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# The Review

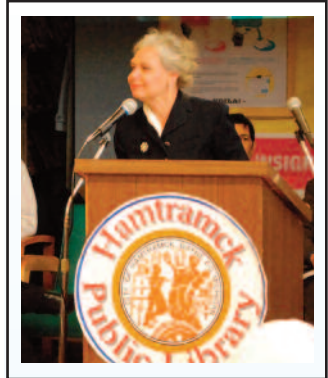
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## Quick Hits

For you politicos out there, this Sunday will usher in a historic moment in Hamtramck.

On Jan. 3 at 1 p.m. a swearing in ceremony will take place for the three city councilmembers who won the November election.

It will be held at the public library with Hamtramck 31st District Court Judge Paul Paruk presiding.

Also being sworn into office will be newly appointed Police Chief Anne Moise.

Mayor Karen Majewski will also say a few words.

This is a historical moment for the city because we now have a Muslim majority on city council. This milestone has attracted a number of national and international media outlets.

From what we can tell, there is still plenty of media buzz out there.

After the swearing-in ceremony we hear there will be a huge get-together at Gates of Columbus hall on Conant.

**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.

**“We’ve got 95 years in and we want to go another 95 years.”**

— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

# Happy New Year! 2016

# A look back at the second half of 2015 – ‘Year in Review’

**By Charles Sercombe**

Welcome back to part two of our annual Year in Review. We pick up from last week with the start of July.

**JULY**

July started off with a bang.

Two groundbreaking ceremonies were held to celebrate and promote major improvements to the city's three parks: Veterans Memorial Park, Pope Park and Zussman Park.

This was a historical moment for Hamtramck. The city's parks had not received this scope of renovation since they were created.

Funding for the park renovations, totaling \$500,000, came from Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, Wayne County Parks millage funds, the Karol Wojtyla Parks Committee – a non-profit group dedicated to the renovation of Pope Park – and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation Patronicity crowdfunding campaign.

So, what was in the works? There were two common threads in all of the parks: more greenery in the form of trees, bushes and flowers, and new lighting.

This year's election sea-



**Pothole repairs became the story of the year. For some residents who were frustrated waiting for repairs, they took matters into their own hands.**

son started off sleepy.

But then things began to heat up and when a candidate reported damage to his campaign signs. The victim: Saad Almasmari, who was one of nine candidates vying for one of three

say to whoever is responsible for the damage:

“If you don't want me to run and win, stand against me legally by being my election competitor. Or support any other candidate against me. Or you



**The theft of cellphones became this year's biggest crime trend. It still is.**

seats on city council.

He reported that about 40 of his signs were spray-painted with a large “X” through his name.

Almasmari had this to

would have come to me and tell me what you don't like about my plan and thoughts. Come and have conversations with me. I'm ready to answer all your

questions and concerns.”

This year's election went on to become historical. Read on for more about what was to come.

■

This year's crime trend involved cellphones.

In July the theft of cellphones became an everyday occurrence. Hamtramck was not alone.

“Right now, it's an epidemic everywhere,” said

was replaced with cell-phone thefts. Mileski said the phones get more money than jewelry.

In some of the more brazen cases, thieves entered a phone store and stole display models.

Some of the higher end phones sell for upwards of \$600 new.

■

Filmmaker Sareta Cheatham had one ground



**Officials gathered at Veterans Memorial Park to kick-off major renovation projects at all three city parks this past summer.**

Sgt. Andrew Mileski. “People need to pay attention to their surroundings.”

Most of the incidents involved young men – some even in their teens – who came up on a person talking on their phone and snatched it. They then run away, sometimes to a waiting car.

In prior years most street robberies involved yanking off gold necklaces from pedestrians.

That crime trend had just about disappeared, and

rule when she first sat down with a group of Hamtramck High students to make a short film.

“I told them it can't be a horror movie, and you can't kill the principal,” she said.

But other than that they had free reign to come up with whatever they wanted and the result was “Black-out,” a film scripted and acted entirely by the students with a little help from some of Cheatham's professional friends, most no-

**Continued on page 2**

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# A look back at the second half of 2015 – ‘Year in Review’

tably Detroit and national hip-hop artist Trick Trick, who scored the movie.

All told, the film was created by a fluctuating group of 15-20 Hamtramck High School students who worked together one day a week after school for eight weeks.

The 5-minute film scripted and acted entirely by Hamtramck High students tells the story of a basketball player who passes out in the school gym and has a horrible dream about a crazed janitor killing students in the high school.

“I let them make the horror movie. I just didn’t let them kill the principal,” Cheatham said. “It’s funny. They laugh at themselves.

plaints about DTE following up on making those repairs.

