach Festival

SUNDAY • AUGUST 7th

12pm-7pm

18891 St. Louis • Detroit
88th Anniversary of St. Louis the King Parish (1923-2011)
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- 50/50

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Chicken, Meatballs, Potatoes, Sauerkraut, Vegetable, Bread, Coffee or Tea
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PLUS REPO Student Outreach, Fridays 7-9pm (middle & high school)

(Real Cup replaces Saturday Exaltation service at Real Church)

Candidate for council weighs in on local issues

The Aug. 2 Primary Election is just around the corner, and to help voters find out where City Council candidates stand on several local issues, we invited the candidates to participate in a survey.

This week, we have only candidate Ian Perrotta. The following candidates have not submitted their surveys: Abdul Algazali, Abu Mahfuz, Showkat Chowdhury, Dilshad Chowdhury, Anam Miah and Mohamed Delwar Hussain.



Name: Ian Perrotta

Education background: I graduated summa cum laude from the University of Pittsburgh-Greensburg with bachelor degrees in English Writing and Political Science.

Employment: I am self-employed as a rental property manager and am currently in the process of opening a music store (Sticks, Strings and Other Things) on Florian St.

Many cities are facing financial hardship. Hamtramck is also facing a financial shortfall in the coming year or two. What steps would you take to

keep the city's budget balanced?

Perrotta: While a lot of emphasis is often placed on reducing city expenditures, I think it would be wise to try and increase revenue. This can be done in a variety of ways without raising taxes.

One way is through a cost-recovery ordinance that charges a fee to people who utilize the city's emergency services, like the one Cathie Gordon has proposed. This isn't to say that if your house burns down you have to pay for the fire department to put it out – that's what taxes are for – but, for example, if someone is drunk and drives their car through a building, there are a lot of costs associated with that person's actions and they should be held responsible.

Another way to increase revenue is to bring more people into the city. Although there are numerous benefits to living in the city, I don't think a lot of people are truly aware of what they are. If there was some sort of concerted effort to try and get people to move here, I think the vacancies could be greatly reduced.

The campaign could be as simple as putting up a few signs on I-75, one near the Davison exit on 75-N that says "If you lived in Hamtramck, you would be home by now" and one near 9 mile on 75-S that says "If you lived in Hamtramck, you wouldn't have left yet". If it was executed properly, I think a campaign to bring people to the city would have a huge impact and would ul-

timately pay for itself.

While there are more ways to bring in additional revenue, I don't necessarily think more revenue is the only solution. Obviously more cuts will have to be made, but in this current economic climate I don't think we need to tighten our belts any more – we just need to wear pants that fit.

Some cities are turning to merging public services with other communities. Are you in favor of taking this action? If so, what would you propose to merge and with whom?

Perrotta: I am in favor of providing the best services to our city in the most cost-effective manner possible. If that means we have to pair up with another city for some services, then I think there is no question we should merge and consolidate some things.

But if the city cannot maintain its current level of service, then I don't think it would be a good idea. It should be noted, however, that consolidating services does not only involve police and fire – it can also involve departments like accounting, maintenance, public works and others.

Also, some cities are turning their police and fire departments into one department, often called a Public Safety Department. Under this plan, firefighters and police officers cross-train to be able to perform both duties. Are you for or against this plan? Please explain your position.

Perrotta: I honestly don't know enough about how Public Safety Departments work to make an informed opinion on whether or not it would be a good idea for the city to implement one. Again, it would depend on the ability of the proposed plan to match the level of service consistent with the current design.

Another option that would be interesting to look into would be the viability of a hybrid department where some firefighters are paid and others are either volunteer or paid by the call. I was a volunteer firefighter for a few years and I really enjoyed it, and I think it's a great way to help strengthen the community.

How would you rate the job of our city manager? Please explain.

Perrotta: It's hard to rate the performance of someone doing a job that few people are qualified to do, but I think that given the cards he was dealt Bill Cooper has done an acceptable job.

