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Quick Hits

Today, we celebrate Veterans Day

By Charles Sercombe

Today, Friday, Nov. 10, is Veterans Day.

It's actually the day that it is "observed," which means government and post offices are closed.

The actual Veterans Day is Saturday, Nov. 11, the official date.

That's neither here nor there, because the main thing to focus on is Veterans Day is when we remember and honor those have served our throughout the last 200-plus years of this country's existence.

Hamtramck has had a long history since it became a city over a 100 years ago of sending our men and women to serve our nation to protect us.

Sadly, many of our veterans are now long gone, and the yearly Veterans Day observance at PLAV Post 10 has stopped, first because of the covid pandemic for three years and now, our aged vets have passed on.

This brings a lump to our throat, but it doesn't let that stop us from honoring and thanking our family members, friends, and neighbors who served in our armed services.

We salute all who served and those who continue to serve our nation.

— HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD —

★ THANK YOU VETERANS ★

VETERANS DAY • NOVEMBER 11

Marching through the streets, protestors called for a ceasefire

By Charles Sercombe

On Saturday, Hamtramck joined a number of other cities across the U.S. in rallying in support of Palestinians and demanding a ceasefire in Israel's military war in Gaza.

About 200 people, a number of them from outside the city, gathered at Veterans Park and then marched through town, ending up in front of city hall, where Mayor Amer Ghalib spoke.

Punctuated throughout the rally were various chants and slogans, including the familiar, and controversial, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free."

The rallies being held nationwide were also in protest of Israel and its ground war grinding along in Gaza.

Israel invaded Gaza in retaliation for a Hamas attack in Israel on Oct. 7, where about 1,400 people were killed, and over 200 people were taken hos-



About 200 people gathered Saturday in Veterans Park and then marched through the city streets in support of Palestine and demanding a ceasefire to Israel's ongoing attack in Gaza. On Oct. 7 Hamas militants invaded Israel and killed 1,400 people. That attack sparked Israel to attack Gaza in retaliation.

tage, including Americans.

It's been reported that over 10,000 Palestinians have since died, including some 4,000 children, although that number has been disputed by some.

President Biden has come under attack for his administration's support of Israel, although Biden has implored Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to suspend hostilities in order to provide humanitarian aid to civilian Palestinians who are trapped in the Israeli military operation.

Netanyahu has rejected that plea until Hamas releases the hostages, and has also said that a ceasefire would allow Hamas to regroup and re-attack Israel.

It appears that Biden may pay a political price for his support of Israel, although Republicans are just as supportive.

Occasionally, some yelled out "Genocide Joe has got to go," in reference to Biden.

One speaker, Khaled Turanni, an American-Palestinian activist, said that, unless Biden reverses course, Arab voters and others opposed to Israel's occupation of Palestine

Continued on page 2



Russ Gordon, former Chairman of the city's Human Relations Commission, raised a pride flag on a Jos. Campau flagpole in protest of the city's ban on displaying that flag on city property.

City's pride flag ban being challenged on constitutional grounds

By Charles Sercombe

Two former mayoral appointees have filed a federal lawsuit against the city, the mayor and city council after being fired for raising a pride flag on a city flagpole.

Russ Gordon, former chairman of the Hamtramck Human Relations Commission, and Commission member Catrina Stackpoole say their First Amendment and civil rights were violated, and also allege the mayor and city council's ban on displaying pride flags on city property was driven by religious belief.

Continued on page 3

An election for the history books

By Charles Sercombe

Talk about a topsy-turvy election. Hamtramck's city council election was a shocker.

Only two out of three incumbents won re-election, as a newcomer edged out Councilmember Nayeem Choudhury.

Both councilmembers Mohammed Hassan and Mohammed Alsomiri won re-election. Muhtasin Sadman, 24, a political newcomer who has never served on any city board or commission, is the city's newest councilmember.

Hassan managed to overcome a slight setback from the August Primary election, where he came in fourth place out of six final finishers, to climb to top vote-getter.

In second place was fellow incumbent Mohammed Alsomiri. In third was Sadman, followed by Lynn Blasey, then Choudhury and then in last place, Nasr Hussain.

Choudhury's defeat is surprising, considering that he finished as the top vote-getter in the August Primary Election.

The election of the top-three winners will keep the city council all-male and all-Muslim.

