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## Committees

- **Design:** Kathy Parsons
- **Economic Revitalization:** Diane Smith
- **Organization & Finance:** Julie Clement
- **Promotions & Marketing:** Nikki Sunstrum
  
- **Board Chair,** Joel VanSlambrouck

Happy New  
Year,  
Portland!

# On the Street

## Downtown Happenings

Doesn't it seem we just celebrated a new century . . . a new millennium? And now it's 2012. Time flies. Here's what's in store for the beginning of 2012 in downtown Portland:

- ▷ Jan 9, Biggest Loser competition starts at Cheeky Monkeys -- stop in and start your way to a new you
- ▷ Jan 9, 4-6pm, Community Dinner, Congregational Church
- ▷ Jan 16, 4-6pm, Community Dinner, Congregational Church
- ▷ January 21, Portland Winter Run (10am) & Portland Plunge (2pm)
- ▷ Jan 23, 4-6pm, Community Dinner, Congregational Church
- ▷ Jan 30, 4-6pm, Community Dinner, Congregational Church
- ▷ Feb 6, 4-6pm, Community Dinner,

Congregational Church

- ▷ Feb 11, PCAC PCAC announces Musician and Artist of the Year at the annual Winter Ball

Would you like your Main Street event listed here? Contact Main Street Manager Patrick Reagan at 517 647 5027 or [ddamainstreet@portland-michigan.org](mailto:ddamainstreet@portland-michigan.org).

## What's New?

**Branding downtown Portland:** Portland Main Street was awarded a branding service a few months ago, and the branding committee is working diligently with consultant Cindy Williams on finding just the right "brand" for Portland. What does this mean? See page 3 for details and

ways you can contribute.

**Great American Main Street Award:** Have you heard? Portland Main Street is one of just ten finalists for the prestigious Great American Main Street Award! Soon, the National Trust for Historic Preservation will select five Main Street communities in the United States from these ten finalists. Want to help? Write a letter of support, telling how the Main Street

program has impacted our historic downtown over the past eight years. Have you seen a difference? Tell the selection committee about it. See details on page 4. Letters are due by January 10 -- hurry!

**Art in the downtown:** Portland Community Arts Council volunteers continue to work on two projects to bring art (and visitors) to the downtown. Last year's Adirondack chair project, "Sit a Spell" was so popular that the PCAC will repeat it again in 2012. And in celebration of our riverfront location, the PCAC will also add a new project in 2012: canoe bookcases. Do you have woodworking experience, or would you like to learn? Are you an artist? Would you like to paint a chair or bookcase? Call Rush Clement at 517 647 6545 today!



**Perfect Balance**  
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Portland  
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**Jody Francis**  
Owner  
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A Full Service Hair and Nail Salon

# Meet Your Neighbor: Kathy Parsons

Kathy Parsons has owned and operated Grider Portland Agency, Inc., in downtown Portland since 2001 when she purchased the business from Tom Grider. Before her move to Portland, Kathy spent 21 years working at the A.A. Smith Insurance Agency in Lansing. Kathy started her career at Auto-Owners Insurance Company. While Kathy is enjoying a rewarding and successful career in the insurance industry, she has many other interests.

In some ways, moving to Portland was a homecoming for Kathy because when she was born, her parents lived in North Lansing, and her grandparents owned a home on the banks of the Grand River in Lansing. Kathy has many fond memories of family activities that incorporated the Grand River. In fact, her mother taught Kathy to fly-fish, and Kathy's mother learned the sport from her mother. This was one of many things she was able to pursue because she never heard, "You can't do that because you're a girl." In addition to being an accomplished fly-fisherwoman, Kathy has over ten years of experience teaching canoeing and orienteering and has hiked over 200 miles of the Appalachian Trail.

Another facet of Kathy's early background is her experience helping law enforcement, which began when she was a high school co-op student and worked part-time as a dispatcher for the Mason Police Department. This has benefited the Portland community because Kathy was one of the charter volunteers with the Portland Police Department's "Volunteers in Police Service" or V.I.P.S. program, which began in 2004. You will see members of the V.I.P.S. program volunteering their time at many school and city events.

The idea of being involved in her community was instilled

in Kathy when she would attend township board meetings with her father, and volunteer in her hometown with her mother; she remains committed to serving her community to this day. Kathy has served the City of Portland as a member of the City Council and the DDA, she is Chair of the Main Street Design Committee, and she is constantly contributing her time and energy to benefit the City of Portland.

In addition to her many activities within the Portland community, Kathy is the current president of the Irish American Club of Mid-Michigan, which celebrates all things Irish, including music, culture, history, and friendship.

So if you're out and about Portland, there's a good chance you'll see Kathy in one of her many roles in the community. Whether she's watering the hanging flower baskets the Design Committee put up downtown; taking refreshments to workers and volunteers during spring clean-up; helping out at a parade, event, or disaster scene; or providing security along the river trail, she'll be making Portland a better place to live, work, and play.