Of course there will be people who say he has done terribly, but the fact of the matter is that it is amazing how well this city is able to function considering how few people are actually involved in the day-to-day operation of it.

Briefly, what are the strengths and weaknesses of Hamtramck?

Perrotta: Overall, the strengths of the city greatly outweigh the weaknesses. I think one of Hamtramck's greatest strengths lies in the accessibility of its local government. If someone wants to open a business in Hamtramck, they can go to City Hall and talk to everyone the need to, face-to-face. That isn't the case in most cities. In Detroit, you would have to go into about four different places, stand in line for hours and even then you would only talk to the lowest person on the totem pole.

Beyond the governmental aspects of the city, location and affordability are two other really important strengths. We are just ten minutes from downtown and ten minutes from the suburbs, yet the city is still affordable enough for someone my age to own properties.

But beyond that, once people are in Hamtramck there isn't much of a reason to leave. The city is walkable, there are plenty of good places to eat and hang out at and most small-ticket items can be picked up locally. The international diversity is also a great strength and was one of the things that initially brought me to the area.

As far as weaknesses go, I think that at times the city is so diverse that it lacks a cohesive direction. With so many different groups there are so many different interests, and I think sometimes the lack of communication between the groups causes a divergence instead of a convergence. But I think the problems are mostly superfi-

cial, because when it comes down to it most people want the same things – a nice safe place to call home, a comfortable standard of living and good friends to enjoy themselves with. Fortunately, Hamtramck offers all of that and more.

What do you stand for as a candidate, and what do you hope to accomplish while in office?

Perrotta: As a candidate, I stand for the city. In order for Hamtramck to maintain its strength and sovereignty, the City Council is going to have to make some tough decisions in the coming future.

I'm willing to make those decisions based on what's best for the city, and hopefully by the time I'm done I will be able to look back and say that I've had a positive impact. If I can leave the city in a better place than it was when I came, then I will have accomplished what I set out to do.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Perrotta: I would just like to say that in addition to writing for The Review over the past two years, I have also been an active member of the Hamtramck community.

I was the chairperson of the Neighborhood Restoration and Economic Development subcommittee for Weed and Seed for almost two years, I helped organize last year's Labor Day Festival (though I can't take any credit away from Kathleen Bittner and Rachel Srodek) and have been involved in

numerous other activities and organizations, including initiating and coordinating the effort to get historic designation for the grandstands at Veterans Park.

Though there are plenty of reasons to vote for me, I will leave you with three.

First, I have already made an effort to help better the city. Even since before I moved here I worked to promote it (through the now-defunct organization Habitat for Hamtramck), and since I've been here I have actively tried to improve it.

Second, I have the knowledge and ability to be a successful councilman. After writing nearly 300 articles for The Review, I am more than familiar with what is currently going on in the city. Additionally, because of the coverage I have done I have personal relationships with many of the people who are involved in the city, whether they are ordinary citizens, business owners or city employees.

Third – but not finally – I am firmly grounded in the area and am dedicated to making it a better place for all to live. Because I have several properties and plan on opening a business here, it means I'm not going anywhere.

I may not have been born in the city, but by now I am from Hamtramck. I have real, tangible reasons for why I want the city to succeed, and I know that given the chance I can help make it happen. So when you vote on Aug. 2, remember this: a vote for me is a vote for you.

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Review: Opinion Page

Aging electrical grid is a hazard for metro area

DTE Energy representatives attended a Ferndale City Council meeting this week to talk about why and how that city suffered a blackout for three days last week.

Why should Hamtramck have an interest in this?

Well, Hamtramck as well as the entire metro region should be concerned, very concerned. That's because we share the same equipment, the same grid, so to speak.

What DTE revealed was eye-opening, although we're sure they didn't mean it to be. The reps basically admitted much of their equipment is 40 years old or

older. The source of Ferndale's power outage was traced to a cable in Royal Oak that was installed in 1969.

Have you looked at Hamtramck's electrical equipment and lines?