Mark Ragsdale, the city’s Director of Public Works, said he was pressuring DTE to speed up replacing sidewalks that were ripped up for new gas lines. He said there were some households who had been waiting since last year for their new sidewalks.

Ragsdale said there had also been some crews who went a little too far in tearing up lawns and shrubbery. He said at least one crew was fired on the spot for causing needless damage.

For the second year in a row, Hamtramck had an old-fashioned Fourth of July

“We wanted to be the only game in town, to stand out,” Daniels said.

Last year’s theme was “Red, White and You.” This year it was: “Celebrate America in Hamtramck.”

“It’s a celebration of our city’s diversity,” Daniels said.

There are Do It Yourself projects, and then there is Hamtramck’s version of a DIY.

The city came under the spotlight of local and national media after several residents took matters into their own hands and began filling potholes when they got tired of waiting and waiting for the city to get to them.

It all began, like so many other Hamtramck-born inspirations, with a group of people having a few beers and talking about the city.

Jonathan Weier, 32, and some buddies were at a local bar complaining/ wondering what could be done about getting potholes filled.

It didn’t take long to come up with a solution: Let’s do it ourselves.

“I guess the tipping point was when on Facebook I got feedback,” Weier said.

Armed with \$150, Weier and crew – who went by the name of Hamtramck Guerilla Road Repair – bought some pothole filler

and took care of several potholes on Lumpkin.

They then set up an on-line fundraiser, with the goal to raise \$5,000. Over five thousand dollars were raised, including some from a donation by Mayor Majewski, who applauded the effort.

“I have no problem with residents taking projects like this – that everyone agrees need to be done and that make all of our lives better – into their own hands,” Majewski said.

City Manager Katrina Powell talked with the volunteers to better coordinate repairs.

Potholes and the general condition of the city’s streets had long been an issue for years, but this year it has become the Story of the Year.

The past winter’s severe freezing and ice created larger than usual potholes. Cold weather also hung on longer, which put repairs behind a few weeks.

On top of that, the city was dealt a month-long setback when the administration was ordered by a state-appointed Transition Advisory Board to rebid the contract for pothole repairs.

Not only did that delay repairs, but the company hired by the city, Highway Construction, couldn’t be here every day because of other commitments, said Mark Ragsdale, the Director of Public Works.

“We’ve got 95 years in and we want to go another 95 years.”

In a way, the story of the unlit Kowalski sign reflected the state of the company over the past several years, a time in which Hamtramck’s beloved sausage maker could’ve ended its near-century-long relationship with the city.

In 2002, Kowalski

Continued on page 3



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# Second Front Page

## A look back at the second half of 2015 – ‘Year in Review’

Continued from page 2

bought Home Style Foods and its plant on Edwin. The following year, Kowalski acquired Tasso’s Epicurean Cuisine out of Novi. In 2011, Kowalski bought Hamtramck-based Dudek Foods. This year, Kowalski acquired Toledo-based Consumer Guild Foods.

Kowalski said the company had considered consolidating all production into one plant, which most likely would have meant leaving Hamtramck. The decision to stay was brought about by customer demand for pre-packaged, pre-sliced lunchmeat.

“If you have a big customer waiting for it, you can’t wait forever or they’ll ask somebody else,” Kowalski said. “Leaving has never been a pursuit of ours. The question was to consolidate or not.”

Ultimately, the company decided to refurbish and expand its Holbrook plant and hire more employees in order to produce meat products for its retailers.

For several years city officials tried to get Wayne County to take care of Conant.

The county-owned road had become a series of potholes and temporary patches.

City officials pleaded to get the road repaved, but county officials said Conant is way down on the

people from two downriver Catholic parishes volunteered to tear up the park’s brick pavers.

And they had their work cut out for them. There were a few thousand pavers that were tightly



After years of asking Wayne County officials to begin repairing Conant, which is owned by the county, action finally took place.

packed in, and they had to be individually pried up and lugged away to a waiting dumpster parked on Belmont, just outside of the park.

Andrew Kilburn of Wyandotte said he and fellow parishioners at St. Vincent Pallotti were looking for a service project before they make a pilgrimage to Youth Day in Krakow, Poland.

“We found this project and decided to do the grunt work,” he said.

City road repairs continued to motor on.

The city awarded two contracts totaling over \$500,000 for the partial

Poland to Caniff. This portion will also be entirely torn up and water mains will also be replaced.

It was hard to believe that when a road was repaired, it became a major

news story.

But such was the state of things in the metro area and the state. Wayne County Executive Warren Evans came to Hamtramck to talk to reporters about repairs being made on Conant and elsewhere in the county.

Evans used the opportunity to urge state lawmakers to come up with a funding solution to repair roads – something they were unable to do for the past two years while the condition of roads deteriorated statewide.

“I’m to the point where they need to make a decision – fix it,” Evans said.

