

Hastings Highlands nominates senior of the year

By Sarah Sobanski

Hastings Highlands has nominated Chris Hass as its 2018 Senior of the Year.

Previous Maynooth and Hastings Highlands Business Association Citizen of the Year, Hass has a long history as an integral member of the North Hastings community. After she was nominated by council at its regular meeting April 17, some councillors joked they didn't know if Hass qualified as a 'senior.' They said it was hard to believe because she was so active in the community.

'Would you believe I'll be 74 in June,' Hass laughed when *Bancroft This Week* spoke to her about her nomination a few days later. She told the paper the nomination was 'humbling.'

'I love to work in the community but when people recognize it, it's even nicer you know,' she said.

Hass has been lending her hands in the community since she retired as an area schoolteacher. That was back in 2000 after 30 years in education including two in Toronto, 14 at Maynooth Public School and 14 at Bancroft Public School. She called retiring her 'millennium project.'

In the years following her retirement, Hass has been a member of Hastings Highlands council; joined the Bancroft Horticultural Society and the Hastings Highlands Public Library board; been on municipal committees; helped co-ordinate Maynooth Madness; started the Maynooth Farmers' Market 'heading into 10th anniversary year this summer' and her own business. Hass opened Memories Bakery and Tea Room last June.

'I was on council for 10 years,' Hass recalled. 'When I was on council then I was on the economic development committee and we were looking for things that we could do that would pick up business in little towns.'

'All of the sudden in the middle of the night I sat up and I thought, 'farmers' market.' It was like it was sent to me to be done,' she added. 'We started out with six or eight vendors and now were up to a regular 35 to 40 a weekend.'

That's just to name a few. Hass said she can't help herself when it comes to volunteering.

'Nothing would happen if you didn't have volunteers. You can't afford to pay people to do it and if you don't have things going on, nobody wants to live in a community that has nothing going on,' she said. 'It's just a lot of fun getting together. I just like the community spirit it builds. It just brings people together.'

Hass's resume is impressive, she's been instrumental in the community 'though she wouldn't admit so to the paper. She suggested anyone looking to make a difference in the Hastings Highlands community, or wondering where to start out as a volunteer in an area with so many options, start at Maynooth Madness.

'In Maynooth particularly I would tell them to volunteer with Maynooth Madness. It gets you involved with all kinds of different aspects like planning the vendors, helping with raising money and all kinds of different things,' she said, or 'any organization that's doing anything.'

She also said volunteering was a great way for those new to the community to get out and 'meet the people.'

'We've got some really hard working, great people. It's just fun. It makes life a lot more fun to live,' she said. 'I think it keeps you young when you laugh and you have fun.'