Do you remember last year when a rash of fires in Detroit whipped through that city and threatened to cross over into Hamtramck? Review reporter Ian Perrotta owned a house in one of the fire zones in Detroit, just outside of Hamtramck.

He and others witnessed DTE electric lines suddenly catching on fire, falling down and starting a garage fire.

Well guess what? Fern-

dale residents reported seeing electric lines smoldering last week.

Perrotta recently told a Fox 2 reporter that electric lines continue to catch on fire and snap off. He says all that DTE does to "repair" the fallen lines is to reattach them, even with the outer insulation burned off.

It's clear that DTE is not reinvesting in the metro area. This is leading to more instances of power failures and needless fires.

It seems to us that DTE needs to be investigated, before serious harm comes to Hamtramck.

Candidate endorsements are never a win for a newspaper

Since last week's editorial of our endorsement for City Council candidates, there's been a certain amount of flak we've received.

We should say up front that endorsing this or that candidate always makes us more enemies than friends.

And it should be stressed that our endorsement are simply that, our endorsements. It doesn't mean we expect everyone to vote a certain way. It's food for thought. In fact, we invite our readers to vigorously challenge our endorsements.

What seemed to rile up some folks in particular was our shout out to candidate Robert Zwolak and the lack of an endorsement of any of the Bengali-American candidates.

First thing first.

Bob Zwolak has been around for many years and is a former councilmember, city clerk and charter revision commission member. He's worn a lot of hats.

He's without a doubt a knowledgeable guy, but the question facing Zwolak is

what does he do with this knowledge?

Voters have not stuck by this guy in any one position for a long length of time. Why is that?

For those who have known Bob for many years, the answer is fairly obvious: He is prone to go on the attack against others and spread division in town. He is also one of those peculiar guys who can dissect an issue or proposal and come up with dozens of reasons why it won't work.

It's rare that Bob actually has something constructive to add. It's all about tearing things down.

People get weary of the constant negativity.

Yet, we occasionally hold out in hope that Zwolak will channel that negative energy and turn it into something positive, something that is actually useful. Call us eternally optimistic, or perhaps naive.

As for our reason for not supporting a single Bengali candidate, the answer is simple: Not one of them returned our candidate ques-

tionnaire. We have no idea where they stand on issues.

Some of them are boycotting this paper.

We say this is a cop out, and a way to duck from having to go on record what they plan to do. Their explanation that they are boycotting The Review because it is "biased" is extremely disturbing. This is an attempt to divide the community and divert attention from themselves.

That's an ugly tactic and one that will eventually backfire on them because sooner or later, they have to face the public and take a stand on issues. There are some in this community who are cheering them on with their boycott, but these folks have their own selfish political agenda at heart – not what is for the good of the community.

We should say, too, that we have consistently supported Councilmember Shahab Ahmed, and at great risk of alienating a lot of voters, the former Citizen newspaper, of which this

Continued on page 7

Odds & Ends

Good time ... Last Saturday's first-ever Hamtramck Arab Festival at Veterans Memorial Park was great fun. The biggest thrill was watching the singers and musicians perform.

The event seemed to be pretty well attended, and let's hope it will return next year.

Crime alert ... Police officials say there have been a rash of robberies and break-ins during the past week. Most notably, PNC Bank was robbed.

Police say two black men entered the bank a week ago Monday, with one acting as a lookout in the lobby while the other man told tellers he had a gun. He managed to take money from three

tellers.

In total, \$13,000 was handed over.

The two ran out of the bank and were last seen running eastbound on Caniff. The bank guard, we are told, was outside in the bank's parking lot. Camera shots of the suspects have so far proven to be unsuccessful in helping police identify them.

There's a twist to this tale. Police say moments before the robbery, a call came into the station saying there was a homicide in progress at an address on Lumpkin St. on the southend of town, forcing officers to hightail it down there. As it turned out, there was no murder in progress.

The call was obviously meant to divert police away from PNC Bank.