To likely no one's surprise, voters said a big N-O, by 70 percent, to the Hamtramck Public School District's second attempt to get a minor tax millage renewed. That proposal also was turned down in the August Primary Election.

Voters were in a rejecting mood at Tuesday's General Election as they also defeated three proposed city charter revisions, one of which would have given the mayor and councilmembers a pay raise totaling over \$60,000 a year.

Voter turnout was low, attracting only about 3,500 voters out of almost 15,000 registered in the city – or, in other words, just

Continued on page 4



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Marching through the streets, protestors called for a ceasefire

Continued from front page

will “swing Michigan,” and that “We have options.” It isn’t clear what exactly those options are, politically.

Turanni also said that the federal aid package that Congress approved, \$14 billion to Israel, is coming out of taxpayers’ wallets.

“They’re stealing your tax dollars,” Turanni said.

At city hall, co-organizer of the rally, City Councilmember Khalil Refai, said that those who showed up are a “blessing,” and that Hamtramck being a majority-Muslim city with an all-Muslim city council and mayor is also a “blessing.”

Mayor Ghalib echoed what others were calling out for: “We want an immediate ceasefire.”

Ghalib went on to say how he would react if his family came under attack.

“I was raised as a quiet kid who doesn’t like to yell and scream,” Ghalib said. “But if someone came to my house and tried to evacuate my family from the house, and take my land, I would respond screaming and yelling.”

He continued: “If you start killing my children in front of my eyes, then I will use every means available for me to resist. I don’t care what names you would call me.

“If you classify a person as a terrorist, other people in different parts of the world consider him as

a freedom fighter. So not everyone agrees with our government. ...”

The U.S. government classifies Hamas as a terrorist organization.

People identifying themselves as Hamas leaders have recently said on Arabic media outlets that they will not cease hostilities until Israel is annihilated.

Ghalib said that Biden and Netanyahu “are leading a campaign of lies and deception” – especially in their remarks that Hamas beheaded babies and raped women “but... couldn’t show any evidence.”

Those initial reports have come under question as to their reliability.

Asked earlier on the day of the rally about his comment on Hamas’s role in the war with Israel, Ghalib told The Review:

“The root cause of all the problems there is the occupation. This conflict will continue for generations to come and this war is only making it more difficult to solve.

“A terrorist for someone here is called a freedom fighter for someone else in different part of the world. Not everyone shares the

same view that our government believes in.

“I do believe, like millions of people around the world, that as long as there is no justice, there would be no peace in that part of the world. The power of the truth would outlive the military power.”

The Jewish organization Anti-Defamation League (ADL) took exception to Ghalib’s response to the actions of Hamas.

(According to its website, the ADL mission is “to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all.”)

“The fact that when asked about Hamas, Mayor Ghalib did not distinguish the difference between Hamas – a terrorist organi-

zation – and innocent Palestinians, who are suffering at the hands of Hamas, tells the real story,” said Carolyn Normandin, Regional Director of ADL.

“On Oct. 7, Hamas terrorists breached the Gaza security fence, entered Israel, and massacred more than 1,400 people – raping, burning, mutilating, and torturing their victims, including infants, children, pregnant women, the elderly, and disabled people.

“They also took more than 220 hostages back to Gaza. Anything that glorifies or justifies the barbarism of Oct. 7 cannot be seen as a righteous or thoughtful way of advancing a solution for the Palestinians or for Jews in the State of Israel.”



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This week at the Library . . .

November 10, 2023

Veteran's Day: November 11th was formerly known as the Armistice Day and was celebrated with parades and military memorial ceremonies.

Big Library Read: This year's feature is Olivia Stephens' graphic novel for middle graders, "Artie and the Wolf Moon." When your parents tell you to stay in at night, could it be because they do not want you to discover their secret werewolf identities? Get access to a digital version of this title at www.biglibraryread.com and join the online book discussion when it goes live on November 2 to 16th.

Chess Club: Something new just for you. Games held on this Thursdays at 3:30 pm right here in the library. Open to newbies, experienced pros, and all those in between.

Story Time: Get you kids together and drop in on our Wednesday afternoon Story Time at 12 noon. Presented by guest readers from Hamtramck Federation of Teachers.

Game Night: Join us for Game Night at the library. We are serving up something fun each Friday at 4 pm. Stop by and let us know that you have come to play. Everyone is invited.

