

# Monument makers honour the past

By Mitch Ward

On a small, low table by the front door of Campbell Monument Company on Dundas Street West, there is a small display. In a presentation case is a pewter medallion, about two inches in diameter. Inscribed around the edge is the name of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Along with traditional monuments, the term used in the memorial business for what people normally refer to as grave markers or tombstones, the craftspeople engrave uniform blocks of grey granite with the names of Ontario veterans.

Since 2006, the craftspeople at the Campbell production facility have produced hundreds of monuments for the CWGC since 2007, and over 1,656 grave markers for the Last Post Fund.

The employees work to deliver monuments for deceased veterans twice a year to cemeteries all over Ontario.

Some reach cemeteries in areas so remote that it requires them to be airlifted in.

The company first won a contract with the Last Post Fund in 2006. Kathleen Robinson, the facility and design manager, explained how it came about.

"My aunt actually, called me on a Saturday and said 'I just saw something in the Toronto Star that you might be interested in.' It was a call for tender to supply the Last Post Fund with the monuments for all of Ontario."

The CWGC office is in the same Ottawa building as the Last Post Fund. It wasn't long, only a year, before they asked Campbell Monuments for a sample of their work.

The work on the veteran monuments is in addition to the regular monuments, where demand is steady.

"We like to see about eight monuments go out the back door on a daily basis, and our full time staff work from April to December," said monument designer Mary Martin.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission was founded in 1917, and their stated goal is to honour the 1 million and seven hundred thousand men and women who died during the two world wars as



Photo by Mitch Ward

**Kevin Soules of Campbell Monuments company clamps a rubber mylar stencil onto a blank granite grave marker, inside of an industrial sand blasting machine. Soules has worked in the workshop since 2010, after visiting with his mother on a "Take your kid to work day."**

part of a Commonwealth nation.

They work on creating and maintaining war cemeteries in over 153 countries.

The work of crafting monuments comes down to monument production facilities like the one at Campbell Monuments, which is now employee owned.

The building, built in 1989 to update the Campbell family's four-generation

business, could be compared to a car dealership in a way.

There are outdoor display models, a showroom inside, and offices and private meeting rooms. The only difference of course is what they're selling, and the fact that they build the product in the same building.

The production facility features a con-

veyer belt where blank granite slabs are rolled along to the stenciling area.

There, custom-made designs are printed on rubber and Mylar sheets using a large format printer. Then, craftspeople carefully cut out the letters and patterns of the stencils.

These tough stencils are then double checked, signed off by design managers

and attached to the front of the granite markers. Workers then wheel the larger markers into industrial sandblasters, and stand back as the machines turn the blank stones into permanent memorials.

"It's been a really nice thing for us, and it's been neat. To have that pride, and workmanship, it's nice to have been apart of it all," said Robinson.



Photo by James Wood

**Inn From the Cold volunteers are framed by the kitchen shelves in the basement of Bridge Street United Church as they prepare for a celebratory lunch, held for everyone who gave their time to the program. Inn From the Cold is a free dinner service provided every single night during the months of January and February.**

## Inn from the Cold serves community

By James Wood

Over the past two months, volunteers have been coming to Bridge Street United Church and giving their time to help combat food insecurity in the Hastings and Prince Edward region. Thousands of meals were prepared, served, and cleaned up after, and hundreds were saved for future use.

Many people in the community were helped by the service, which ran seven nights a week, four-o'clock to six-thirty, without fail.

The service has now concluded its run for this year, and the numbers for overall usage are down compared to last year's information.

However, the drop in numbers may not necessarily show a drop in need. It may simply reflect the fact that this year's winter has been difficult for residents to get to the meals in the first place.

"Availability isn't an issue, accessibility is," said Ian Sutherland, co-coordinator of the Inn from the Cold program and congregation member at Bridge Street. "The people who are needful in terms of food often have coexisting issues, and mobility is certainly one of them," said Sutherland. The geography of Belleville and the surrounding area has a role to play in access to the building.

Bridge Street sits on a hill in the east side of Belleville, and the walk up was often slippery or tough to get through, especially for a resident with mobility issues. "Though the city has done its best this year, sidewalks are not as clear as they were this past winter," said Sutherland.

The difficulty in access led to a significant drop in visits to the service. "Our numbers were down probably 15 per cent, and that translates into 300 or 400 meals," said Sutherland. This means that despite the 3850 hot meals served

to residents, hundreds more could have been served.

"Food is the most fluid item in the budget," said Ruth Ingersoll, executive director of the Community Development Council of Quinte. With major costs such as rent, hydro, and transportation being given priority over food, it means that hard months such as January and February will have scant food budgets for those in the lowest quintile of income. "Hugely impactful," said Ingersoll, when asked about the role that Inn From the Cold plays in those harsh months.