He said the county had \$23 million to spend on road repairs, but that amount would only cover 14 projects.

The county has over 700 miles of road, half of which were in need of repairs, Evans said.

“The reality is, there is not enough money, but we just can’t sit back and wring our hands,” he added.

As for the deadlock among state legislators, Evans blamed it on a “polarized” political environment in Lansing.

Hamtramck police busted a carjacking network.

During August two carjackings occurred that involved three armed suspects. An auto theft unit called C.O.B.R.A. (Communities Opting to Beat Rising Auto theft) involving officers from Hamtramck, Highland Park and Ecorse arrested “multiple” individuals connected with the carjackings.

The C.O.B.R.A. team had made a number of other arrests in the city.

One of the carjackings occurred at 11:30 p.m. at Conant and Caniff, in which the suspects intentionally bumped a driver with their car. The driver pulled over, apparently thinking it was a legitimate accident, and was then pulled out of the car by three men and pis-

tol-whipped.

The suspects drove off in his car – a 1999 Toyota Corolla.

### SEPTEMBER

Hamtramck’s Primary Election went off without a hitch in August.

But since then something odd popped up.

Two voters made a police report saying that someone they knew took their signed absentee ballot without their permission.

No other information was available, but City Clerk August Gitschlag said the matter was assigned to a police detective.

It is illegal for anyone not related to a voter or a member of a voter’s household to handle absentee ballots (postal and election officials are exempted).

This wasn’t the first time the handling of absentee ballots became an issue.

Two years ago three Hamtramck men were convicted of a felony charge for illegally handling absentee ballots.

The use of absentee ballots in Hamtramck became more prevalent in recent years as an increasing number of candidates running for office urged their supporters to vote using this method as a way to guarantee their votes.

If there was one word that defined this year’s Hamtramck Labor Day Fes-

Continued on page 4



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	Preceded by singing of Christmas carols (koleady) at 11:30 pm	
<b>Friday, December 25</b>	Christmas Day Mass (English)	8:00 am
	Christmas Day Mass (Polish)	9:30 am
<b>Thursday, Dec. 31</b>	New Year's Eve Mass (English)	5:30 pm
<b>Friday, Jan. 1, 2016</b>	Solemnity of Mary (English)	8:00 am
	Solemnity of Mary (Polish)	9:30 am



Volunteers helped with the renovation of Pope Park by removing thousands of brick pavers.

list of county-owned roads that need repaving.

With a new city manager in place, Hamtramck got the next best deal: A county road crew began milling down the worst sections of Conant and laying down new asphalt.

How did that come about?

City Manager Katrina Powell said that she began contacting county officials since she began her job here over six months ago.

“Relationships build roads and bridges; the staff and I work diligently in building those relationships with the county and various contractors that work in our community, to achieve the goal of bettering Hamtramck, one step and relationship at a time,” Powell said.

The renovation of Pope Park got a jumpstart in August.

A group of mostly young

repaving of Goodson and Hanley streets.

Work on both streets was slated to begin in mid-September, said Mark Ragsdale, the Director of Public Works.

On Hanley, the center lane was going to be milled down and filled with a new layer of asphalt from Jos. Campau to Conant.

That project cost \$255,000.

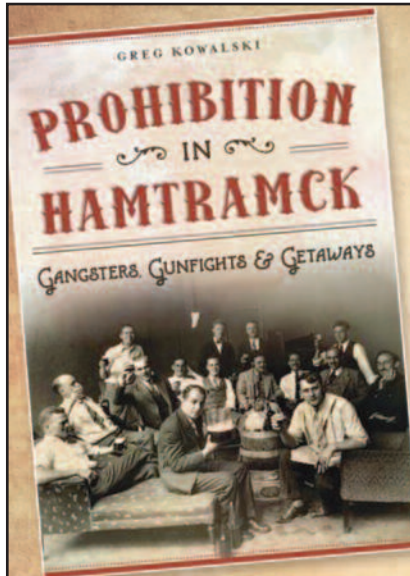
On Goodson, the street was to be entirely ripped up starting from Gallagher and going west for 280 feet.

Besides replacing the street, a new water line was going to be installed as well. The cost of this project was \$293,000.

Funding for both projects came from the state.

Ragsdale said these two streets were chosen based on an engineering study that rated all of the city’s streets.

This coming spring it will be Lumpkin’s turn, from




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# A look back at the second half of 2015 – ‘Year in Review’

Continued from page 3

tival it was: Hot.

As in unbearable, muggy, suffocating and not-enough-beer-in-the-world-to-quench-your-thirst kind of hot.

At least there was no rainstorm to wipe out part of the festival as in years past. Although, a little sprinkling would have been welcomed.

While the brutal heat kept attendance down during the day, at night people swarmed into Hamtramck. Organizers said it was one of the highest-attended festivals in recent years.