The FBI is assisting Hamtramck investigators.

In other crime news, Amicci's Pizza was robbed, but even though the gunman was wearing a bandana, employees recognized his voice. The suspect happened to hang around the pizza shop, and was arrested a day after.

The suspect, Ernad Dizdarevic, 20, is a Hamtramck resident and faces spending the next 20 years in prison. Police say he has tattooed tear drops in the corner of each eye, which should come in handy while trying to survive prison life.

And there's one more, besides New Dodge bar being broken into for the umpteenth time. A pharmacy on Conant and Evaline was broken into at 3 a.m. one day last week.

Apparently unbeknown to the two suspects, who were caught red-handed with a bag full of narcotics, a silent alarm went off.

Sheesh, folks, be extra careful out there.



The city's first-ever Hamtramck Arab Festival offered some exciting live performances.

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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 July 26, and all members were present. The meeting ran for three hours.

You could say that two hours of the meeting went up in smoke, or to be more exact, it was all about smoking.

Pot, that is, or if you want to sound more legalistic: medical marijuana.

That's how long councilmembers spent on discussing and voting on a set of laws regulating the growth of medical marijuana and how much the city should charge in fees to set up a marijuana clinic.

And this was after a previous meeting where the council unanimously agreed on two ordinances regulating it. Ah, but the process of adopting an ordinance requires multiple readings and votes, and it also gives the council an opportunity to make last-minute amendments.

And truth be told, there was some thoughtful discussion on the subject, as well as some dead-end digressions.

And it should be noted this was the sole item to take care of.

We'll cut to the chase and report upfront that a zoning ordinance was agreed on as well as what to charge for licensing fees.

For those of you hankering to set up a medical marijuana growing facility or compassion club, take note: the laws don't go into effect until 14 days from today (July 29). Medical marijuana users, however, can consume their, um, product, at any time.

What's not terribly clear about this issue is what in the heck police agencies are going to do. The state Attorney General has called for a crackdown, citing the fact that federal law still prohibits marijuana, and also the Department of Justice has reminded states and communities that marijuana is outlawed by the

feds.

So ... this is one complicated and politically charged issue that will certainly end up in a whole bunch of courts, and we're going to go out on a limb and predict it will land in the lap of the U.S. Supreme Court as a states' rights issue.

But ... we digress.

This is Hamtramck, and this is how the state's law allowing medical marijuana to be grown and consumed will play out here ... at least until the feds or state police come busting in.

However, before we get to the council's discussion, let's start with public comment.

City Council candidate Steve Shaya questioned why the council is even entertaining a discussion on medical marijuana.

"It's still against federal law," he said.

A woman spoke in favor of medical marijuana, saying it has improved the health of her mother and sister who are battling cancer. She said her mother was able to gain weight using marijuana, going from 90 pounds up to 130 pounds.

A woman who identified herself as Andrea also spoke in favor of medical marijuana, saying it has helped cancer patients. She also railed against police agencies breaking into marijuana clinics.

She urged the council to "think humanistic" about the subject.

Two public hearings on the subject were held, but no one from the public spoke up.

Now, let's get to the meat of the discussion.

Councilmember Catrina Stackpoole suggested an amendment to require caregivers who grow plants at home for others to be required to get a home business permit and abide by the zoning laws for home businesses.

That would limit the space

to where marijuana can be grown at home to no more than 25 percent of the total square footage.

(Editor's note: Interestingly, a basement is not considered part of the house when calculating total square footage. Does this mean you can grow pot plants in your entire basement as well as up to 25 percent of the space upstairs? No, said City Manager. Remember, however, state law limits the number of plants that a caregiver can grow, which depends on how many patients the caregiver grows for.)

Councilmember Tom Jankowski said he doesn't think a caregiver's home operation should be considered a home business.

(Editor's note: Stackpoole's amendment would not require a caregiver who grows marijuana for only him or herself as a home business. Stackpoole said she wanted to designate a caregiver who grows plants for patients a home business as a way to protect the city's housing stock, and to prevent people from buying up houses and turning them into marijuana growing facilities.)

