

The Quorum Review

Official Newsletter of the Brownstone Quorum, Inc.

~ Dedicated to the preservation of Portland's natural history and resources ~

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January, 2012

What Does It Take To Market a Town?

— Please Join Us for the Brownstone Quorum Annual Meeting —



Mary Dickerson

By Nan Zimmer

You are invited to The Brownstone Quorum Annual Meeting on Monday, January 23, 2012, 7 PM, in the Mary Flood Room of the Portland Library

Hear **Mary Dillon Dickerson**, Economic Development Consultant to Portland since 2007, reveal the trials, tribulations, and triumphs of implementing a marketing program for a highly resistant town.

How well is our business community viewed by investors? Does the town have a brand? What are our assets? Where are the obstacles? How much money has been added to town coffers? Are we getting our money's worth?

Well equipped to answer these questions, Mary Dickerson's first job was tax accountant for **Ted Hintz**, Portland CPA. State

employed, she next developed a budget for a maximum-security correctional facility in Uncasville, before landing a job as Chief Accountant for a US military installation in New York City.

Adding an MBA in International Business to her BS from St. Joseph College, Dickerson's professional expertise was honed as an Accounting Policy and Research Associate at Salomon, Inc. in the City, absorbing the sophistication of front office management, clients, practice and policies of investment banking in US, UK, and Tokyo offices.

What does it take to market a town? A dynamic and articulate business professional, home grown and able to demonstrate why Portland deserves the title of One of the Best 100 Small Towns in the Nation. Bring your questions and learn why the Brownstone Quorum is grateful for the Talented Town Treasure named Mary Dillon Dickerson..

Please make time to join us. This is a great opportunity to learn more about what's happening economically in Portland and to ask pertinent questions. Refreshments will be provided. ✱

January 14, 2012

President's Message:

2011 was a very busy year for the Brownstone Quorum. We continued our efforts to further develop the Riverfront Park, which included participating in the planning and design of a new picnic pavilion and starting work on a new stage area. Our collaboration with Portland Park and Recreation continued to grow in 2011 and we are looking forward to co-sponsoring events at the Riverfront Park in 2012. Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers and the tremendous support of the town, 2011 was a huge success.

At the beginning of 2011 we established three main goals for the park. These goals were to support the design and development of a new pavilion area such that we can meet our target of having the pavilion area ready for public use in 2012, to continue the maintenance program established in 2010 to ensure that the area remains inviting for public use, and to finalize the design and begin development of a stage area. All three goals were met. The most exciting project currently underway at the Riverfront Park is the construction of the new pavilion. Funded by a STEAP grant obtained by the town in 2010, the new 50'x30' structure is nearing completion. The goal is for construction of the pavilion and final grading and seeding to be completed in spring 2012. We invite you all to visit the park and check out the progress for yourselves. You can also visit our web site at www.brownstonequorum.org to view pictures of our progress. Our maintenance program remained strong in 2011. We consistently held monthly

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The New Portland Riverfront Park Pavilion

By Frank Winiski

Here is an update in time line fashion on the construction of the new pavilion at the Portland Riverfront Park.

10/16/11 - Brownstone Quorum members and town officials met at the future site of the pavilion on a beautiful summer-like day and held a ground-breaking ceremony.

11/2/11 – The snow from the unbelievable October snow-storm was almost melted, and the construction site was covered with mounds of dirt and rock.

11/7/11 – Long, deep trenches were being dug in preparation for the pouring of the concrete footings and the foundation for a room to be located in the rear section of the pavilion. Huge brownstone stones were removed from this area and added to the collection on the river side of the construction.

11/14/11 – The footing forms and bracing were in place to be poured, and concrete trucks arrived the following day to start the process.

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President's letter, continued

work parties at the riverfront on the 1st Saturday of every month. We used these work parties to continue improving views along the river as well as implementing other improvements to the park. In addition to our many volunteers we are fortunate to have John LeShane, who tirelessly works to maintain the trails at the park, and Steve Klick, who does a tremendous job maintaining the grass at the main usage and parking areas. The park was in great shape all summer and we consistently saw families enjoying the riverfront picnic area and trails. The stage, located in the usage area designated as Heritage Plaza, will be completed in 2012. The final design is an elevated stage that incorporates Portland brownstone into the design. The stage will have over 50' of frontage and is designed to support future events at the park. As you can see, 2011 was a very busy year for the Brownstone Quorum.

