

Locals make community proud

By Sarah Sobanski

Seven area community members were nominated for MP Mike Bossio's Canada 150 awards. That's five from Bancroft, one from L'Amable and another from Maynooth of 68 nominated across Hastings-Lennox and Addington.

The awards celebrate extraordinary service to country and/or community within Bossio's constituency, according to a release by his office. The trophies were pins made from the copper of the roof of the Parliament of Canada. Each MP across the country received 20 pins to give out.

That meant 20 final award winners or too many good people to recognize and not enough pins. Bossio said he agreed.

"We could have had hundreds. I could pick 68 out of Bancroft alone that are deserving of this honour," he said, noting people still wanted to nominate their peers after nominations had closed.

"I know there's going to be a number of disappointed people who aren't going to get to participate in the work we're doing, but there's enough to say that at least we're recognizing the people that are out there with the knowledge that there are so many so many well-deserving people in my riding."

One of the reasons Bossio had five independent judges choose the winners was because he felt a great number of people deserved the award.

"I can't emphasize enough, I really stepped back and had no involvement in this whatsoever in either the nominations or picking those who won because I really wanted it to be an at-arms-length process," said Bossio.

That meant youth such as 16-year-old Dillabough who hadn't met Bossio before Sept. 12 could be nominated. She was nominated by her mother for her incredible resume of volunteer work 320 hours to date, not counting this summer when she joined up with the North Hastings Community Fish Hatchery.

"I was very shocked, felt very humbled and privileged and honoured. I couldn't believe it when I first found out," she said of her nomination.

Dillabough started volunteering at the North Hastings Children's Services Experience Summer Camp when she was 13. She was only required to volunteer for one month when she signed up, but she stayed for two the rest is history.

"I like to help out around the community. I think it's an important piece of being a citizen and [I'm] just happy to do it."

Dillabough isn't far behind legacies of commitment to the community such as that of Kijicho Manito Madaouskarini Algonquin Nation's Ada Tinney, Hastings Highlands Senior of the Year Joey Shulman, Town of Bancroft Council's Tracy McGibbon or Bancroft and Area Stewardship Council chair Steve Wilkins who were also nominated for the award.

Wilkins stressed his nomination was for more than one person.

"I'm just the representative of so many people who have done so much work on the trails. The way it worked out was they needed one representative," he said. "I'm going down as long as everyone understands I represent all of those great people that have done so much work."

He joked, "I told them, if we get it every name is going to be mentioned, whether they give it to me or not? I just hope the group gets recognition? That's all that matters."

On Sept. 8, Bossio said his staff was expecting as many as 200 people for the Napanee awards ceremony Sept. 11.

"It's good because everyone will be recognized? There [will] be a little something for everyone."

At the end of the night Sept. 11, Tinney, Shulman and McGibbon walked away with pins. Other award winners included Kevin Alkenbrack (Napanee), Jessica Boomhower (Bath), Cortwright Christian (Napanee), Don Degenova (Tweed), Don Fenwick (Enterprise), Nicole Flynn (Madoc), Dr. Mellissa Holowaty (Marmora), Cathie Jones (Marmora), Amy Mack (Napanee), Chief Donald Maracle (Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory), Winifred Perryman (Corbyville), Rick Phillips (Plainfield), Janet Scott (Stella), Katherine Sedgwick (Madoc), Maria Stebelsky (Napanee), Keith Stephenson (Plainfield) and Margaret Walsh (Tyendinaga/Napanee).

Not all winners were available for comment before press time. Look for a follow up with the winners in Bancroft This Week's next issue.