*Submitted by Jim Barnes,  
Organization & Finance Committee*



[www.griderportland.com](http://www.griderportland.com)

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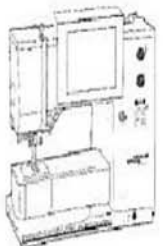
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# Did You Realize . . .

- "Small business" is the largest employers in the nation . . . by far. When you support local businesses, you not only keep jobs in the United States, you keep them in your own community.
- Locally owned businesses contribute up to 2.5 times as much to local nonprofit organizations as chain and big-box stores. We all know how important these groups are--from band boosters to cheerleaders, from running clubs to arts organizations, from to historical societies to the library, from schools to churches, from civic clubs to food banks . . . you get the picture. When you support local businesses, you help them continue to contribute to the organizations that are important to you and to the community.
- Local businesses are owned by your friends, family, and neighbors. They make business decisions that keep our community unique, family oriented, and friendly. They're in business because they want to be of service to you--the people who live and work in Portland. Can you say the same about corporate executives in another state, who only know Portland as a pin on a map?
- When you spend money at a local business, most of that money stays right here in the community--not only in the form of donations, but also as local taxes, purchases that those business owners make right here, wages that they pay their local employees . . . and the list goes on and on.
- If each Portland resident spent another \$50 per month in downtown Portland--on food, gas, services, gifts, lessons, health care, etc.--that would translate into \$2.2 million. Imagine how much more our local businesses could offer you with even half of that. More of the jobs, merchandise, and services that you desire!

## Branding Downtown Portland

A brand is more than a logo; it's an identity that can be represented by a collection of statements, ideas, visuals (including a logo), words, and more that define us. Portland Main Street is working with consultant Cindy Williams of W. Design to pinpoint our authentic brand. *What is downtown Portland? Who are we? What can we offer? What do we want people to say about us and think about us?*

At the end of this process we'll have materials to help us market our historic downtown--our future goals along with our heritage and what we are right now.

What do you think of when you think of downtown Portland? We don't mean the entire city of Portland--just the downtown. Check out the Main Street website. Read our own Vision for the future. Then send your thoughts to Main Street Manager Patrick Reagan, and we'll put them in the mix: [ddainstreet@portland-michigan.org](mailto:ddainstreet@portland-michigan.org)

**Winter Run & Portland Plunge**  
**January 21**  
**Mark Your Calendars!**



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# Hot Jobs!

There's no end to the work when it comes to creating a vibrant downtown. You don't need to be a downtown business owner to care about the future of Portland. Contact Main Street Manager Patrick Reagan today

to lend your skills and time to one of the important jobs below. Think you're too young (or too old or too something else)? Nonsense! You're just the person we're looking for!

- ♦ **Writers:** We need you to write articles on downtown business owners, downtown revitalization, downtown happenings, local events, and more. Want to get some great writing experience? Volunteer a little, or volunteer a lot--it's all up to you!
- ♦ **Newsletter assistant:** We need to turn our print newsletters into email newsletters. Can you work with Constant Contact? Do you want to learn? Call today!
- ♦ **Facebook guru:** Are you great at this social media tool? We need someone to make regular posts to our Facebook page. Could it be you? Give us a call!
- ♦ **Public Relations:** We often need information from downtown business and property owners to help them succeed. We need someone who can stop in and chat with them. You won't be selling anything--just getting to know your downtown neighbors so Main Street can do even more for downtown businesses. We think you're just the person we had in mind!
- ♦ Call or email Patrick Reagan today: 517 647 5027 or [ddamainstreet@portland-michigan.org](mailto:ddamainstreet@portland-michigan.org)

# Great American Main Street Award

"Each year, the National Trust Main Street Center recognizes exceptional Main Street communities whose successes serve as a model for comprehensive commercial district revitalization. These award-winning communities have demonstrated proven success in using the Main Street Four Point Approach® to create economic vitality, a unique sense of place, and a strong commitment to the community by all stakeholders."

<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/awards/>

During December and early January, Portland Main Street volunteers and Manager Patrick Reagan are collecting data on our Main Street program, collecting photos and letters of support, and creating a video to show the National Trust for Historic Preservation what we're all about.

Have you watched the downtown's transformation during the past eight years? Do you like what you see? Drop a letter in the mail to Patrick Reagan, and we'll try to include it in our finalist package. Let us know how you think the Main Street program has helped downtown Portland. You can email letters to [ddamainstreet@portland-michigan.org](mailto:ddamainstreet@portland-michigan.org), or mail them to Patrick Reagan, 259 Kent Street, Portland, MI 48875. Patrick needs letters by January 10!

Main Street volunteers send their thanks to Patrick for all of his work in compiling our application. Keep your fingers crossed, Portland!

## Biggest-loser contest starts Jan. 9 at Cheeky Monkeys. Bring it on!

## Something's always happening at Rush Hour Studios!

Guitar lessons . . . art classes & workshops . . . paint your own pottery . . . glass fusing . . . winter-break activities . . . & more!

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See [www.raffaelesmarketplace.com](http://www.raffaelesmarketplace.com) or [www.rushhourstudios.com](http://www.rushhourstudios.com) for schedules