

Common Threads



By Nate Smelle

LOOKING BACK THROUGH the piles of copies of Bancroft This Week from years past at the office, one finds more than a few common threads binding together our communal history in North Hastings. Dating as far back as the year 2000 these faded pages reveal much about our local history. Reading the Letters to the Editor I could see how the tone changed after Sept. 11, 2001. The fear and anger emotionally expressed in these letters brought back memories of a time much different than today. This got me thinking about how important it is to preserve our local history.

For me at least, these chapters would have remained a mystery if it wasn't for the good sense of an unknown historically concerned colleague who began compiling our free weekly archive.

With every turn of the yellowing pages a little bit more light was shed on how we got here today. Reading the history documented by my predecessors, submissions from the public, letters to the editor and even in ads I find 'common threads' in the form of names; names of people, names of businesses, names of organizations and events that have endured to this day as stitches in the fabric of our community. I also find other important names no longer in circulation that have disappeared into the void of undocumented moments that helped lead us here.

Although many of the mayors, reeves and councillors we elected in previous elections may no longer hold office, many of them are still active in community improvement projects throughout the region. Community events that have stood the test of time such as the Rockhound Gemboree, the various studio tours and Maynooth Madness each also provide a unique and useful glimpse of who we

are as a community today. The reasons we gather say a lot in regards to the things we care about as individuals, a community and as a society. The moments captured in photographs and in words during these annual celebrations often paint a vivid picture of what life is like for those living in the Greater Bancroft Area.

On Saturday, July 25 the name Thomas Kehoe joined the list of historic communal contributors in a public ceremony dedicating the bridge on Station Street in downtown Bancroft in his honour. Killed by a drunk driver while on duty, his legacy of community service now lives on every time each of us crosses the bridge in the heart of Bancroft that bears his name. Thanks to the many news agencies in attendance and the powerful summer thunderstorm that swept through town drenching the crowd, the 150 or so people who took part in the ceremony will forever remember this special occasion as a monumental moment in our community's history; a history still in the making.