Moving on, Councilmember Cathie Gordon proposed amending the ordinance to ban growing facilities from locating on Jos. Campau.

"I really don't want them in the central business district," she said.

Later in the meeting, Councilmember Jankowski pressed her on this issue, asking her specially what was her objection to having them set up shop on Jos. Campau.

"Gordon said it's because the businesses aren't open to the general public, but instead only to patients.

Councilmember Stackpoole said that would be discriminating against a legitimate business.

Jankowski asked Community & Economic Development Director Jason Friedmann what his opinion is on allowing growing facilities to locate on Jos. Campau. Friedmann said with proper regulation he could see them "fitting in."

Mayor Karen Majewski asked City Attorney Jim Allen if there is anything in the city's zoning law that prohibits marijuana clinics operating in the central business district (which is the entire length of Jos. Campau).

Allen said that considering the zoning law allows medical clinics, pharmacies and smoke shops, there should be no restriction for these clinics.

Councilmember Gordon asked what if the clinics become a non-profit operation, which she said is restricted from locating on Jos. Campau.

Councilmember Stackpoole said it's highly unlikely the IRS would allow a marijuana clinic to operate as a non-profit since, technically, medical marijuana still violates federal law.

Let's cut to the vote: Except for Councilmember Shahab Ahmed, the council voted to adopt a zoning law regulating where and how medical marijuana can be grown, including Councilmember Stackpoole's amendment requiring caregivers to register as a home business when growing plants at their home for patients.

As for the issue of banning marijuana growing facilities from Jos. Campau, that failed to gain support.

The council, except for Ahmed, also agreed on what to charge commercial growing facilities.

And after a lengthy debate,

the council set the commercial permit fees as follows: a one-time application fee of \$1,500 and a yearly permit fee of \$1,500.

Originally, the permit was set at \$1,000 to apply and \$5,000 a year to renew the permit. (Home business fees are much lower.)

Councilmember Stackpoole suggested lowering the fee because it was out of line with other fees charged to businesses. She said the proposed fees were "cost-prohibitive."

City Manager Bill Cooper defended the fees, saying the verification that the city has to undertake, which is spelled out in the ordinances the city created on its own, requires a lot of time to process.

He said he agreed, however, that it could be lowered, but suggested going no lower than \$2,500 or \$3,000 a year.

The city's law regulating marijuana clinics requires cross-referencing the medical numbers of patients with the state's records.

(Editor's note: State law does not require communities to take this step. Councilmember Stackpoole told The Review after the meeting that the council adopted the regulation

in order to prevent illegal operations from setting up shop.)

Several fee structures were proposed, but in the end, the council agreed on charging \$1,500 a year for a permit instead of \$5,000. That fee can be changed at any time depending on what it really costs the city to complete the verification process.

Councilmember Ahmed, it should be noted, previously voted in favor of regulating medical marijuana. He later told The Review he changed his mind because of the possibility that illegal drug traffickers may set up shop. He also said medical marijuana still violates federal law.

(Editor's note: If the council took no action at all, there would be no local law regulating medical marijuana, and since state law allows it, there would essentially be nothing stopping someone from setting up a growing facility.)

We'll take a breather here, and maybe step outside for a "smoke" – kidding. Next week: Why are contractors and employees of contractors calling Councilmember Jankowski? And, should this be a concern for the city administration?

Letters • Letters

Where is city enforcement of garbage can code?

This is in response to a recent article regarding garbage cans.

In said article, it was noted that, due to the shortage of city-issued garbage cans "...residents can purchase their own garbage can, but it must come with a secure lid. The one thing you cannot do, however, is throw your garbage out into the alley in just a plastic bag. That's

a code violation, and you could be ticketed."

Oh, really? Since a picture is worth a thousand words, take a look at the photo below. This is what goes on in my alley.