Despite the impact that the program has on the community and levels of food insecurity, a lack of reliable transport to the church building does play a role in the numbers of residents reached who need the food offered. "Transit could be a piece to the puzzle," said Ingersoll.

The program will resume next January.

## Text with 911 to be introduced here

### Speech and hearing impaired will benefit from service

By Jonathan King

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission's plans to enhance 911 systems for those with speech or hearing impairments has come full circle since their announcement January last year.

Belleville Police have started rolling out plans for their Text with 911 system for those with speech and hearing impairments. Those who wish to use Text with 911 will have to register beforehand with their wireless carrier before being able to use the service, meaning those without disabilities won't have access to the new technology rolling out this year.

As the service becomes available, those who are hearing or speech impaired will call 911 and the emergency notification center, where calls are handled, will get a notification to initiate a text conversation. The feature will only be available to police stations and emergency centers who've introduced the changes to their call centre, furthermore, the CRTC stresses that the texts directly to "911" don't go to EMS services.

"Services such as 911 are critical to the health and safety of all Canadians," said CRTC Chairman Jean-Pierre Blais, in a press release in January of last year. "This initiative is a perfect example of how technology can be used to improve access to 911 services for Canadians with disabilities. I would like to thank those who participated in last year's trial. Its success convinced us that expanding the initiative across the country is not only possible, but also in the public interest."

The CRTC doesn't have a cost es-

timate for research, development or implementation they said in an email interview that "each stakeholder is responsible for their own costs." In that same email, CRTC also disclosed that they've been looking into Text with 911 since 2009. The email also said that as all wireless carriers are able to provide Text with 911 and that it's now the emergency call centers responsibility to implement the new technology which is legislated by provincial or municipal governments.

Belleville Police will spend \$20,000 to upgrade 911 services in Belleville, a mere six per cent of the police services \$320,000 proposed annual budget, according to an interview between Cory McMullen and The Intelligencer on March 7th.

"The service is amazing, exactly what we all need! I know we will feel protected since we finally have an access to Text with 911 when we need help. Some people don't have voice minutes on their phones; this method would make things much easier," said Emily LaFleur, a first-year photojournalism student said who is also hearing impaired. "We have been waiting for this to happen for years, this will save a lot of lives; deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing people too."

When asked about other services that the CRTC can provide in order to improve the lives of the 10 per cent of Canadians who are deaf or hard of hearing, LaFleur said she would like to see the return of Video-Relay Service, or VRS.

"Text with 911 is a great start, but I feel that VRS (Video-relay service) should be back in Canada. It will allow us to sign freely with the interpreter on a television or a computer, get them to call anyone I want. It can be for ordering food, taxi, or a call to a person who doesn't have a Skype account or a cell-phone," she said.

## Online retail impacts on Belleville's retail landscape

### Vacant storefronts across the city an indication of problem

By Mitch Ward

The retail landscape in Belleville is becoming an example of the national shift towards online retail and away from walk-in stores.

The most recent North American retailer with a presence in Belleville to announce closings is Staples.

The company did not give specifics, but did announce that it will be closing 225 stores in North America by 2015.

If the Bell Boulevard location is

closed, it could become another vacant storefront, like that of the former wZellers location across the road that closed last year.

General manager of the Quinte Mall, Alexandra Benjafield, who oversees the plaza that includes the Staples outlet, said she was not concerned with the possibility of having to deal with a vacant property in the near future.

One factor mentioned in the Staples financial press release was the move to online retail.

Bill Saunders of the Belleville Chamber of Commerce confirmed this trend.

"The entire retail market is changing. People are doing more online shopping. Those numbers are rising

dramatically every year. Presumably, this is taking away from in-store sales.

"So retailers are moving towards making sure they have an online presence."

The downtown cores of Belleville and neighbouring Trenton are more reminders of the decline.

Research from the Office of Consumer Affairs showed that despite the success of Canadian malls, space is becoming limited as municipalities move toward building more industrial-based businesses and office space for companies.

Combined with a rising cut to retail-based jobs by major companies, the large number of part-time workers relying on the jobs will be at risk.

Especially at risk is the more mature workforce.

Research by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce showed that the population aged 55 and over had the largest increase in employment in 2013.

With the move to online retailing, companies are looking for a different kind of employee.

"There is a shift towards retailers hiring folks with IT skills, online skills and social media skills, to support the online retail business. And because of that, you see slower hiring or reduced hiring in the traditional retail businesses," said Saunders.

Despite the worrying stats, the retail situation in Belleville is still healthy,

according to City Economics manager Karen Poste.

"In general terms, retail is doing extremely well in Belleville. We are the retail centre for a much larger region than just the city of Belleville. We attract customers from 50 kilometres away. We have a lot of the big name stores here, as well as several private label stores that are doing quite well."

At the moment, city officials say they aren't worried about the retail economy.

Poste added, "There's nothing in the information that we have that indicates any sort of looming cloud over the retail economy in Belleville."