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Quick Hits

The little library movement is on the march.

Last year a couple of the mini libraries sprung up in town, and now there are two more.

One is located at the Holbrook Garden Park on Alice and another is in Zussman Park, across from city hall.

The enclosed boxes contain books for anyone to take and read. You can also donate a book to the cause as well.

It's a way to encourage youngsters and folks of all ages to read more – and we don't mean reading social media from our phones.

The library units were provided by Eagle Scout candidate Will Townsend from Royal Oak.

Mayor Majewski welcomed the additions: "We are grateful for this gift to the city. We want our parks to be family-friendly places and the Little Free Library will be a great addition to the neighborhood parks."

— **HAMTRAMCK'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD** —

New assessments spur protests from housing plaintiffs

By Charles Sercombe

Over 40 years ago hundreds of African-American residents accused Hamtramck officials of targeting their neighborhoods for demolition in order to kick them out of the city.

That demolition of some neighborhoods in the 1960s was done in the name of urban renewal.

African-American residents said it was more about "negro removal."

The residents filed a class action lawsuit, and they eventually agreed to a settlement with the city.

Flash forward to today and that case is nearly completed. The last three houses out of 200 built

Homeowners who are part of a housing discrimination lawsuit protest outside city hall over recent city assessment increases. Some say their assessments doubled and tripled within the last two years.

will soon be finished.

But now, a number of descendants of the plaintiffs who purchased a

house from the settlement agreement are once again accusing the city of singling them out.

For the past two city council meetings, about 30 of the homeowners

Continued on page 2

Repaving to start in southend

By Charles Sercombe

This summer's southend construction will be coming to an end this week.

According to the city's engineering consultant, the sewer replacement project is almost completed, and on Monday the repaving of Jos. Campau – starting at Goodson to Denton – will begin.

There is still one section of the pipe that needs to be placed, but that won't interrupt the start of repaving.

That's good news for the dozen or so businesses that have had to endure a closed off Campau for the past few months. For some that has resulted in a staggering loss of income.

But it will be good news for residents. The new, larger-sized sewer pipes will help alleviate basement flooding when heavy rains hit.

The city was forced to take steps to repair the existing sewer system after over a hundred residents filed a lawsuit against the city for repeated basement flooding.

In many cases raw sewage backed up into homes, causing the loss of items.

This is the first of several stages in addressing the problem. The next part will expand replacing new sewer pipes in the southend. But first city officials have to scramble to look for funding to finance that part of the project.

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New assessments spur protests from housing plaintiffs

Cont. from front page

complained that within the last two years the city increased their house assessments by double or triple.

That meant for some of them their property taxes have gone up from \$1,200 a year to over \$2,000. Property taxes are based on house assessments – which is half the value of a house’s market value.

“This just doesn’t seem right,” said Lemuel Sawyer, whose mother was one of the original plaintiffs in the housing case. “It makes us want to fight.”

Many of those protesting the assessment increase insist they are being singled out and once again being set up to get kicked out of the city.

“You are trying to take our houses through trickery,” said Sawyer.

But city officials say there is no trick involved.

City Manager Katrina Powell said the new assessments are part of a citywide re-assessment.

For the first time in almost 50 years the city is undertaking this massive project thanks to a recent grant.

The re-assessment will take at least another year to complete.

But those challenging the new assessments say they have special property tax breaks, and were also promised by HUD officials, who helped plaintiffs with financing the new housing, that their house’s mortgage, insurance and taxes would not ever exceed 30 percent of their yearly income.

The city attorney is researching whether there are special tax breaks. There were several separate housing development deals that went into the building of the 200 new homes.

As for the 30 percent limit promised by HUD, city officials pointed out that that was only meant as a guide for new homeowners on how to budget for the year.

A number of the plaintiffs are on fixed incomes, either through pensions or disability or social security.

That means while property taxes and other expenses increase over the years, their fixed incomes remain stagnant.