It sure is a good thing that these residents have garbage cans that came with a secure lid!

I constantly report these "FLAPs" and others (like those who don't seem

to know their lawns need mowing). Whether or not something is ever done about it, I don't know for sure, because it continues.

And it continues, I believe, because there's no enforcement. Heck, the city itself doesn't even follow its OWN rules! How can they expect its residents to do so?

Lead by example! And I don't want to hear the excuse of "limited resources." The entire city is going to turn into a ghetto if they don't start enforcing codes. Stop barking when you need to bite.

**Christine Komisarz
Hamtramck**



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Candidate endorsements are never a win for a newspaper

Continued from page 6

"opinion" writer was a part, championed his first-time run several years ago.

Many white voters were outraged over this and – surprise! – boycotted the paper.

It's a shame that Mr. Ahmed has chosen not to seek re-election because he is head and shoulders far better than most of the candidates running in this election.

Two years ago we were impressed with candidate Anam Miah. At the recent "Meet the Candidates

Night," however, Mr. Miah did not seem prepared or knowledgeable of current issues.

Instead, he spoke of "accountability" in City Hall, leaving us to wonder what that means exactly. Since when did "accountability" – or a lack thereof – become an issue?

And just who is lacking in accountability? And besides, what does accountability mean in this context?

Sadly, when it comes to specifics, Mr. Miah has come up short. And worse, he, too,

failed to turn in our candidate questionnaire.

Still, Mr. Miah would probably be a constructive councilmember. We would like to add to last week's endorsement and also encourage voters to consider Mr. Miah.

On second thought, maybe it would be wise to swap out Mr. Zwolak with Mr. Miah, considering Mr. Zwolak's long history of personal attacks on elected officials and his inability to bring something constructive to the table.

It's a secret who bought St. Lad's former school

Continued from front page

that the building has been sold.

According to Rev. Andrew Wesley, the administrator of the parish, they were able to find a buyer just as the lease with the Hamtramck Public School system was coming to an end.

However, Wesley said he is currently unable to disclose the buyer's identity, or the price the building was sold for.

City officials say it could be a few months before that information can be disclosed, along with the new owner's

plans for the building.

The best guess, however, is the building will be turned into a charter school. At least that makes the most sense.

The Hamtramck Public School system had been leasing the school since 1998, but didn't renew the lease as a result of declining enrollment and budget cuts.

Initially, Wesley said he anticipated a difficult sale in the current market. But a sale was necessary, he said, as keeping the former school was a financial burden on the parish.



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Poet was known for nurturing new talent

By Scott Klein
 Special to The Review

Over the past decade, David Blair established himself as one of the pillars of the folk music and poetry community in Detroit and Hamtramck.

That community was shaken to its core last Sunday, as the news filtered through the community that Mr. Blair had died, an apparent victim of the six day heat wave that gripped the city.

Born and raised in Newton, New Jersey, Mr. Blair moved to Detroit after visiting the visiting city in the 1990's. After working a series of jobs in the city, he found himself working at Chrysler's Jefferson North and Lynch Road plant.

In an interview in January of 2009, Mr. Blair told Crain's Detroit that he quit working at Chrysler in 2002 because, "There were all these creative minds and what scared me is, it's a hard job and an admirable job, but I was starting to feel like a bunch of the people who started out there — they were stuck. I didn't want to wake up one morning and be stuck."



In 2002, Mr. Blair won a spot on the Detroit/Hamtramck Poetry Slam team. Blair centered the team, and because of his inspired performances both on the night of the semi-finals and on the night of the finals, the Detroit/Hamtramck Poetry Slam team won the national championship.

That was no small feat. Locally, Mr. Blair hosted open microphones at both the Urban Break and Café 1923. He performed at many of Hamtramck's bars as a solo act, or as front man for the Urban Folk Collective and Blair and The Boyfriends.

Many artists, poets and musicians are so focused on their own careers that they have little time to be bothered with other people. That was not Mr. Blair. He viewed arts as an opportunity to build a community. He nurtured young performers by creating spaces in our community where people felt safe to express themselves.