A weekend highlight included the annual Polish Day Parade, which seemed a little shorter this year. And because of the intense heat, the various groups of Polish dancers participating in the parade did not perform as usual. Instead, they just walked down the parade route and waved to onlookers.

It had been over six months since the Detroit Football Club last pitched a proposal to move its semi-professional soccer team to Hamtramck.

In September the club followed up on its proposal to lease Keyworth Stadium from the Hamtramck Public School District. At the regular monthly meeting of the School Board, the club presented a lease agreement and an artist’s rendition of a renovated stadium.

The club said it was interested in leasing the stadium for several years and would invest about \$1 million in repairs.

The repairs would include shoring up and renovating the bleacher section, seating, restrooms and dressing rooms.

The school board liked what they heard and agreed to a 10-year lease with the club.

The club had been using the field at Cass Tech High



An artist’s rendition of a plan to update Keyworth Stadium was presented to the Hamtramck Public School Board. The Detroit City Football Club will be playing there starting this spring.

School in Detroit, but has outgrown that facility.

Sean Mann, speaking for the club, said he expected to draw 6,000 fans to the games, which he hoped to begin having at Keyworth starting in the spring of 2016.

“We think Keyworth is perfect for us, and we could breathe new life into it,” he said.

So far, the club is on track to meeting its fundraising goal.

The city’s commitment to replanting trees continued to grow deeper roots.

City Manager Katrina Powell announced that the city was set to receive two grants that will fund the planting of 97 trees.

With this latest grant, the city planted about 200 trees in the past year.

In 1997 the city was dealt a devastating blow when a tornado – or something very close to it – blew through town and downed an estimated 500 trees. Some blocks that had boasted of picturesque

canopies lost all of their trees.

Hamtramck’s Fire Department kept raking in federal grants.

The department’s latest grant came once again from the federal agency FEMA. FEMA awarded Hamtramck almost \$167,000 for the purchase of new firefighting clothing and air packs.

The award, announced by Senators Gary Peters and Debbie Stabenow, covered the cost of 23 sets of personal protective gear, which included pants, jackets, boots and gloves.

The department had been receiving grants from FEMA since 2009 when it received \$350,000 to purchase a new fire engine truck. In 2011 the department scored another major grant – worth \$750,000 – to purchase a ladder truck.

The city also received a much needed helping hand in reducing its costs when FEMA once again awarded the department a SAFER grant in 2012, worth \$3 million over two years. That grant covered salary costs for the department.

The new school year started off great for the

Hamtramck Public School District.

The district officially resolved its financial crisis that took five years to conquer.

Hamtramck was one out of 20 districts and charter schools that enjoyed such news. There were at one time 56 school districts in financial trouble. That number came down to 38.

Five years ago Hamtramck was in a budget deficit of over \$3 million. In September it had a \$1.3 million fund balance.

And there was more good news. Due to a slight increase in student enrollment, the district was given an extra \$400,000 in state financial aid.

## OCTOBER

After battling ill health for several months, City Councilmember Titus Walters succumbed to a failing heart.

Walters, 52, died while in hospice care.

Prior to being elected to city council in 2013, he served several years as president of the Hamtramck School Board.

He was passionate about Hamtramck and its children.

Mayor Karen Majewski said Walters “wore his heart on his sleeve.”

“Titus ... loved his family, his students, his church, and his community and he let that love guide him in everything he did,” Majewski said.

“Few of us manage to touch so many lives in so short a time on earth as Titus has. I’m profoundly grateful for having had the opportunity to know and work with him over the years. The spirit of convic-

tion he embodied will continue to be an inspiration and provide a role model for people of all backgrounds and generations. On behalf of the City of Hamtramck, I extend my sincere condolences to his family and loved ones. We will all miss him deeply.”

Walters’ election to the city council was a historical occasion.

It had been 91 years since the last African-American (Dr. James Henderson) had been elected to the city council.

Walters downplayed the significance of his election, telling The Review:

“I never look at color, but I know the importance of it,” he said, and added: “You have to be a leader for the whole community.”

Walters was also a deacon at Corinthian Baptist Church.

Walters’ death unfortunately led to an ugly debate among city officials over who would fill the remainder of his term, which had two years left in it.

It would eventually be decided by a Wayne County Circuit Court judge. Ian Perrotta was named as Walters’ successor.

For the first time in who knew when, the city revealed a five-year plan outlining which streets will be repaired during the coming years.

However, because of limited resources, the city could not afford to repair anywhere near the majority of city streets, considering that the estimated cost to repair a street is \$1.5 million to \$2 million per mile.

The city receives a little over \$1 million a year in Act 51 monies from the state

to make repairs to streets.