There also seems to be a serious misunderstanding on what’s going on with the new assessments.

One plaintiff who lives on Goodson insisted that his assessment doubled in the past year, from \$56,000 to \$128,000. That meant, the man said, an increase in property taxes from \$1,800 a year to \$3,400.

But The Review checked his assessment records and found out that for the past several years he had not been charged a property tax – an unexplained fluke that has been popping up as the new citywide re-assessment continues.

It appears when some of the new housing was being built for the plaintiffs, the city recorded only the value of the basements that were completed and never returned to update the records.

The Goodson man’s assessment was finally recorded in 2016 at \$59,800. It was increased recently to \$62,200.

Another plaintiff told

The Review that her monthly house mortgage has remained at a little less than \$400 a month for the past several years and remains constant. At the end of 15 years, the house will be turned over to her.

She said she came to the council meeting in solidarity with the other plaintiffs who have different financing deals.

City Assessor Jay Singh has encouraged plaintiffs – or anyone else who thinks their new assess-

ment is off base – to get an official appraisal and he will abide by that value.

There have been some plaintiffs who say they have appraisals but so far have declined to reveal the paperwork to back up their claims.

City officials have privately wondered if this challenge will once again lead to a housing lawsuit just as the one filed over 40 years is about to come to a final end.

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DETROIT 1967: DO YOU REMEMBER? – Do you have fond memories of living in the metro Detroit Area? Did you live in Detroit during the 1960s? Would you like to share your story? The Detroit Historical Society is currently embarking on an ambitious project to collect oral or

written histories from our community members who have compelling accounts of the life in or around Detroit before, during, or after the July 1967 civil unrest. No story is too big or too small. Please contact us today.

Cooking Matters for Adults – Free cooking and nutrition classes featuring healthy cooking on a budget, smart shopping ideas, culinary secrets, free cookbook and free groceries. Classes meet 2 hours each week and are 6

weeks long. (Commitment to all classes is mandatory.) If interested please call the Hamtramck Public Library at (313) 365-7050.

Michigan Activity Pass – The pass will enable Library card holders to obtain a one-time free entry into any Michigan State park or recreation area, and free entry into over 100 participating cultural institutions. Ask at the circulation desk for more details.

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.

Second Front Page

Police investigate house fire as a case of arson

By Charles Sercombe
A house fire on Sobieski last Sunday may have been started by three teens, police officials say. Officials say they can't release details about the matter but did confirm that three juveniles were arrested for arson and charges may be pending. Sources told The Review that the teens were playing with fireworks. Interim Fire Chief Danny Hagen said there has been no determination yet on what started the fire. He said that a Detroit fire crew that was driving through the city noticed the fire first and immediately went to the scene. Hamtramck has a mutual aid agreement with Detroit.



Last Sunday a fire destroyed a house on Sobieski. Three teens were arrested in connection with the fire for arson.

Hagen said when firefighters arrived the fire was already through the roof. "At that point it became a defensive fire," he said. That meant firefighters couldn't go inside the dwelling to knock down the flames. The two-family house had been abandoned for a few years and had experienced previous fires. A house next door was affected by the intense heat but was not severely damaged. There were no injuries.

Learn how to keep the city clean and have fun

By Charles Sercombe
From now on all Hamtramck parks will be "litter-free zones." The city is attempting to crackdown on the problem with a special kick-off next Thursday (Aug. 18) at Veterans Memorial Park. The public is invited to attend and learn about how to keep the city litter free, as well as participate in fun activities and competitions. There will also be free food and prizes. The event runs from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. About 150 kids are expected to show up at the park. Kathy Angerer, the Director of Community & Eco-

nomics Development, said what spurred the campaign to cut down on litter was seeing park clean-ups sabotaged within 24 hours by thoughtless litterers. "We're just saying it's our park, and we want to keep it clean," she said. City Councilmember

Anam Miah suggested taking the issue one step further by declaring the entire city litter-free. He added one way to reduce litter is to start issuing tickets. "Trust me, it'll be in everyone's ears within hours," he said.