We enjoyed continued success with respect to our efforts to collaborate with Portland Park and Recreation. Through our collaboration we are looking to establish a concert series at the park in 2012. Planning is underway for a 3 concert series in 2012 which we hope will grow in future years. The events are currently scheduled for Tuesday evenings on August 7, 14 and 21. Please be on the lookout for additional information regarding these events. In addition to the concert series, please note that we are going to be having a summer kickoff event at the park on Saturday, June 2. Additional information will be published throughout the spring. Whether to attend one of our scheduled events or to enjoy a quiet picnic by the river, we look forward to seeing you at your Riverfront Park.

The Brownstone Quorum was also involved in two additional projects that should be noted. The first was supporting the publication of a children's book written and illustrated by Portland's own Kearen Enright. The book, *Quarry Story*, is a well told story that teaches about the history of Portland's historic quarries. The book is currently for sale locally, as well as at Amazon.com. A portion of the proceeds from the book come to the Brownstone Quorum to support our efforts so please feel free to contact us if you are interested in purchasing a copy. The other additional project to be noted is the construction of a new, updated web site. Our goal is to provide additional information regarding our activities, a calendar of scheduled events, and photo galleries showing the progress of various projects. We are still adding content to the site but please feel free to visit us at www.brownstonequorum.org and let us know what you think.

2011 was a decent year for Brownstone Quorum membership. Despite a difficult economy, we had 135 paid memberships. This was down slightly from 2010. We hope and need to grow membership in 2012. Simply stated, we very much need your continued support. The strong support we receive from the community is crucial to the continued development and maintenance of our Riverfront Park. It is important to note that support comes in many forms. Some are able to give time and others support our efforts through donations. Both are critical to our success. If you are a member and have not yet paid your 2012 dues, please take a moment to do so using the self addressed envelope we have provided. Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

In summary, 2011 was a transformational year for the Riverfront Park. We took major steps forward regarding the development of new usage areas and have laid the groundwork for continued momentum in 2012. We are confident that with your continued support we will be successful. We look forward to seeing you at the Riverfront Park, one of our quorum events, work parties, or meetings soon.



Jim Tripp
President
Brownstone Quorum, Inc.



UNDER CONSTRUCTION: The 50' x 30' pavilion at Portland Riverfront Park is the newest feature to appear on the property. It will be available for rental sometime in 2012 for family reunions, meetings and other gatherings.

New Park Pavilion, continued

11/21/11 – By this time the footings and room foundation were poured. Metal brackets had been set into the upper surface of the footings to accept the large wooden side beams that would hold the arch assembly for the roof.

11/27/11 – Many large truckloads of fill were brought in to level the area surrounding the concrete footings and room foundation, as well as the area which was being prepared for the floor slab. The following day, the first side beam/roof arch assembly was bolted in place.

12/1/11 – Four of the beam/arch assemblies were now in place, and by the following day, all seven were constructed.

12/5/11 – Wooden roof boards were nailed in place on the arch beams, and a few days later the roof had been trimmed and shingled. But during this time, a major rain storm had created a sizeable pond of water in the recently excavated and filled-in area under the new pavilion roof. This would need to be drained and dried in order to pour the concrete floor slab. I sacrificed a pair of shoes to take photos of the pond, as my feet sank in mud up to my ankles!

12/14/11 – The flooded area had been cleared of water and refilled, with wooden forms and wire reinforcing material being put in place for the pouring of the floor.

12/18/11 – Construction of the floor had commenced, and the floor was completely poured and leveled on the following day. I resisted the urge to scratch my initials into the wet concrete. Besides, the mud kept me away.

Happy New Year! As the year 2012 begins, the pavilion has been stained and awaits completion of the room in the rear section, which will become a storage/ washroom. We look forward to future events and celebrations that will be held in the pavilion and surrounding park area starting this year! ✱

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"How strange that Nature does not knock, and yet does not intrude!"