There are 37 miles of roads in Hamtramck and most of them are rated in fair to poor condition, according to a recent study performed by Hennessey Engineers, Inc.

For some kids, getting tucked into bed is only a dream.

But thanks to an ongoing project, it was going to be sweet dreams for more kids in Hamtramck and the surrounding neighborhoods.

While many of us have a nice, comfortable bed to crawl into at night, there are a number of kids in the 48212 zip code who do not have such a luxury. Instead, they have a hard floor, or at best a couch, to sleep on.

Catrina Stackpoole of Recycled Treasures had been aiming to turn that around for the past few years. Her organization regularly gives new and slightly used beds to families who have suffered an emergency.

Stackpoole won over \$700 at a Hamtramck SOUP fundraising event to continue her good work.

There are birthday milestones and then there are milestones few ever live to see.

Becoming 100 years old is certainly one of them.

Marie Rzeszutek joined a very exclusive club by becoming a centenarian in October.

How rare is that? In the U.S., only 0.02 percent of the population lives to be 100, according to the U.S. Census.

While most credit healthy living, Rzeszutek, who was still able to walk on her own, said it was not only because of “God’s will,” but also living by the philosophy of “Que Sera, Sera.”

For those of a certain age, you will remember this being Doris Day’s signature song. The phrase means “Whatever Will Be, Will Be.”

A week after we published her milestone, we received a call about one more resident turning 100 years old.

Joining Marie Rzeszutek in that exclusive club was Hattie Goryl. Whatever is in Hamtramck’s water, keep drinking it!

City Councilmember Mohammed Hassan was seriously injured in an auto accident.

A speeding driver from Detroit crossed over the centerline on Jos. Campau just north of Caniff and hit head-on the car Hassan was driving.

Hassan’s injuries are not life-threatening and he returned to council meetings shortly after the accident.

## NOVEMBER

There was only one word to describe the November election: Historical.

For the first time ever in Hamtramck, there will now

Continued on page 5

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Hamtramck Recreation Department

Programs for Children & Adults

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Special Events

Community Center

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# Review: Opinion Page

## In Our Opinion

### We may be a small city but big things come from here

We say this every year.

This week's issue is part two of our annual Year in Review. Last week we rounded up the news from the first six months of the year. This week is the second half.

Each time we compile the yearly review we are amazed at how much news this little town generates.

In fact, 2015 was a historical year for Hamtramck. National and international

media outlets sent reporters for the past couple of months to talk about how our city government is now a Muslim majority.

This is likely a first-ever for any American city.

The reports ranged from insightful to sensational, as one would expect given the political climate of the times.

Hamtramck has always been a city of change. Many people come here from other

countries to begin their American Dream.

Many stay just a few years and move on. We have always been a city in transition.

This is what makes Hamtramck so special and so full of vitality. We expect more change in the year to come.

We wish our readers a year of good health and success. Let us remember also, though, we all depend on each other.

## Odds & Ends

**Helping hand...** It seems we were remiss last week when we highlighted the good folks from Alhambra Caravan 261 of Warren.

The photo space last week was far too small to get the entire group in, so we decided to put things in better perspective this week.

Here's a recap of the good work they do:


For over a dozen years the group has distributed free turkeys to the families of special needs students.

It all started many years ago by retired public schools bus driver John "Hippo" Hypnarowicz, who specialized in driving those students to and from school.

Many of the families are low-income and have a hard time scraping by. Over 100 families received a free turkey over the holiday season.

The Alhambra group also gets a huge helping hand from the generosity of Srodek's Sausage Co. which supplies the turkeys at a special low cost.

Thanks again guys.



**Members of Alhambra Caravan 261 of Warren pose for a photo during their annual turkey dinner distribution.**

### The Hamtramck Review

Published every Friday

3020 Caniff, Hamtramck, MI 48212

Phone: 313-874-2100 Fax: 313-874-2101

www.hamtramckreview.com • email news@thehamtramckreview.com

Publisher: John Ulaj • (248) 866-1110 • julaj@thehamtramckreview.com

Editor: Charles Sercombe Office Manager: Jean Ingenthron

Sales Manager: Dave Sweet Reporter/Copy Editor: Ian Perrotta

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## A look back at the second half of 2015 – ‘Year in Review’

Continued from page 4

be a Muslim majority city council. This was also a likely first-ever for any American community. As a result, national and international media outlets swarmed into town to report on this milestone.

Saad Almasmari, a Yemeni-American, was the top vote-getter. There are now four out of six council seats held by officials of the Muslim faith.

Councilmember Robert Zwolak lost his bid for reelection.

Upon hearing the election results in city hall, Almasmari was ecstatic.

“I expected this (sic) results,” he said. “I asked God to help me, and I promise to serve the community.”

Hamtramck’s political landscape had been changing in recent years.