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Aug. 29 - Mass for People from prayer list, 7 p.m.
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Sept. 10 - Polish Dinner 4-7 p.m.
Oct. 8 - Soup Kitchen, 2-4 p.m.
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Change of date for Sept. soup kitchen*
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German muralist paints a picture of cultural diversity

By Charles Sercombe

Hamtramck continues to be a magnet for mural artists.

A few years ago a spray paint company brought in national and international

graffiti artists to create murals at several locations in the city.

The latest to join in the street art movement is Gerrit Fischer of Hamburg, Germany.

He recently created two murals on the Conant viaduct and another one at the Jos. Campau viaduct.

On the west side of Conant the mural empha-

sizes the city's cultural diversity, showing a depiction of an Eastern European child, an Arabic woman, an African-American man and an Arabic male.

Also painted on that side is a message of unity.

"Laughing knows no nation. Tears know no border. Culture is different. But the heart is the same place."

Fischer goes by the moniker "Brozilla" and spent two weeks here at Popp's Packing as an artist in residence.

He bought his paint supplies locally at Mostek.

He told The Review that he had seen the previous murals in the city back in Germany and that inspired him to visit.

"It looked so exciting," he said.

Fischer was further inspired by the mix of ethnicities living in the city –

which is something that surprises many visitors from nearby and far away.

With that in mind, Fischer said it was easy to come up with a theme.

"I wanted to show the city's diversity," he said.

While painting the Conant murals, he said, drivers would honk at him in approval and also yell out.

"I was really happy about that," Fischer said.

Kathy Angerer, the city's Director of Community & Government Affairs Department, helped pave the way for Fischer to paint on the walls of the viaduct.

You can see more of Fischer's work on his website, www.brozilla.org.



Artist Gerrit Fischer travelled from Germany to Hamtramck to paint murals on the Conant viaduct. He was inspired by the city's ethnic diversity, and his murals reflect the many faces you can see in town.

The Hamtramck Review is a proud sponsor of the 2016 Bangladesh Festival

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On the Conant Ave (Bangladesh Ave), Hamtramck, MI

Review: Opinion Page

In Our Opinion

Hamtramck is enjoying a resurgence, but a major fight continues

Recently there was a report in a local major media outlet about Hamtramck's economic resurgence.

Crain's Detroit Business reported on the growing number of businesses opening here and others planning to do so in the near future. The reporter also noted that a number of people being chased out of mid-town Detroit and other affluent areas are finding Hamtramck rents to be a bargain.

All of that is true, and it's been our ongoing pleasure to report these happenings throughout the year.

Yes, Hamtramck is increasingly becoming a destination. Finding a rental dwelling in the city has become nearly impossible in recent months.

But if Hamtramck wants to continue this trend, it has to step up its game as well.

We still see plenty of filthy streets and lots, and weeds growing out of control on major streets like Jos. Campau, Caniff and Conant.

What is going on?

Unfortunately, while we pose that question we know the answer all too well: There has been inertia on this subject for years, decades in fact. The city can't seem to get its act together to keep our streets clean.

City finances have taken up most of the focus of city officials. There is a constant battle to keep the city out of deficit spending – we get that.

But at the same time there has never been a cohesive plan on battling blight. You can't expect developers to take this city seriously if we can't get some of the basics done, such as litter control and weeds getting removed from our main streets.

Even some of the planters on Jos. Campau have become weedy.

Where is the pride in our city?

We don't know what it will take to get this issue controlled once and for all, but it's something we can no longer to continue to ignore.

Having said that, the city is indeed taking a first step in engaging the community.

Come to Veterans Park next Thursday, Aug. 18, to learn about how to combat litter and blight. It's going to be a fun family-oriented affair with free food and prizes. It starts at 10 a.m. and goes until 1 p.m.