~Emily Dickinson, in a letter to Mrs. J.S. Cooper, 1880  
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There's a New Sign In Town

By Cari Klick

While the sign by the Connecticut River beckons people to "Come on Over" to Portland, a new sign has been erected to welcome them when they arrive. Perhaps you've seen it – the large brownstone slab in the middle of the triangular garden at the intersection of routes 66 and 17A. As motorists come off the bridge into Portland, the sign greets them with "Welcome to Historic Portland," while the reverse side says "Leaving Historic Portland."

The slab and sign are part of the streetscape project initiated by then Town Planner, **Nancy Mueller**, who has since retired, and Quarryside Downtown (formerly PRIDE), an organization working to beautify Main Street. One of the goals of the streetscape project was to have a "gateway" element and a nice slab of brownstone from the historic Portland Brownstone Quarries seemed to be the best, and most obvious, choice.

Cisco, LLC, a contracting company out of New Haven, installed the slab. They purchased it from **Mike Meehan**, owner of the Portland Brownstone Quarries on Brownstone Avenue (the quarrying operation business), as part of Cisco's contract with the town to install the streetscape sidewalks and decorative elements. The lettering was installed by Signs of All Kinds in Manchester, CT. According to **Chris Dickman**, owner of Cisco, LLC and also a Portland resident, the slab weighs

nearly 9000 lbs. The Streetscape project is funded entirely with grants from the Federal Transportation Enhancement Act and a STEAP Grant (Small Town Economic Assistance Program).

There are other similar brownstone pieces used in town as well. St. Mary's Church has a stone on Rt. 66 near the entrance to the church parking lot. The church's name is on the slab. In addition, Quarry Heights has a similar stone in front of the apartment complex on Main Street. Their street number is prominently displayed on it. Brownstone markers are also used at the Buck-Foreman Building, Town Hall and the Arch Pavilion on Main Street, just to name a few.

To finish off the sign project, several plantings will surround the slab and new sidewalk. **Scott Whited**, owner of Pine Ledge Gardens here in Portland, continues to design, install and maintain the plantings on the island. He said several plantings were interrupted due to the installation of the

sidewalk and slab. Day lilies that were removed have been replaced, and ink berries that lined the sidewalk were removed, but will not be replaced. Pine Ledge has installed 1000 tulips and daffodils that will come up this spring. They will also be installing seasonal plantings this spring around the brownstone sign. ❀

Susan Bransfield also contributed to this article.

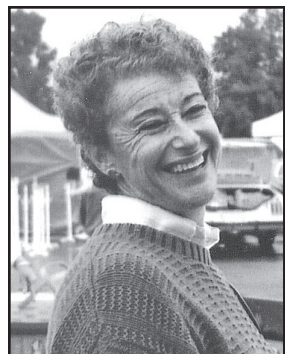


A 9000 lb. slab of brownstone, cut from the Portland Brownstone Quarries to create this welcoming sign installed on Rt. 66, is one of the first things motorists see as they come off the bridge from Middletown.

Remembering Sari

By Cindy Andrus

We remember and honor our dear friend, **Sari Rosenbaum**, who was always so enthusiastic about and worked so hard for the Brownstone Quorum. She was there in the beginning, with **John Monroe** and the Portland Charrette, helping to compile a questionnaire about the quarry and the riverfront for the town.



She served as secretary for a number of years. When we had the Quarry Focus Days, she took charge of the sandwiches we made and sold, and she helped with the boutique as well. Sari helped haul tires and other trash out of the quarry and was there again, cutting brush and removing trash from the riverfront. Even when she was

feeling weak from her chemo treatments and couldn't do anything too stressful, she asked **Steve Klick** what she could do to help. He said if she could trim back the small vine branches that hung out from the edges of the paths and field, that would be a huge help to him, as they were always whipping him in the face when he mowed the grass.

After five years, Quarry Focus Day changed to the Portland Town wide Festival and riverfront picnic. Sari was again responsible for getting the good to the riverfront and ready to be cooked and served.

