

Maple Leaf Snow Skimmers celebrate landowners, volunteers and anniversary of maintenance facility



By **Mike Riley**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Maple Leaf Snow Skimmers held a private event on Sept. 23 at their maintenance facility at 348 Boulter Lake Road in Lake St. Peter to show appreciation to their landowners and volunteers, who contribute immeasurably to their trail system. They also celebrated the 10-year anniversary of their maintenance facility, the acquisition of a new trail groomer and a couple of awards they'd won this past September. MLSS president Steve Lang comments on this momentous occasion.

On Sept. 23, the MLSS feted their landowners and volunteers who have done so much over the years to make the snowmobile trail they use each year possible and overall successful. They also celebrated the anniversary of their Lake St. Peter maintenance facility, opened officially back in 2013 by then president Dewey Jordan, what Lang called "a long-standing dream for a lot of snow skimmers." They also celebrated their club taking possession of a new \$360,000 trail groomer with drag attachment from the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, being awarded the distinction of being the 2022/2023 District 6 Club of the Year, and having club vice president and long-time volunteer George Tsagrinos win the District 6 Volunteer of the Year award.

The MLSS was formed by Con Dillabough and Glen Jones of Maple Leaf in 1974, with Dillabough being the first president. The MLSS joined the OFSC in 1981 and became incorporated two years later, largely due to the efforts of landowners Bruce and Ethel Davis. Today, the club is flourishing, with the club maintaining 300 kilometres of trails with three groomers. These trails branch out from Lake St. Peter as a hub, northwest to Whitney, north to Madawaska, east to Combermere, south to Bancroft, west to Martins Mill and southeast to Baptiste Lake.

The MLSS is administered by a nine-member executive, with 12 trained groomer operators, 20 certified trail wardens and numerous volunteers keeping it running smoothly. They now have over 900 members and that number keeps growing each year.

In addition to members of the Maple Leaf Snow Skimmers who were present at the Sept. 23 event, the landowners and volunteers were also there, as were snowmobile clubs from the surrounding areas, and elected officials and staff from the Town of Bancroft, the

Municipality of Hastings Highlands and South Algonquin Township, including landowners Bruce and Ethel Davis, Hastings Highlands Councillor Roger Davis, Bancroft Councillor George Eastman, and many more.

Lang told the attendees on Sept. 23 that a lot of work was done to get the maintenance facility off the ground.

?A lot of fundraising, a lot of donations; the floor, the grating, everything like that was donations from different companies like the Levesque Bros. There were a lot of companies that were really good to us to help get this building up,? he says.

Lang also said they were fortunate to have great cooperation with the municipalities, their neighbours and the business community.

Lang told Bancroft This Week that the event couldn't have gone better with great weather, great company and great food.

?I was ecstatic that landowners Bruce and Ethel Davis, who made the club a legal entity back in 1983 were able to attend. It is a real shot in the arm for this club to recognize the support and efforts of everyone that makes our trail system first class,? he says. ?OFSC awards, the 10-year anniversary of our maintenance facility and recent delivery of a brand-new groomer was icing on the cake of a perfect day.?