Stop by and become part of the solution.



Continued from front page

properties that include two houses, two garages and a fantastical outsider art installation created by the late Dmytro Szylak over a near-30-year span will end at midnight Aug. 21. Yep, that's next week-end.

As I begin writing this column the Save Hamtramck Disneyland campaign, launched by the Hatch Art collective, had raised just over \$18,300. That's well shy of the \$50,000 goal, which, if reached, would be matched by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA). That's a nice round figure of \$100,000 that can be used for some serious structural improvements and to establish an international residency program for visiting artists.

The Review went to press just as a fundraising dinner was getting started at the Hamtramck Historical Museum. The event featured a conversation between Mayor Karen Majewski and yours truly, focusing on our 25-year history with Disneyland and Dmytro.

If you missed it, there are several other opportunities over the next eight days to donate to the campaign.

At Royal Kabob (3236 Caniff) all day today, Friday, Aug. 12, the restaurant will donate 10 percent of its revenues to the Disneyland cause. So go get some grilled chicken or a falafel sandwich and pitch in to the campaign as you enjoy your food. The restaurant opens at 10 a.m. and closes at 11 p.m.

At Cafe 1923, 2287 Holbrook, Hatch Art's Chris Schneider has a show called "This is a Happy Place: Hamtramck Disneyland in Photographs" up now through Aug. 31. The photos are for sale, with proceeds going to the Save Hamtramck Disneyland campaign.

Next Thursday at Small's (10339 Conant) bands James Linck, Go Tiger Go and Rayning will

rock hard for Disneyland. Doors are 8 p.m., with pay-what-you-can up to 9 p.m. and a \$10 suggested donation beginning at 9 p.m.

A closing party, "Countdown to Midnight," will be at Trixie's (2656 Carpenter) on Aug. 20. The event will feature special guest DJs curated by Nothing Elegant, outdoor games, food and drinks. Donations to Save Hamtramck Disneyland will be accepted until midnight.

OK, donors, the time is now to throw some money into the hat. Let's all get behind this one-of-a-kind community art treasure. Spread the word: the countdown is on.

To donate online, go here: https://www.patronicity.com/project/save_hamtramck_disneyland

Donations can also be mailed to: Hatch Art, 3456 Evaline St., Hamtramck, MI 48212

City Life is a column about walkable discovery, participation and experience in Hamtramck. Illustration of Hamtramck Disneyland by Emily Wood.



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Obituaries

OCHOCINSKI



Zbigniew Ochocinski, 67, died August 9, 2016.

Mr. Ochocinski was the beloved husband of Zdzislawa; father of Zenon, Sylvia, Asia. Mr Ochocinski is also survived by seven grandchildren; brothers, Miroslaw, Janusz; sister, Renata.

Visitation was Thursday at Jurkiewicz & Wilk Funeral Home. Mr. Ochocinski will lie in state Friday, August 12, 9:30 a.m. until the time of the Funeral Mass at 10 a.m. at St. Florian Catholic Church in Hamtramck. There will be a private cremation with interment at Mt. Olivet Cemetery.

The Hamtramck Review

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Teacher realizes her dream with opening of child care center

By Mike Murphy

For the owner and operator of a new child care center just outside of Hamtramck, education combined with early child care makes good sense.

So when the former middle and high school English teacher encountered a chance to expend her talents as an educator on a younger set of students, she jumped at it.

“I was teaching in Michigan, and the opportunity kind of presented itself,” said Al Wali Child Care Center owner and operator Sameerah Saadiq. “I thought early education would be helpful to address the national problem of illiteracy.”

The center and school, which became fully-licensed this past March, is capable of taking on 46 children from infant-age to 12-years-old. So far, 20 have enrolled, mostly infants and toddlers.

There are five licensed teachers at the school, but Saadiq performs much of the day-to-day work at the center, which is licensed to operate from 6 a.m. to 11:59 p.m. Monday through Friday.

