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should have sparkle and glam. Together the two chamber women thought of everything.

There was a star-lined walk of fame which led guests from the curb to the entrance of the theater where a red carpet and a trio of shouting "paparazzi" begged for photos awaited each arriving guest. There were even erupting flashbulbs for authenticity.

The champagne flowed from a fountain and guests grazed the buffet table that stretched along one side of the lobby and which featured another centerpiece fountain. This one dispensed chocolate. Guests had their choice of fruit, cookies and other sweets to embellish under the velvety chocolate volcano.

Even the stars showed up. Elvis and Marilyn Monroe were there in spirit as life-size cardboard cutouts. Authentic Emmy and Oscar statuettes were on display.

Guests included local business stars like Frank Lanza and his wife Doris, owners of Highway Garage along with Smyth Cramer Realtor Kathy Neptune and her husband Jim. The recent Valley Art Center lifetime achievement honorees and art scene regulars Dave and Lois Toole made an appearance as well.

Chagrin Falls Councilwoman Nancy Rogoff represented local government along with former Bainbridge Trustee Chris Horn who is the chamber's new president and presided over the evening's events. Mr. Horn took the reins from H. Kenneth Douthit III, publisher of Chagrin Valley Times, Solon Times and Geauga Times Courier, who was seen chatting with VAC Executive Director Mary Ann Breisch and board President Bruce Downy.

Angelina Dolasante, a Chagrin Falls High School graduate and a current Glass Asylum artist, stood with a display table featuring examples of her art. The glass blowing studio on West Orange Street is a chamber member, evening sponsor and created the glass flower and statuette awards recipients would receive later in the evening.

At 6-feet tall, it was local TV personality Loree Vick who quite literally stood head and shoulders above the packed lobby. She was the guest of the Chagrin Documentary



Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce members and their guests enjoy food and drink in the lobby of Chagrin Cinemas on March 22 for the chamber's Academy Awards style awards night.

Photo by Geoff Powers

### Film Festival.

The shortest guests of honor were Theo and Celia Hawk, Chagrin Falls Intermediate and Middle School students, who were there to show their "Shop Local Pledge" promotional film which the chamber commissioned in a competition among junior filmmakers.

### The envelopes please

Then, with gift bags of popcorn in hand, party goers filed into the cinema's W.C. Fields and Shirley Temple Theatre for the program. On the screen, as they settled into their seats, guests saw a series of locally made commercials promoting the evening's sponsors and other chamber businesses.

Another highlight was a short film showing chamber members in action during events and programs held during the previous 12 months and set to the Bachman-Turner Overdrive tune "Taking Care of Business."

There wasn't an empty seat in the house as Mrs. Gebler stepped to the stage to call the awards ceremony to order.

"We are a half hour behind schedule but I promise you there will be no political jokes," she began.

Then she introduced guests including representatives from Gov. John Kasich's office along with two surrogates, one from the office of U.S.

Rep. David Joyce, R-Bainbridge, and the other from the office of Secretary of State Jon Husted.

Mrs. Gebler then told the audience to make sure there were no mix-ups when naming the winners of business awards, she introduced the awards briefcase guardians, three members of the U.S. Army Reserves who in full dress uniforms and with briefcase in hand climbed to the stage to thunderous applause.

### And the winners are

Described as a man "who walks the walk by supporting fellow chamber members by shopping and partnering with them," Mrs. Gebler presented the Chamber Member of the Year Award to Michael Henry of Henry Real Estate Group.

"He works hard and he gives back to the chamber," Mrs. Gebler added. A smiling Mr. Henry accepted with a simple "Thank you everyone."

Next was the coveted Business of the Year Award which Mrs. Gebler awarded to "Lal a Land," a comic reference to the embarrassing flub made during this year's Oscars awards show.

It got a laugh but things got serious again when she announced the winner brings \$600,000 to the community in five days, 10,000 people from the region and across the globe and presenting a program so "amazing" it virtually guarantees return customers due to their positive experience.

Business of the Year went to the Chagrin Documentary Film Festival. Its founder and Director Mary Ann Ponce had a few encouraging words for the audience.

"I love the chamber and the first thing I did right for the festival was to join this organization and in return we all felt so supported," Mrs. Ponce said. "We are here to bring something special to the community and it is something we are so happy to be able to do."

As outgoing president, Mr. Douthit had the honor of presenting the President's Merit Award.

"One of the nice things about being president of this organization is being able to be a past president and present this award," Mr. Douthit said. Then he named as recipients Bob and Jo Royer - founders in 2015 of the valley's First Responders Recognition Day.

Mr. Douthit noted that the event began in Chagrin Falls in 2015 and was celebrated by 10 area communities in 2016 that took the time to honor their police, firefighters and rescue squad workers.

Mr. Royer reminded the audience the day is a way "to thank the people who take care of us day in and day out and who leave for work in the morning with no guarantee they will come home that night."

The Royers were inspired to lead the initiative after being saddened by the way safety forces were being treated.

Mr. Douthit told the audience he had talked to a local police chief who told him it wasn't the dinners supplied to the local departments "but the recognition and outpouring of support from the communities."

The final accolade on the evening's agenda was the presentation of the Chagrin Valley Chamber of Commerce Scholarships. Scholarship Chairman David Strahl described the honorees as "the most talented and well put together young people you will ever meet."

Scholarships went to Vala Zennai, Chagrin Falls High School; Brett Grossman, Kenston High School; Jessica Perez, Newbury High School, and Russell John Rogers, Orange High School.

Mr. Strahl pointed out all four students are engaged in business pursuits and working in the world of business.