

## Mud Dawgs awarded Citizen of the Year in Maynooth



By Nate Smelle

Members of the Maynooth and Hastings Highlands Business Association (MHHBA) defied the freezing rain and icy roads on the night of Sunday, Jan. 18 to recognize this year's Citizen of the Year. Now in its 22nd year, this award celebrates the individual, or individuals who have shown outstanding community service throughout the past year.

Walking into The Arlington on this night there was an air of mystery in the room as everyone wondered who this year's winner was.

"Every year the electoral committee does an amazing job keeping the winner a secret," said the MHHBA's past chair Joe Shulman. "It's hard to believe that we can keep it a secret in such a small and close-knit community. It makes it more exciting for everyone that way... especially for the winner, or winners."

Still not letting the cat out of the bag, Shulman continued to add to the suspense, when he invited the hungry crowd to indulge in a buffet-style potluck dinner before this year's recipient was announced. Keeping in the spirit of giving back to the community attendees were asked to bring donations for the local food bank.

"This is a very special night for this community," said Shulman. "It gives our members and people from the community a chance to get together and have fun. Many of the winners of Citizen of the Year from previous years are actually here tonight."

Past winner of the MHHBA's Citizen of the Year Lloyd Trolley continued his winning ways winning the draw for a free membership and exposure for his business Lloyd Trolley Logging Ltd. on a new sign at the corner of Hwy. 62 and Hwy. 127 in Maynooth.

Like Shulman, MHHBA membership chair Sean Cassidy also recognizes the importance of this specific annual event as being valuable to the community on many levels.

"Another way we want to improve doing business is by creating social networking opportunities in which members are able to get to know each other," Cassidy said.

"We can share information, we can seek advice, and that in the great thing about this business association is that we can refer businesses to one another. We can also identify opportunities for partnerships, because there a lot of businesses here within our small community that can cross promote very effectively together, so I think we should be trying to focus on, and drive those possibilities."

Prior to the announcement of the winner(s), Cassidy spoke of some of the MHHBA's plans to grow in 2015.

?We are actively looking for people who want to stand up and make their voice heard and be included in our organization and help drive it forward to be successful. Almost just as important is the fact that by belonging to a business association it gives us a collective voice as a business community for government and other tourism businesses and organizations.?

When Cassidy was finished speaking Shulman brought the suspense to an end revealing this year's winners .

?And the award for Citizen of the Year goes too?Boyhood,? joked Shulman. ?But seriously I would like to congratulate the organizing committee of Maynooth's Mud Dawgs as the winners of Citizen of the Year.?

The idea for the Mud Dawg's annual Mud Run started small, with a private gathering at Tom Scott's house 10 years ago and it quickly became very popular. It was then that they came up with the idea to host a similar public event. In the third year the current committee came on board and have been running the event ever since. This committee is made up of Angel and Tom Scott, and Tracy and Frank Hagar. Since the committee has taken charge of the event they have taken it to a whole new level. This dedicated team of volunteers has added more fundraisers, new fencing and bleachers. They have also improved the marketing of the event by producing an annual promotional brochure.

Speaking on behalf of the committee Hagar expressed how grateful they were to receive this honour.

?I would say that the four of us love doing this event,? said Hagar. ?This year is the 10th annual, so we are hoping to bring something new to the pit. Thank you to all in our community that support us each year with our fundraisers that will be starting soon for this year and thank you to the people of the MHHBA for honouring us with this award.?

Hagar's fellow Citizen of the Year, Angel Scott said she is truly humbled by the award.

?We feel that the mud run helps with the community, it brings the public to the area, which means more business to the town,? she said.

?It also gives our beautiful town a little more attention. We have big shoes to fill following the great success of the Loggers games, but hopefully we can achieve the same success that they had. Our event is always directed to the public and giving some of our fellow mud junkies to play and show off their hard work they put in their boggers.?

Scott said the event would not be in its 10th year without the support of the local business community.

?This year is going to be totally amazing, we are improving the track and more excitement for the trucks and the spectators, it will be definitely something to take part in!?