She describes herself as the Center’s janitor and cook, but her work includes picking up food for breakfasts and lunches, supporting and assisting teachers, administrative tasks, marketing, and advertising.

Her work also included a constant flow of gentle conversation with the kids as she answered this interviewer’s questions.

“It’s rest time now, so it’s pretty quiet,” Saadiq said. “It all can get pretty daunting.”

A typical day at Al Wali begins with breakfast and a talk with the children about how they spent their previous nights at home. That leads to individual academic instruction, which is followed by a half-hour of time playing outside, a large-group gathering inside, and lunch.

Academic learning takes place mostly in the morning and after 3 p.m. In between, there is plenty of time for kids to play before parents come to pick them up at about 5 p.m.

Besides teaching and allowing the kids plenty of playtime, Saadiq sees other potential activities for the children.

“We’re next door to a dance studio with a ballet instructor,” Saadiq said. “I would like to have her come in for ballet instruction and to show the kids yoga moves.”

The end of the day is for reflection time, which means that the kids choose something to color and to take home to their parents.

It’s a long day for Saadiq, who opens and closes shop, but she also sees it as both fun and a serious mission for herself as an educator.

“It’s exciting to take care of the children, and with academic instruction taking place earlier, maybe they’ll do better when they get to the standardized tests,” Saadiq said.

The Al Wali Child Care Center is located at 12845 Conant. The Center’s phone number is (313) 731-7950.

Hamtramck Recreation Department

BACK to SCHOOL CARNIVAL

Come celebrate going back to school with us as we partner with H.O.P.E. Community Learning Center to give away backpacks, school supplies, and other fun free stuff!

Thursday, August 25, 2016

Pulaski Park

4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Backpack Giveaway

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Backpacks are for Hamtramck Residents or those who attend a Hamtramck Public School. Therefore, an ID for proof of residency or a report card must be presented to receive a ticket. NO EXCEPTIONS. A parent or legal guardian must also be present to receive a ticket.

Dates for receiving tickets for Grades 1-12 at the Hamtramck Community Center:
Monday, August 15 3:00-6:00PM
Tuesday, August 16 3:00-6:00PM
Wednesday, August 17: 3:00-6:00PM
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Coming events

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, August 12-13, 9 s.m.-5 p.m. – Rummage sale at Our Lady Queen of Apostles Activity Center, on parking lot, entrance on Harold St., numerous items for sale, proceeds to benefit 100th anniversary of the church in 2017.
SATURDAY, August 13, 9-3 p.m. – Hamtramck’s Recycle Center is open at Caniff and McDougall. Drop off your recyclables for free.
SATURDAY, Aug. 13, 2-4 p.m. – Soup Kitchen, Holy Cross Parish, 2311 Pulaski at Fleming. All Are Welcome.
WEDNESDAY, Aug. 17, 7-8 p.m. – The Hamtramck Midtown Block Club will meet at St. Florian’s Convent; please use the side entrance facing the church. The meeting will be an informal get-together, which will feature an ice cream plus potluck dessert social. Participants are asked to bring a dessert and Vernor’s ginger ale and A & W root beer ice cream floats will be provided (while supplies last) by the club. Officers Michelle Odrobina and Kathy Miles will make a gift presentation to St. Florian’s pastor, Rev. Miroslaw Frankowski, S. Chr., for his generous use of the convent meeting room for our club throughout the years. The August meeting will mark the last meeting held in the convent before Hamtramck Midtown merges with 3C7, which meets at the Senior Day Time Center, 2339 Caniff, the second Wednesday of the month, from 7-8 p.m. This merger will take place in September. Thank you to all who have supported the club by their attendance – Michelle Odrobina, president/secretary.



By Charles Sercombe
This week’s Crime Log covers Aug. 2-8.