The Bangladeshi and Yemeni communities have been growing in recent years. For decades Hamtramck has been a predominantly Polish town, but those of Polish descent now find themselves in the minority, or nearly so.

According to U.S. Census figures Hamtramck’s Muslim community now represents 40 to 50 percent of the community and includes those from Bangladesh, Yemen and Bosnia.

This historic turn of events was not lost on Ibrahim Aljahim, a political activist in the Yemeni community.

Aljahim spoke at a victory celebration held at Kabob House on Conant for Almasmari, Miah and Musa after the election.

What he said at that meeting disturbed some in the community.

“Today, we showed the Polish and everybody else that we are united,” Aljahim said.

The city took a bold move and decided to get back into the snow plowing business.

City Manager Katrina Powell said she had been concerned about the cost of using a private contractor for the service and vowed that this year the city would take it over.

She made good on that word after getting the OK from the city council to purchase four trucks – including a dumpster for salting – and snow plowing equipment. The cost of the purchase was paid by a state fund, called Act 84, that came unexpectedly, Powell said.

The check from the state was for \$190,000 – which was more than enough to cover the total purchase price of \$133,000.

“This is a windfall for us,” Powell told the council. “Essentially we won the lottery.”

During the past three years the city has paid Platinum Landscaping, Inc. over \$863,000 for snow plowing and street salting.

Not everyone was pleased with this new arrangement.

City Councilmember Robert Zwolak questioned whether the city can handle the work and how good of a job it will do. He ended

Almost a year after Gov. Snyder declared Hamtramck’s financial emergency was over and the creation of a Transition Advisory Board (TAB), Square announced her resignation from the TAB.

Square, who is also the City Administer of Highland Park, said it was time for her step away. She was Hamtramck’s emergency manager for 18 months



**Marie Rzesutek**



**Hattie Goryl**

up being the only vote against purchasing the equipment.

Former Councilmember Cathie Gordon said that there was “something fishy” about the new deal.

On the heels of a historical election in town, Gov. Rick Snyder made his first-ever visit to Hamtramck.

He came to Kabob House to officially kick-off the rebranding of Conant as “Banglatown,” which is what it has been called for several years now. Conant is filled with mostly Bangladeshi-owned businesses and restaurants.

Gov. Snyder embraced this development as an example of “Pure Michigan.”

“Banglatown is a cool concept,” he said.

For 18 years Hamtramck City Hall was dominated by one person: Robert Kozaren.

He was the city’s longest serving mayor, and arguably the most popular mayor in modern times. Kozaren was mayor from 1980 to 1997, and he died in 2007.

A majority of city councilmembers voted to name city hall in Kozaren’s honor.

The vote was taken after a public hearing was held on the proposal. A number of residents who worked with Kozaren and those who knew him spoke in favor of the honorary designation.

One theme that emerged from his supporters was Kozaren’s commitment to the city.

“He had an unquestioned love for the city,” said Tom Cervenak. “He was mayor for all the people of Hamtramck.”

Former Hamtramck Emergency Manager Cathy Square cut her ties to the city.

prior to being on the TAB.

“It’s been two-and-half years,” she told The Review. “That’s probably enough, and I have my hands full in Highland Park.”

She was replaced by Peter McInerney, of Grosse Pointe, who is the Community Development Director for the City of Wayne.

Snyder also created an additional position on the four-member TAB and appointed Albert Bogdan of Huntington Woods.

In an attempt to soothe tensions since the recent city council election, the Yemeni-American Leadership Association held a meeting to “build bridges” in the community.

Hamtramck’s election received national and international media attention over the city being the first in the nation to have a Muslim majority on city council.

About 100 people showed up at the Hamtramck High School Community Center. Most of those attending were men from the Yemeni and Bengali communities.

The organizer of the event, Dr. Khalid Almasmari, said that despite the differences, Hamtramck is unique in many ways.

“Walking down Hamtramck is walking down different countries at the same time,” he said.

Residents, he said, share “our love for our city.”

## DECEMBER

There was no let up from the international media’s fascination with Hamtramck.

As a result of November’s election, there will be a Muslim majority city council come January. That historical turn of events

Continued on page 6



# A look back at the second half of 2015 – ‘Year in Review’

Continued from page 5

continued to attract outside media attention.

A number of the articles have focused on the cultural diversity of the city, and also Mayor Karen Majewski’s reaction to the election results.

Not all of it was good. One of the more bizarre media encounters the mayor experienced was with a CNN anchor who asked Majewski point-blank if she was afraid of this new Muslim majority.

After correcting the reporter’s mispronunciation of her name, Majewski calmly replied that not only is she not afraid, most residents are more concerned about potholes in the streets rather than who runs city government.

“The issues for most of our residents are: Can we fix the streets? . . . The streetlight that’s out in front of my house, can we get that fixed? They’re local issues,” she said.