Exercise Classes: The Tai Chi classes are held on Fridays at 10 am and adoptive yoga classes are held on Tuesdays at 2:30 pm. As always, these group workout sessions are presented by the RIM Foundation and are open to the public. Comfortable clothes recommended, Space is limited.

Margaret Mitchell: This author was born on November 8, 1900 in Atlanta, Georgia. Her romantic novel "Gone with the Wind", about the American Civil War sold over 10 million copies and was translated into 30 languages. It was also made into one of the most popular movies of all time. She won a Pulitzer Prize in 1937 for that novel, her only book. She died after being struck by an automobile in Atlanta.

The Great Blackout: On November 9, 1965 all lights in the Northeast went out as a tripped circuit breaker at the power plant on the Niagara River caused a chain reaction sending power surges knocking out interconnected power companies down the East Coast. The blackout affected over 30 million persons, one-sixth of the entire U.S. population. Electricity also failed in Ontario and Quebec.

Nellie Bly: This newspaper reporter set out from New York to beat the record of Jules Verne's imaginary hero Phileas Fogg, who traveled around the world in 80 days.. Bly (pen name for Elizabeth Cochrane) returned 72 days later to a tumultuous welcome in New York.

John Peter Zenger: This New York Weekly Journal Publisher was arrested on November 17, 1734 and charged with libeling the colonial governor of New York. In his trial truth was successfully used as a defense, a first step toward freedom of the press.

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Review: Opinion Page

Other Voices: Guest Editorial

Your history is Hamtramck's history

By Greg Kowalski

Going through a box of material donated to the museum recently, I came upon a diary of high school girl from the mid-1930s. It wasn't intensely personal; it was more like a calendar of daily activities she was involved in. But it was pretty impressive. Her days were filled with school events and after-school things that occupied her time. She was one busy girl. I can justify this belated eavesdropping by noting that this was an informative and valuable portal to the past. It gives us, today, a detailed view of an aspect of both her life and the community in which she lived. Aside from a refreshing lack of any mention of Facebook or social media

of any sort (or even TV), it painted a picture of her daily life nearly a century ago. At the time she wrote it, she probably never imagined that this would become an important historical document, but it did. That is why the Hamtramck Historical Museum keeps urging people of any age to write down the stories of their lives. It may not seem meaningful at the time to do so, but it is important. In fact, it is more important than ever. As you can read in the article above, The Hamtramck Explorer website has been launched. This cooperative project – being done by Wayne State University, Michigan Technological University and the Hamtramck Historical Museum – has seen created an interactive map of

this city. The goal is to gather, and then present, every bit of information there is to know about sites in Hamtramck. In the process, we will build an incredible historical picture of the city. You can help. We want to include personal stories linked to the map. This is vital, because a city really isn't made of buildings - it is made up of people. The structures are essential, but at the same time incidental. It's the people who are the soul of a city. Write down your memories of Hamtramck, even if they stretch no farther back in time than yesterday. Send them to the museum, either by email - hamtramckhistory@gmail.com – or by regular mail to **Continued on page 4**

City's pride flag ban being challenged on constitutional grounds

Cont. from front page

The two are seeking to get their appointments re-instated as well as financial re-imbursement for their legal fees, and other compensatory costs. The lawsuit is 22 pages long, and includes about 200 pages of supporting documents, including public comments made at the city council meeting where the ban was voted on and passed. Gordon told The Review that he has a couple of reasons for filing the lawsuit. “I’m pissed,” he said succinctly. For the past several years Gordon has spearheaded donation drives to pay for the international flags that used to be flown on the 18 flagpoles on Jos. Campau. That policy changed in July when pride flags were banned by the mayor and city council a few months ago amid an outcry from some in the community, mostly from those of the Muslim faith, who objected to the pride flag because it represented, to them, immoral sexual conduct. The city now only allows the American, state, city and POW flags to be displayed on city property. At the time, the council said it took that action to remain “neutral” about the pride flag, and other flags some consider controversial. Council's ban is only a resolution, not an ordinance or law. State Attorney General Dana Nessel criticized the mayor and council for contending their ban is an act of neutrality. At a rally, held several months ago in front of city hall in protest to the ban, Nessel said: “Banning the Pride flag is meant to send the very opposite message: a message of intolerance, hatred,