Mr. Blair understood that the prime responsibility of an artist is to use their art to build and strengthen our community and culture. This point is lost to many whose only concern is to sell product and to promote their own self.

Mr. Blair was a 2010 Callaloo Fellow, 2009 Seattle Haiku Slam Champion, and the 2007 Recipient of BENT Writing Institute's Mentor of the Year Award. He's toured extensively throughout the U.S., Europe, and Africa.

He taught classes and lectured on poetry and music in Detroit Public Schools, The Ruth Ellis Center, Hannan House Senior Center, the YMCA of Detroit, and at various universities, colleges and

high schools across the nation.

He is survived by his mother, Hildegard (Smith), and his siblings: Herbert Blair of Pennsylvania, Tony Blair of New Jersey, Walter Blair of Florida and Joy Blair Swinson of New Jersey. He is also survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts and uncles.

A Community Memorial Service for is planned for David Blair on Sunday, July 31, 2011.

Friends are asked to gather at 1 p.m. on the corner of Cass and MLK/Mack Avenues in Detroit and march down Cass to the Unitarian Universalist Church (UU) at 4605 Cass on the corner of Forest. Percussion instruments are welcome to join in this march.

A Life Celebration will be held at the UU church at 2 p.m., and at 3:30 p.m., a Community Potluck will be held at Memorial Hall at the UU. Please bring a dish.

Separate services will be held by Mr. Blair's family in New Jersey, and are yet to be announced.

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Metro news ...

Obituaries
WIECKOWSKI

Eugene Stanley Wieckowski, 73, died July 26, 2011.

Mr. Wieckowski was retired from Chrysler Corp., and served in the Army. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Pam.

Mr. Wieckowski is survived by his wife, Barbara; daughters, Deborah Donaldson and Linda (Nicholas) Nelson; sons, Eugene (Karen) Wieckowski and Arthur Wieckowski; mother, Evelyn; sisters, Geneva (Harry) Rivera, Josephine Wilson,

Gloria (Michael) Kierzynski; brothers, Frank (Lois) Wieckowski and Patrick Wieckowski; grandchildren, Emily and Derek; and many nieces and nephews.

Funeral arrangements were made by Krot Funeral Home. A memorial service will be held at a later date.

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

With their permission, here is a round-up of their reports from the past week:

On July 18, the Detroit/

Wayne County Port Authority will debut a 250-foot public off-shore wharf and 21,000 square foot facility along the Detroit RiverWalk.

These major additions to the RiverWalk, built at a cost of \$22 million, are on Atwater at Bates, between the GM Renaissance Center and Hart Plaza. The public wharf will be able to accommodate a variety of vessels, including cruise ships and naval frigates. The 21,000 square foot facility houses the new offices for the Detroit/Wayne County Port Authority, meeting rooms with a view of the Detroit River, a command room for ships, and state-of-the-art maritime technology to regulate the flow of visitors and ship traffic.

Newly-appointed DWCPA Executive Director John Jamian says the project is over 20 years in the making.

"In 1998, during my first tour of duty at the Port Authority, I talked to Senator Carl Levin about a vision for our waterfront in downtown Detroit," he says. "The original vision was to build a wharf or a public walkway that was like a wharf, and really celebrating the river, the waterfront, the ships that come by, and really having this as a magnet to draw people downtown - like most other waterfront communities."

The wharf was built to handle commercial, as well as cruise ship traffic - and the port could be an attraction for international tourists from Windsor. "Ultimately, we'd like to consider the ability to have some sort of ferry service that can take passengers back and forth across the river," Jamian says.

Call it a maritime revival on the Detroit River. "In the old days, when a ship would basically tie up wherever it could, and there was very little ability to process people getting off the ship," he says. "It's just a dream true, because we finally have what all the other major ports across the country have, on the Great Lakes."

Writer: Ashley C. Woods