In a story by The Telegraph, a British publication, a headline about the city cried out in alarm: “Refugee debate stokes tensions in Hamtramck, America’s Muslim capitol.”

Mayor Majewski blasted

the report, calling it “sensational.”

“Some members of the media have tried to exploit our differences to make a sensational story,” she said in an email to The Review. “We ARE sensational, but not because we are afraid of each other. We are sensational because every day we work to live out the great lesson that binds the world’s religions and frames our moral principles: we strive to live peaceably and respectfully with each other.”

There was good news for fans of Hamtramck Disneyland.

The dispute over the estate of Dmytro Szylak was settled, and there was talk of a plan to fund a way to preserve Szylak’s famed folk art creation.

Szylak died in May at the age of 92, and his two houses on Klinger, which support the massive creation, have been unoccupied since then. His step-son, Yuriy Byega, said he was now in charge of the estate.

He began emptying out the contents of the two houses. He told The Re-

view there are a few options for the artwork that has attracted the attention of media outlets throughout the world and each year attracts thousands of visitors.



Hamtramck’s Muslim community held a rally at Zussman Park in protest of terrorism.

“We’re not taking it down,” Byega said as a way of introduction to meeting a Review reporter asking about the future plans for his step-dad’s creation. “That’s the good news. We’re going to try to preserve, and if that doesn’t work we’ll auction it.”

Byega said he will be looking into a starting an internet fundraising site to turn the house into a permanent museum.

Looking for a break on the cost of home insurance

here in Hamtramck? If so, the city received some helpful news.

The Insurance Service “Muslims are the biggest victims of ISIS and its terrorism. We are just as shocked and horrified as all other peaceful citizens across America,” said Mohammed Kamrul Hassan in

a press release issued at the rally. “No religion condones the murder of innocent civilians, barbaric beheading of scholars or desecration of houses of worship. Religions are about love –not hate.”

Well, that’s it for 2015. It was certainly a year full of important changes in the community.

Offices (ISO) upgraded the city’s ability to fight fires from a Class 5 to a Class 4.

The ISO rating is used by most insurance companies in determining your homeowner’s insurance premium. Homeowners can use this new rating to challenge their current insurance cost.

A Class 1 rating is the best while a Class 10 rating is the worst.

Fire Chief Paul Wilk credited the better class rating to the increased amount of training by the Fire Department, the Auto-Aide Response Agreement with Detroit, and the hard work

and dedication of the city’s firefighters.

In recent years the number of house fires in the city has dropped dramatically. There are now only about two or three major house fires each year. One of the major factors for that decrease is the city has aggressively demolished vacant homes that are beyond repair.

Hamtramck’s Muslim community sent out a message to the world that Islam is a religion of peace.

About 200 people, mostly men from Hamtramck’s Bengali and Yemeni communities, held a rally in Zussman Park. The event was organized by a new group called United and Concerned Citizens of Hamtramck.

Some 20 speakers, many who spoke on the fly, talked about Islam and railed against those who commit terrorist acts in the name of that religion

## Coming events

**SATURDAY, Jan. 9, 9-3 p.m.** – Hamtramck’s Recycle Center is open at Caniff and McDougall. Drop of your recyclables for free.

**WEDNESDAY, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.** – The Hamtramck Midtown Block Club will not meet during December 2015 and January 2016. In 2016, the block club will meet Wednesday, February 17, at 7 p.m. in St. Florian’s Convent, 2626 Florian; please use the side entrance. Share information with your friends and neighbors and listen to guest speakers. Light refreshments will be served. Please invite others to join us.



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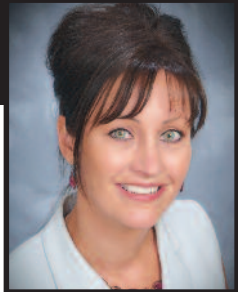
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**By Charles Sercombe**

This week's Crime Log covers Dec. 22-28.

**Tuesday, December 22**

- Two Detroit residents were arrested following a traffic stop. The driver was arrested for driving without a license. He had been previously convicted of this offense 30 times. The driver also had improper plates and was wanted on a warrant. The passenger was also wanted on a warrant.
- At 2:30 a.m. a resident in the 12000 block of Lumpkin was carjacked at gunpoint. Two suspects forced the resident out of the car and sped away, but crashed soon after.
- A resident reported receiving harassing phone calls by several suspects.
- A resident was arrested for indecent exposure and being wanted on 12 warrants.
- Two residents were arrested following a traffic stop for obstruction. The driver was also arrested for impaired driving.
- A Port Huron resident was arrested for driving a stolen car.

**Wednesday, December 23**

- A resident reported someone stole a money order from her mailbox.
- A Conant resident reported a break-in.
- A resident was arrested following a traffic stop for being wanted on a warrant.