and bigotry. ... As it's said, 'In situations of injustice, neutrality always favors the oppressor, never the oppressed.' And as Martin Luther King Jr. so aptly observed: 'The hottest place in hell is reserved for those who remain neutral in times of great moral conflict. Anyone who accepts evil, without protesting against it, is one who cooperates with it.' Nessel added: “And make no mistake: homophobia, transphobia, are indeed forms of evil just as much as Islamophobia is.” After the ban was passed, Gordon and Stackpoole raised a pride flag on Jos. Campau as an act of protest against the ban. Asked to elaborate on his lawsuit, Gordon said “I just want the flags back up. It's the right thing to do.” He conceded it's possible the lawsuit “will go nowhere, but we have a pretty strong case.” Stackpoole, who identifies as being a member of the LGBTQ community, said “I am a strong believer in separation of church and state. The resolution banning the pride flag was passed based on their religious views. “I did not break the law – they did, by passing an unconstitutional resolution. All residents of Hamtramck should feel represented and welcome. Raise ALL the flags! “I hope to get the pride flag back up on Jos. Campau. I want back on the Human Relations Communications, with an apology.” City Manager Max Garbarino declined to comment. Mayor Ghalib said he is not surprised a lawsuit was filed. “This was expected. Another unnecessary distraction by the former power

structure that doesn't like to see the city moving forward. Good things are happening for the first time in decades, such as budget surplus and infrastructure repair,” Ghalib said. “This exposes the former egregious leadership failure, therefore they want to constantly create obstacles on our way.” He also added: “As commissioners, they broke their oath and they were in defiance of the city's rules and regulations, therefore they should be held accountable for two things: first, taking decisions without having meetings or quorum for the human relations commission. “Second, for putting the flag up on city flag pole after disallowing that by passing resolution 2023-82 by the city council.” (You can read Ghalib's entire response to the lawsuit on page 6.) Digging into the lawsuit, here are some highlights: It was pointed out that, at one time, the city gave its permission to allow a pride flag be flown on a city-owned flagpole. Gordon, as chairman of the Human Relations Commission, contends that he was given sole discretion in choosing what flags to fly. According to the lawsuit: “In the course of the meeting, several individuals who supported the Resolution indicated that they supported it based on religious grounds, two of whom spoke in Arabic, and were translated by Mayor Ghalib. “Several commenters indicated that they opposed the resolution based on its stemming from religious convictions.” “After the public opinion segment of the meeting **Continued on page 6**

Odds & Ends

Condolences... A number of people here in town are still reeling from the news that Richard “Rocky” Radtke died on Tuesday. He was 62 years old, and was long a fixture in Hamtramck’s social scene. He owned Baker’s Street Car Bar on Jos. Campau for many years. Radtke had been serving in the city code enforcement department, and was the department’s Code Supervisor. On social media, there was an outpouring of kind comments about his passing. The city’s Assistant Assessor, Konrad Maziarz, had this to say: “I will miss our conversations at City Hall, and your infectious warm personality that lit up a room. You were always someone willing to listen to any of my (our) issues here and someone I loved talking to. “Your laugh will be missed in this building, zoom meetings and throughout the city. ... “RIP Rocky, you will be severely missed by all those that knew you.” You can read about his funeral service information and obituary on page 5.

Celebrity spotting... Polonia restaurant, which is owned by the publisher of this paper, hosted a visit by famed chef Keith Famie, who has added an additional career, that of a documentary filmmaker – and an award-winning one at that. Keith was in town last Friday to interview folks about St. Florian Church – and maybe even expanding into something more. Hamtramck does have that spell on people. We reminded Keith of his last filming visit to Hamtramck, oh, about 18-or-so years ago, when he was doing a documentary on the Polish community in the metro area. He hosted a press get-together at a Thai restaurant on Jos. Campau that is now, unfortunately, long gone. That's when he offered a drink from a gallon