Tuesday, August 2
• The Warren Police Department recovered a car stolen out of Hamtramck.
• At a little after midnight, the back porch of a house in the 5100 block of Yemans was set on fire.
• At 12:40 a.m. a resident in the 9500 block of Jos. Campau reported a person he knows attempted to pour sugar into his car’s gas tank.
• A person was arrested for trespassing at a business in the 10000 block of Conant.
• A break-in was reported at a location in the 8800 block of Conant.
• A Norwalk resident reported someone crashed into a tree which then fell on the resident’s car and damaged it.
• A resident reported being robbed of his wallet while near Evaline and Mitchell.
• A Bernard resident reported damage to their residence from a construction crew.
• A Detroit resident was arrested after a traf-

fic stop for driving without a license, possessing narcotics and being wanted on two Hamtramck warrants.
• A man reported being assaulted by two suspects while in the area of Dequindre and Circle Dr.
Wednesday, August 3
• At about 2:30 a.m. a man said he was robbed by a group of suspects while at a residence in the 12000 block of Dyar. The man said one of the suspects fired a handgun.
• A Detroit resident reported being robbed by a suspect while in the 3100 block of Carpenter.
• A resident reported the theft of their license plate.
Thursday, August 4
• A resident reported being robbed by a suspect of their prescription medicine while in the 10300 block of Jos. Campau.
• A resident reported the theft of an item from his Dodge Ram while it was parked in the 2200 block of Caniff.
• A business in the 9200 block of Conant reported fraudulent use of a credit card.

Friday, August 5
• At about 4 a.m. two juveniles were arrested for violating the city’s curfew ordinance after they were seen breaking into a car near Alpena and Edwin.
• A man reported someone damaged his car while it was parked in the 8600 block of Jos. Campau.
• A person was arrested for home invasion following an investigation in the area of Jos. Campau and Andrus.
• A woman reported she was robbed of her cellphone while in the 11700 block of Moran.

Saturday, August 6
• At about 4 a.m. an owner of a business in the 12100 block of Carpenter reported someone broke out his front window.
• At 1:15 a.m. police received calls of a shooting in the 11400 block of Jos. Campau. Officers determined that there had been a shoot-out at the scene with one injury being reported.
• An Edwin resident reported a break-in.
• A woman was ticketed for careless driving and cruelty to birds after

Continued on page 8

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Wed., Aug. 24th, 6 Pm International Beginning Ministries Church Grayling Street Hamtramck Revival,
'Respect for Guns, Sex And The Golden Rule'




Continued from page 7

she struck birds in the Hamtramck Town Center parking lot.

- A 14-year-old male reported a suspect forcibly stole his bike while in the 11600 block of St. Aubin. The suspect then took it to a waiting accomplice in a blue Ford Focus and drove off.

- A medium-sized black dog with no owner information was found

wandering in the 3800 block of Comstock. The dog was dropped off at the Westland Humane Society.

Sunday, August 7

- At 1:15 a.m. three people were arrested following an investigation at Jos. Campau and Casmere. The three suspects were charged with possessing narcotics.

- At about 4:30 a.m.

officers investigated a report of extortion.

- Three people were arrested for arson.

- Two suspects were arrested for assault following a disturbance on Zinow.

Monday, August 8

- A resident said her prescription drugs were stolen from her purse.

- Michigan State Police found a child riding

a bike on I-75 and the Lodge. The child had previously been reported as missing.

- At 2 p.m. a man was robbed at gunpoint of his prescription medications while at Jos. Campau and Caniff. The victim said there were three suspects, one of whom had a full beard.

- A woman reported being assaulted near a bus stop at Jos. Campau and Caniff.

- A business in the 12000 block of Conant reported receiving a fraudulent check.

- A prisoner in the holding cell at Hamtramck 31st District Court broke out a window.

- A man was arrested in the 5100 block of Yemans for domestic violence.

- A Poland resident reported his tenants were stealing his electrical power.

- A resident in the 9500 block of Mitchell reported a break-in.

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1994	TOY	4D	4T1SK12E9RU350942
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