When you went to the Portland Fair, you found Sari and when the Arch Pavilion was being built next to the Police Station, she brought lunch and water to the workers. Sari was a part of the heart and soul of the Brownstone Quorum and we would not have done nearly as well without her. ❀



Brownstone Quorum, Inc.
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Remember Last Year?



*Snow blanketed the entrance to Riverfront Park in January of 2011.
This year, we have easy access to the park...for now.*

The Quorum Review

~ January 2012 Newsletter ~

BQ Calendar:

Mon., Jan. 23.....BQ Annual Meeting–Portland Library
Sat., Feb. 4*.....Work Party at Riverfront Park–9:00 am
Mon. Feb. 6Exec. Board Mtg., Senior Ctr.–6:00 pm
Wed., Feb. 29.....Leap Day
Sat., Mar. 3*.....Work Party at Riverfront Park–9:00 am
Sun., Mar. 4Daylight Savings Begins...Spring Ahead!
Mon. Mar. 5.....Exec. Board Mtg., Senior Ctr.–6:00 pm
Tues., Mar. 20.....First Day of Spring
Mon. April 2.....Exec. Board Mtg., Senior Ctr.–6:00 pm
Sat., April 7*.....Work Party at Riverfront Park–9:00 am
Sun., April 22.....Earth Day
Fri., April 27.....Arbor Day
Sat., May 5*.....Work Party at Riverfront Park–9:00 am
Mon. May 7.....Exec. Board Mtg., Senior Ctr.–6:00 pm
Sat., May 5*.....Work Party at Riverfront Park–9:00 am
Mon. May 7.....Exec. Board Mtg., Senior Ctr.–6:00 pm
Sat., June 2*.....Work Party at Riverfront Park–9:00 am
Sat., June 2.....Summer Kickoff Concert & BBQ–3:00-7:00 pm

The public is invited to any of our meetings or work parties. We welcome your participation, input and feedback, and greatly appreciate your help!

**All work parties are weather permitting.*

Annual Meeting:

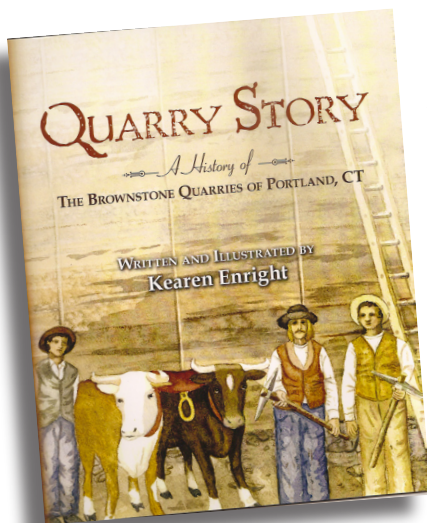
Monday, January 23, 2012

**7pm @ Portland Library
in the Mary Flood Room**

See details inside, on page 1

*“Those who dwell among the beauties and
mysteries of the earth are never alone or
weary of life.” ~Rachel Carson*

A Beautiful Story About Portland's Past



By Cari Klick

"When did they put in the zip lines, slides and the other fun stuff, Grandpa?' I asked. Now summer could not come quickly enough for me."

"Well, the most wonderful thing happened. There was a small group of townspeople who were sad that the quarry was such a mess. They wanted to see something nice done with it. They pulled the old cars and garbage out of the

water and worked very, very hard to clean up the land."¹

This excerpt is from the book, "Quarry Story," written and illustrated by Portland resident Kearen Enright. It tells the delightful story of a little girl who goes for a walk to the quarries with her grandfather one day. All the while, her grandfather tells her a story about the quarries and how the stone was removed and used to build homes and buildings. Loaded with Kearen's beautiful illustrations, the story also shows how the vision of just a few dedicated people can benefit so many for years to come. In the back, you'll find a fabulous historic time line from 1665 to 2006.

Be sure to pick up your copy of the book. They are available for \$12.95 at: www.QuarryStory.com, www.Amazon.com, Portland Historical Society, The Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park, and The CT River Museum. A portion of the proceeds benefits the Brownstone Quorum. For an extra treat, bring your kids or grandchildren to the CT River Museum on March 24 at 10:00. Kearen will be doing a reading of the book and signing copies.