jug of Vietnamese homemade liquor – he had just come back from doing a documentary there – made with (brace yourself) venomous snakes (dead obviously) coiled up in the bottom of the jug. This brave and intrepid reporter (ahem) was offered a sip, and in doing his journalistic duty, obliged. Long story made short, I (Charles Sercombe) didn’t die. Upshot: it tasted like Jack Daniels whiskey. When reminded of that, Famie volunteered that he still has that jug, still filled with the snake liquor and dead snakes (from which, by the way, the snake venom has been removed before the making of it. Or, so we think). Asked if he still samples some, he said: “No way, it's gross.” Oh, really? **What does it mean?...** You have probably heard the chant that appears at many pro-Palestine rallies that goes like this: “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.” So what does this mean exactly? There is no clear consensus, and it appears to have a double meaning – depending, of course, on who you ask. The American Jewish Committee, a global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, says it's a call “for the establishment of a State of Palestine from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, erasing the State of Israel and its people.” According to the 2017 constitution of Hamas, it means: “Hamas rejects any alternative to the full and complete liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea.”

On Oct. 7, Hamas fighters killed about 1,400 Israelis in a brutal raid that has now sparked a ground invasion into Gaza by the Israeli military. Now, over the past few weeks, it's been reported that 10,000 Palestinians have been killed. Others say the slogan has nothing to do with annihilating Israel, and that those insisting on that meaning are “Islamophobes.” The Palestinian-American writer Yousef Munayyer said, in 2021, that the saying simply means: “Palestinians can live in their homeland as free and equal citizens, neither dominated by others, nor dominating them.” **Photo exhibit...** One of our favorite photographers, Suraj Bhamra, who had a column in our pages, has a new exhibit of his photos. There's an opening reception on Nov. 17, from 5 - 8 p.m., at the A. Alfred Taubman Center for Design Education, 460 West Baltimore in Detroit. The exhibit is called “A Figure Creeping up the Embankment Exhibition.” Here's what the gallery has to say about his latest work: “Photographer Suraj Bhamra reflects on a decade of photographs made in Hamtramck, Michigan. These photographs serve not only as a document tied to an epoch in time, colorized by a national miasma that leaves us wondering who we are and what will become of us, but also as a diary that allows Bhamra to narrate his personal life in the form of vignettes existing in a larger body of work.” Can't wait to see the works on the wall!



Documentary filmmaker Keith Famie (left) recently visited Polonia Restaurant while in the process of making a new documentary on St. Florian Church. That's Polonia owner John Ulaj posing with Famie.

The Hamtramck Review

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An election for the history books

Continued from front page

about 23-percent of the voters turned out.

There was only one female candidate, Lynn Blasey (who was also the only LGBTQ candidate), and she came in fourth place.

A number of her supporters urged others to plunk for Blasey, which means to vote for just one person, but that strategy still failed.

Blasey previously ran for council unsuccessfully. She took her defeat in stride.

"I ran as an exploration of a different way that I could serve the community, and I will continue to serve Hamtramckans in meaningful ways.," Blasey told The Review.

Here is the breakdown of how the votes went:

Mohammed Hassan – 1,618 (21.91%)
Mohammed Alsomiri – 1,309 (17.73%)
Muhtasin Sadman – 1,238 (16.76%)
Lynn Blasey – 1,156 (15.65%)
Nayeem Choudhury – 1,118 (15.14 %)
Nasr Hussain – 887 (12.01%)

Hussain was one of the most outspoken candidates in this election.

He waged an aggressive social media campaign, promising to seek an end to the city income tax, stop what he called "selective" code enforcement, end the use of the new parking meters in the business district, and change the route of the bike lane on Jos. Campau in the southend, among other issues.

He further urged voters to reject the school millage renewal, and said that he would work against any other proposed tax increases.

Hussain also drew fire for making comments about Jews being persecuted back during the Holocaust for the actions being taken today by modern Israelis in Gaza. He is an appointee of Mayor Amer Ghalib, who said he would not remove Hussain from the Plan Commission, despite having removed other appointees with whom he disagreed.

At this point, it is unknown what the school district will do now that voters have twice rejected its millage renewal, which would have raised about \$750,000 a year for the next 10 years.

That money was strictly earmarked for the upkeep and maintenance of school buildings. The district did not organize a campaign committee to push for the millage.

The district distributed a brochure pointing out what the tax money had been used for in the last 10 years and what it would be used in the future, but that brochure was only distributed among students instead of being mailed out to each house in the city, according to sources.

Hamtramck Public School District Superintendent Jaleelah Ahmed did not respond to The Review for comment on the millage defeat, nor has she responded to other prior requests for comment.

As for the three charter revision proposals, it's unknown if the city council will try again in a future election.