- Three people were arrested following a traffic stop for health code violations.
- A resident in the 2900 block of Goodson was arrested for reckless discharge of a gun and possessing an unregistered handgun.

**Thursday, December 24**

- A resident reported the theft of his gym bag from the trunk of his car.
- Officers recovered a stolen car in the 12000 block of Moran.
- A break-in was reported in the 5100 block of Belmont.

**Friday, December 25**

- A Belmont resident reported the theft of a package from his front porch.
- A resident in the 2600 block of Yemans reported a break-in.
- A resident reported being assaulted by two men in the area of Caniff and Fleming.

**Saturday, December 26**

- A person reported receiving threatening phone calls from a person they know.
- A resident was arrested for intentionally running over two people in the 2400 block of Zinow.
- A Belmont resident reported someone apparently walked on top of his car, causing damage.
- A resident was arrested for offering fraudulent proof of insurance and obstruction.

- A resident was arrested for urinating in public while in the 2300 block of Carpenter.

**Sunday, December 27**

- At almost 8 a.m. a domestic assault was reported from a residence in the 9400 block of McDougall. The suspect fled before officers arrived.
- At almost 9 a.m. officers discovered a business in the 9800 block of Jos. Campau had been broken into during the night. A cash register had been stolen.
- A house break-in was reported in the 2600 block of Trowbridge.
- A resident reported the theft of tools from his car while it was parked on Jos. Campau overnight.

**Monday, December 28**

- A resident was arrested for passing a fraudulent check to pay a fine in Hamtramck 31st District Court.
- A car crashed into Deb's Flowers on Caniff.
- A Hanley resident reported the theft of his passport from his mailbox.
- A Belmont resident reported a break-in.
- A St. Aubin resident reported a garage break-in and the theft of power tools and three bikes.
- A resident reported being assaulted and robbed by three known suspects while in the 11500 block of Nagel.

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**10/\$10**

**All Varieties  
Faygo or 7-Up  
Products**  
2 liter btls. + dep.  
**10/\$10**

**All Varieties 7.5 oz.  
Spartan Liquid Hand Soap  
or Dawn Original Scent  
Dish Detergent 9 oz.**  
**10/\$10**

**Fresh 1 lb. bag  
Baby Cut Carrots  
or  
Hass Avocados each**  
**10/\$10**

**All Varieties 7-10 oz.  
Green Giant  
Vegetables in Sauce**  
Boil in Bag. Excludes asparagus spears  
**10/\$10**

**12 ct. double roll Cottenelle  
Clean Care Bath Tissue  
or 6 ct. Regular roll  
Brawny Paper Towels**  
**\$4<sup>99</sup>**

**24 pk. 16.9 oz. bottles  
Absopure Spring  
Water**  
LIMIT 5 WITH  
ADDITIONAL  
\$5 PURCHASE.  
LESSER  
QUANTITIES  
\$2.50.  
**\$1<sup>99</sup>**

**Regular or Light  
Kraft Miracle Whip  
or Regular only 30 oz.  
Mayonnaise**  
**\$1<sup>99</sup>**

**All Varieties  
Ragu Pasta  
Sauce**  
16-24 oz.  
**3/\$5**

**All Varieties  
Faygo  
7-Up Products**  
12 pk., 12 oz. cans or 6 pk., 16.9 oz. btls.  
**2/\$5**  
Plus deposit

**All Varieties  
Spartan Shredded  
or Chunk Cheese**  
6-8 oz.  
**3/\$5**



*Have a Happy Holiday  
and  
Happy New Year*

from  
**City Manager  
Katrina Powell**

## Complete Foot & Ankle

— Dr. Myron Lederman —

- Heel Pain • Corns, Calluses • Hammer Toes
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**Senior and Diabetic Foot Care**  
*Over 30 Years Experience*

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Please call for appointment

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Shoes**

**9731 Jos. Campau • Hamtramck  
(313) 872-4076**

## Call For Artists!

Call 313-826-7158 to get an application and chair

**1st Place winner gets \$100 cash prize**

**Save the Date!**  
**January 30, 2016 at 6pm**

4th Annual Chair Affair Dinner  
**"A Taste of Hamtramck"**  
And  
**"A Chair to Remember" Contest & Auction**

A Benefit for **Recycled Treasures**  
Artists will be decorating or remaking chairs into art, that will be auctioned off to support the mission of Recycled Treasures.  
**Door Prizes, 50/50 raffle, and more!**

**Recycled Treasures**

12101 Joseph Campau  
Hamtramck MI 48212  
313-826-7158  
www.recycledtreasureshamtramck.org

**STORE HOURS**  
Tuesday 2-6pm  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday  
Saturday  
10-5pm