



Editor writes about his 'Driven City'

"Hamtramck: The Driven City," part of the "Making of America Series," by Greg Kowalski (Arcadia Publishing, Augusta, Maine, July 2002, \$24.99).

BY KEELY KALESKI
STAFF WRITER

Surrounded by Detroit's inner city, Hamtramck's gritty yet refined, home to artists and poets, factory workers, professionals, and immigrants. It's a hip place to live, and property values are increasing. Hamtramck's prospering while other Rust Belt cities gasp for air. It's "The Driven City," one of Greg Kowalski's favorite topics, and the subject of his newly published book. "People have a real affection for Hamtramck," said Kowalski who was born there, and continues to make the city his home.

"I don't care where you go, Hamtramck is still home. We have former residents everywhere. I get e-mail from all over the country every day from former Hamtramckians."

His day job is editor of the Birmingham Eccentric; his hobby is collecting Hamtramck memorabilia and working to preserve the city's history. Since 1998 he's served as chairman of the Hamtramck Historical Commission.

"We constantly look around for material. When the commission was formed we had nothing, the city had thrown out its history, or neglected it," said Kowalski adding he's even gone through Dumpsters looking for information. Founded as a township in 1798, pieces of Hamtramck were slowly annexed by Detroit until the area, that once reached from the Detroit River north to Eight Mile Road, west to Woodward Avenue and east to the Grosse Pointes, was only 2.2 square miles big. Its population, fueled by the opening of Dodge Main in 1910, swelled from 2,559 people to 26,000 by 1930. It's now about 23,000.



Greg Kowalski, author, and editor of the Birmingham Eccentric, shows off his newly published book at Urban Break coffeehouse in Hamtramck.

Kowalski chose automotive metaphors to take readers for a spin around his hometown. After all, he says, the car industry is what built Hamtramck.

Reading each chapter is like turning the corner of a street you'll want to investigate. Historic and current photos, some of them taken by Kowalski, offer a glimpse of the city today, and yesterday when round steak was 10 cents a pound and eggs sold for 25 cents a dozen at Val Magielski's Victory Market on Conant.

Kowalski doesn't recite Hamtramck's history, he interprets it, and tells a story. The Communist Party was

headquartered in Hamtramck for many years, and most labor histories of Detroit include something about the city.

Educational reforms introduced by superintendent Maurice Keyworth in 1923 - special education, involving parents in their child's education, adult education, and medical services - were adopted by schools across the country.

During Prohibition you could get a drink in Hamtramck, and the Purple Gang sometimes visited. Political corruption was not uncommon, and local politics are still pretty intense.

The city is still known for its clubs, and has always had a thriving downtown business district.

But some things are chang-

ing. Once predominantly Polish, Hamtramck has attracted new immigrants from Bosnia, Yemen, Albania, and India which are helping

GET THE BOOK

■ *Hamtramck: The Driven City*, part of the "Making of America Series," by Greg Kowalski (Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, S.C., July 2002, \$24.99) is available at local bookstores, on Amazon.com, the Detroit Historical Museum and in Hamtramck at the public library, Polish Art Center, Urban Break, Polish Village Cafe and Salvadore Deli. ■ Visit the Hamtramck Historical Commission Web site, hamtramckhistory.org ■ Mark your calendar - look for Kowalski's *Hamtramck: Soul of a City*, part of Arcadia Publishing's "The Images of America Series," this summer.

drive the city in new directions.

"I won't leave Hamtramck," said Kowalski "It's a giant apartment building where you can sit in your living room and watch your neighbor's TV. The houses were built on 50 foot lots. You have to be able to adapt to that lifestyle. I've never had a driveway."

Metroparks get ready to tap trees for maple syrup

If winter is leaving you longing for something fun and sappy, journey to the sugar bush at local Metroparks this March.

Maple sugaring is an annual rite of spring, and four Metroparks will be tapping trees and collecting sap to make syrup.

Michigan is one of the top 10 producers of maple syrup. Learn about the rich history of maple sugaring at these Metroparks:

■ **Maple Sugaring: A Journey to the Sugar Bush** - 10 a.m. - 11 a.m. and noon, Saturday and Sunday, March 1-2, 8-9, 15-16, 22-23. Take a short hike at the Hudson Mills Metropark near Dexter with an interpreter to see how to tap trees, collect sap and boil it to make real maple syrup.

The all-you-entail pancakes and sausage, with real maple syrup, will be served at the Activity Center 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on days tours are offered.

Fee \$5 per person with breakfast, \$2 without breakfast.

Reservations required, call (734) 426-8211 or (800) 477-3191.

■ **Maple's Sweet Story** - Open to 3 p.m. weekends, March 1-30 at Kensington Metropark Farm Learning Center near Milford/Brighton. Visit the sugar bush to see how maple trees are tapped and the sap is collected, then stop by the sugar shack and watch the sap boiled down into maple syrup.

Visit a Native American sugaring camp to see how Native Americans collected sap and made syrup. Michigan maple



Karen Blake, Indian Springs Metropark Interpreter, uses a bit and brace to tap a maple tree during a maple sugaring program.

products will be for sale while supplies last.

Registration not required for the weekend program. Call (800) 477-3178 or (248) 685-1561 for information.

■ **Maple Sugaring** - weekends, Sunday, March 2-30 at Indian Springs Metropark, near White Lake, by appoint-

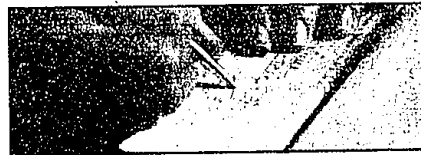
ment only.

See how maple tree sap is transformed into syrup and learn about the history of maple sugaring.

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