Tuesday's weather initially made for a pleasant day for voters, with some sun and warmish temperatures in the 50s in the morning, but then things grew notably colder by the day's end.

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School Bell

Israel's retaliatory military action in Gaza. The Israeli military action was prompted by the Oct. 7 attack on the Israelis by Hamas.

On that date, Hamas, which is considered a terrorist organization by the U.S. government, invaded Israel and killed 1,400 people, additionally taking over 200 hostages, some of which are Americans.

According to some sources, it is estimated upward of 10,000 Palestinians have since been killed in the Israeli military response.

Your history is Hamtramck's history

Continued from page 3

9525 Jos. Campau, Hamtramck, MI 48212.

We did this to a degree last year, as the city celebrated its 100th anniversary. But now this project takes on greater significance with The Hamtramck Explorer. With it, your memories will become part of the preserved history of Hamtramck.

By doing that, you will leave a legacy for future generations of Hamtramckans. The young lady who wrote that diary surely never imagined she was doing that. But you can take pride in knowing that you are preserving Hamtramck's history – as well as our own.

(Mr. Kowalski is the Executive Director of the Hamtramck Historical Museum.)



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Obituaries

CIUBA



Thomas Ciuba, 73, died October 31, 2023.

Thomas was the husband of the dear Patricia (nee Czarnik); brother of Sylvia (Larry) Nowakowski and Cynthia (Roman) Welyczkowsky and the late Arlene Wolf and John Jr. Tom is also survived by his niece Lori (Cass), Donna (Donald), and Robbie.

Tom served in the United States Navy during the Vietnam War and then worked and retired from the City of Hamtramck, working various positions. A Memorial Mass was held November 9, 2023, at St. Ladislaus Catholic Church, Hamtramck MI. Inurnment followed Mass at Great Lakes National Cemetery, Holly MI.

RADTKE



Richard "Rocky" Radtke, 62, died November 7, 2023. Richard was the son of the late Maria and Bo; brother and best friend of Mark (Jean); uncle of Joshua.

Rocky was a dear friend to many. He was the former owner of Baker's Streetcar Bar which was renowned for the Alley Cow Grill. He was also a paramedic and most recently worked for the City of Hamtramck. He had a love of entertaining and cooking and would watch cooking shows for new ideas. He also enjoyed singing a tune or three or four when drinks were rolling at the bar.

Rocky's stature was big, and you could hear his

laugh a mile away, but his huge heart dwarfed his appearance and made you love him even more.

Rocky's Christmas Party at Bakers always raised money and donations for the Michigan Anti Cruelty Society. In lieu of flowers, please make donations in Rocky's name to them at <https://macsshelter.org/donate/>

Visitation is Friday, November 17, 2023, from 1 – 9 p.m. Prayers TBD at Jurkiewicz & Wilk Funeral Home, 2396 Caniff, Hamtramck MI 48212. He will lie in state Saturday, November 18, 2023, at 9:30 a.m. until the time of the funeral Mass at 10 a.m. at St. Florian Catholic Church, 2626 Poland, Hamtramck MI 48212.

Entombment will be at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Detroit MI.

LETKOWSKI



Richard "Gus" Letkowski, 82, died November 6, 2023.

Richard was the brother of Judith (the late Tom) Nowakowski and Michael (Regina). Gus is also survived by a niece and nephew; by his dear friends Pat Frick, Mike Spavale, and Mike Myroniuk.

Visitation is Thursday, November 9, 2023, from

Coming Events

SATURDAY, Nov. 11, 2-4 p.m. – Take-out only Soup Kitchen at Holy Cross P.N.C. Church, 2311 Pulaski at Fleming. Everyone is welcome!

SATURDAY, Nov. 18, 3:30-5:30 p.m. – Drive-thru Take-out Polish Dinner at Holy Cross P.N.C. Church, 2311 Pulaski at Fleming. \$13 Adult/\$6 Child 12 & under. Menu: Pork Chop, Kielbasa, Pierogi/sour cream, Sauerkraut, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Desert. Cars will be staged in parking lot for delivery in front of church.