The Quorum is extremely grateful to Kearen for her wonderful talents, her hard work and generosity. ✱

¹Kearen Enright, *Quarry Story* (Portland, CT: 2011) p. 24.

Goings On Around Town...

Goodrich Property Gets the Green Light

Portland was awarded a \$230,000 grant on January 4 for development of the former Goodrich property on Gospel Lane (Rt. 17), near Strickland Street. The 37-acre plot was purchased by the town in 2006 and will be completely paid off in 2015.

23 acres of the property will be developed as a multi-purpose field complex. Amenities could include any combination of athletic fields, concessions, playground, basketball courts, tennis courts, pavilion, splash pad, pool, rest rooms, storage buildings, parking lot and utilities. Many sporting events are currently held at a similar venue on Rt. 5/15 in Berlin. This will give Portland an opportunity to host tournaments and other sporting events, and thus, bring people into town, making a positive economic impact. The award comes from a STEAP Grant (Small Town Economic Assistance Program). ✱

Grant Application for the Airline Trail

Portland has applied for a grant to fund a project on the Airline Trail. Following the old rail beds, it begins its 2.9 mile span at Depot Hill Road, ending at Ames Hollow Road. The purpose of the project will be to provide a trail that can be used safely for pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian enthusiasts, eliminating their interaction with motor vehicles and potential safety concerns. It also coincides with trail development in neighboring communities. ✱

Don't miss our first event at the park this summer! Mark your calendars for June 2 to attend the first of a series of summer concerts, this one complete with a BBQ! Not sure how to find the park? See the map on the reverse side of this sheet.

I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station, through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in. ~George Washington Carver

We're Looking for New Members in 2012!

— **Won't you renew today or pass this form on to someone you think would be interested?** —

Your support is crucial to the ongoing development of Portland Riverfront Park. Without it, we wouldn't have gotten as far as we have, nor will we be able to continue to build upon the progress we've made. If you've been a member prior to 2012, **THANK YOU!** We hope you will continue to support us. **If you are already a member for 2012, please give this form to a friend.**

Please take a moment to fill out this form completely and mail it with your check to: **The Brownstone Quorum, Inc., PO Box 402, Portland, CT 06480** All memberships are for the 2012 calendar year.

*** **Your information will not be sold or exchanged for any reason and is for BQ correspondence only.**

My Interest Level:

- ☐ Active Member
☐ Keep me Informed Only

I am interested in:

- ☐ Volunteering for work parties
☐ Helping out with park events
☐ Becoming a committee and/or board member

Membership Type: ☐ Individual \$10.00

☐ Family of 3 or more \$25.00

☐ Business \$25.00

☐ Additional Contribution _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: _____

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Names of Family Members: _____

Worth Mentioning....

www.brownstonequorum.org

Our new web site is up-and-running! Thanks to the hard work of **Dave Kuzminski** and his tech crew, the Quorum has a beautiful, updated site. Some parts are still under construction, but you'll still find a calendar, photos, links, past issues of the Quorum Review, info about the Quorum and more. Check it out at www.brownstonequorum.org. ❄

Forests, lakes, and rivers, clouds and winds, stars and flowers, stupendous glaciers and crystal snowflakes - every form of animate or inanimate existence, leaves its impress upon the soul of man. ~Orison Swett Marden

Quorum Fundraising Tag Sale

The Brownstone Quorum will be having a fundraising tag sale this spring and we need your help! Please consider donating your unwanted items to the Quorum to sell that day. Furniture, household, tools, kitchen items, small appliances, perhaps even a bigger item or two...we sure can use it. The annual tag sale is our largest fundraising effort each year. If You Would like us to contact you as the date gets closer, please make a note on the membership form and we'll get in touch with you in April.

Additionally, if you would like to volunteer at the sale and help us with pricing, organization, selling, etc., we would love to have the help. Thank you for your help and donations! ❄



Use this handy map to find your way to the park. Come down to visit us during work parties (first Saturday of each month, weather permitting), attend an event, or just take a walk with the family dog.

Get up close with Portland's Gem on the River!