



Aaron Crossen is the owner of Need A Hero? Comics on North Front Street. He opened the shop four years ago because he was tired of having to either order online or drive to Toronto to buy comic books. Crossen said that he was a huge fan of the X-Men cartoons in the '90s, but didn't get into comic books until he was in college. "That's when I fell into the rabbit hole." Some of his favourite comics are Batman, Deadpool and Spiderman.

Small business owners prefer their independence



Marina Boretski, owner of Boretski Gallery in downtown Belleville, poses with articles of vintage clothing. Boretski collects and sells antiques and vintage clothing and accessories. Her love for these items started in her teenage years and has continued as her business passes its decade mark.



(Above) Mike Malachowski is pictured in his antique store, Funk & Gruven A-Z on Bridge Street. Malachowski opened the shop 17 years ago to pursue his love of antiques and crafts and arts.

(Right) Tammy Yeotes is the owner of Yuppy Puppies, a dog groomers business in Belleville. Yeotes began her own business three years ago. She had been laid off from her two previous jobs and decided she would rather be her own boss.



(Above) John Irvine has been running his small barber parlour for 32 years. One of his passions is to paint barber's poles. "Nowadays there are no barbers left. They don't teach this profession anymore. They prefer hairdressing," he whispered.

(Right) Bill Chesher is the owner of Chesher's Outdoors. "It all started because I wanted to help people." Chesher is a well-known figure in the outdoors community. He co-hosts two television shows, Into the Wild and Canadian Whitetail.



(Above) "It's been a crazy few months with the holidays and winter coming on. It is nice to be able to try and get caught up but there is always something else that needs to get done," says Ed Kraus, owner of Ideal Bike in downtown Belleville.

(Below) Antonina V. Durham was one of the two vendors to brave the cold at the Farmer's Market in Belleville. Durham, originally from Russia, has been operating Hear-beat, a thrift store located in Belleville's Bayview Mall for 15 years. Durham's favourite part of being a business owner is her freedom and her ability to be creative.