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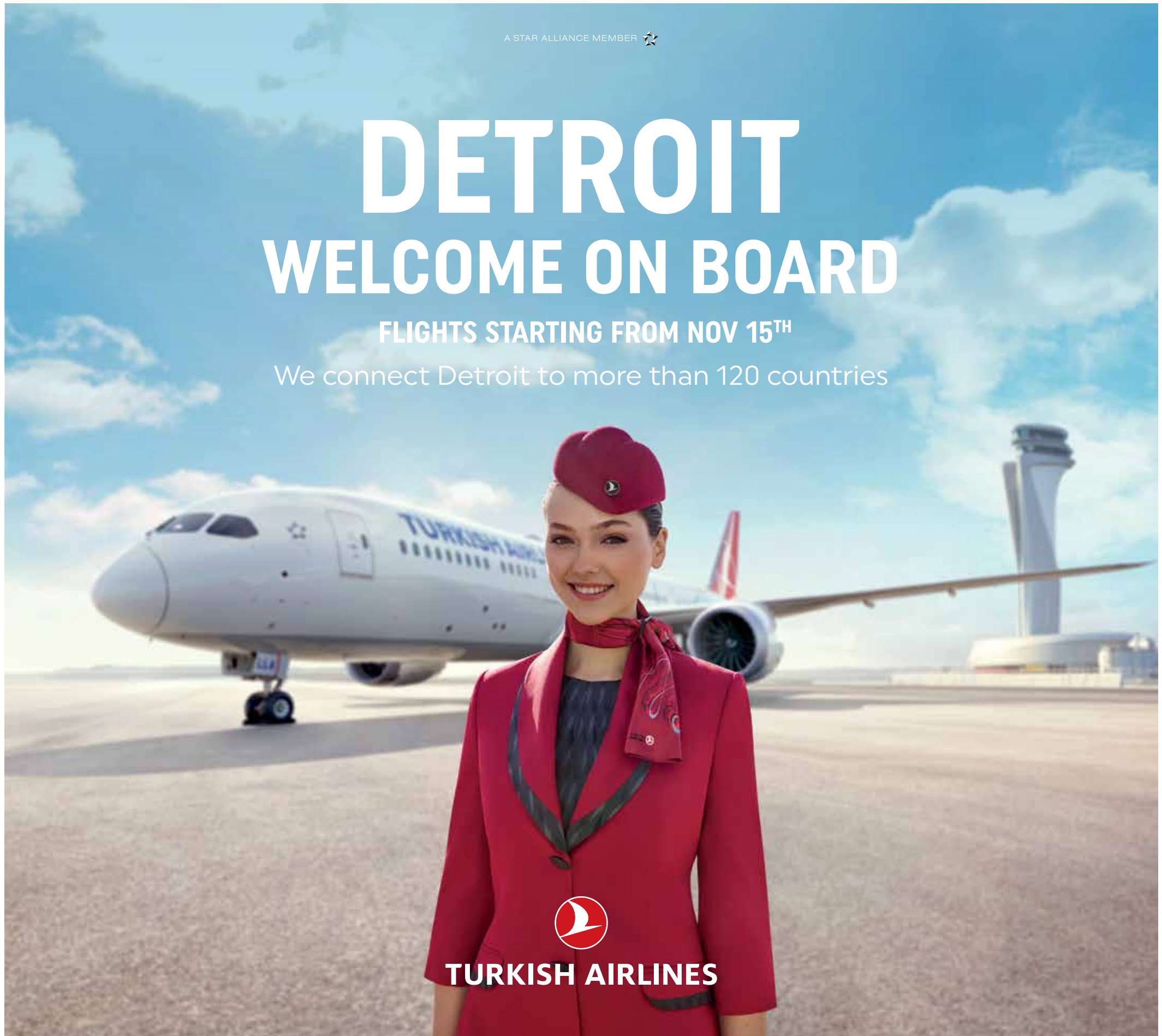
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City’s pride flag ban being challenged on constitutional grounds

Cont. from front page

was concluded, the Councilmembers offered their opinions. The Mayor Pro Temp, Councilman Mohammed Hassan, gave a fervent and impassioned explanation of the meaning of democracy, invoking the famous words from President Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, “Of the people, by the people, for the people.”

“He stated: ‘I am of the people. I am elected by the people, okay? And I am for the people. So, what I’m doing ... what I’m doing because I’m elected, I am of the people and by the people elected, I’m working for the people.’

“In that case, since 77%

of the Hamtramck residents who offered their opinions during the public statement segment of the meeting opposed the Resolution, he should have voted to reject the Resolution. He did not.”

Councilmember Nayeem Choudhury dialed into the religious aspect, saying, at a council meeting, according to the lawsuit:

“But here’s the thing, folks. You guys are welcome to the community. You guys welcome to walk to the restaurants, walk to the grocery store. Why do we have to have a flag flown in the city property to be represented? You’re

already represented. We already know who you are, and we don’t have any hate or any discrimination against that. We get along very well.”

“By making this bigotry, making this scene, it’s making like you wanted to hate us. It’s you versus others. It’s not that. It’s everyone included. ... But the community as a whole has this respect that we are raising family. We’re doing our best to support the community.”

“Therefore, you are not unwelcome. You are welcome here. But we have to respect the religions. We have to respect the people around here. Schools, mosques, churches. I won’t take any longer than this. It’s been a long night. But I welcome every one of you.”

Also according to the lawsuit: “Hamtramck’s Resolution 2023-82 is not content neutral, because it permits the display of the Prisoner Of War flag and nations’ flags which represent the international character of the City, but prohibits displaying all other flags which convey a different message. The Resolution therefore violates the Freedom of Speech provision of the First Amendment and is unconstitutional.”

“The Establishment Clause of the First Amendment prohibits any governmental entity from enacting any statute, ordinance, resolution or policy in order to accommodate the religious beliefs of its citizenry.”

“The statement in Resolution 2023-99 that by raising the Pride flag on the flag pole on Joseph Campau Ave. Stackpoole did not maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law is false, defamatory, and constitutes libel per se under Michigan law.

“By opposing the unconstitutional Resolution, Stackpoole was maintaining the respect and dignity of the Michigan Constitution, and of the rule of law. It was the Councilmen who voted in favor of the unconstitutional Resolution who failed to maintain the respect and dignity of the rule of law.”

On social media there was the usual back and forth between opposing sides.

Former City Councilmember Phillip Kwik said, on the Facebook Page Hamtramck Square, that he hopes “They (Gordon and Stackpoole) sue Hamtramck out of existence. Long past time the city should be part of Detroit.

Nasr Hussain, who lost his bid on Tuesday to be elected to city council, said this lawsuit is basically sour grapes.

“Guess Cathy Stackpoole and Russ Gordon don’t like ... the fact that the city is thriving. They are an example of the people who kept Hamtramck near bankruptcy for decades,” he said.

Mayor Ghalib responds to pride flag lawsuit

The Review reached out to Mayor Amer Ghalib regarding a lawsuit filed in federal court challenging the city’s pride flag ban and the firing of two mayoral appointees.

Here’s his response:

“This was expected. Another unnecessary distraction by the former power structure that doesn’t like to see the city moving forward. Good things are happening for the first time in decades such as budget surplus and infrastructure repair.

“This exposes the former egregious leadership failure, therefore they want to constantly create obstacles on our way. The neutrality resolution is legal and constitutional. The city doesn’t discriminate, or give any preferential treatment to any group.

“The taxpayer government buildings or spaces belong to everyone and cannot be used by specific group to promote special interest group’s agenda. The city isn’t being selective on which flag it can fly, like it was the case with Shurtleff v. Boston, in which the Supreme Court ruled against the city’s selective enforcement.

“This is different, the city decided to keep government properties neutral and no group would be allowed to fly any kind of flags other than what’s specified in the resolution.

“They mentioned on the lawsuit details, that in 2021, the art and culture commission took permission from the city council to fly the flag in front of city hall, but in 2022, after the leadership was changed, one person decided to move on with the decision ignoring the city council and the new Mayor.

“What was changed for them to change the whole process and not to get that same permission and let the council vote on it like they did in 2021!

“The fact that the dysfunctional human relations commission used to do things the wrong way during the former leadership, doesn’t mean that they could continue to do it without having a quorum or even a meeting! Not under my leadership.

“By just saying, that is the way they used to do it during the former administration, isn’t a valid argument. One person cannot undermine the power of the mayor and council.

“As commissioners, they broke their oath and they were in defiance of the city’s rules and regulations, therefore they should be held accountable for two things: first, taking decisions without having meetings or quorum for the human relations commission.

“Second, for putting the flag up on city flag pole after disallowing that by passing resolution 82 by the city council.”

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