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## Top Story::

### Beauty, brains and personality

#### Wabush woman competing in Miss Canada Scholarship Pageant this week

**Pam Bennett**  
**The Aurora**

Kristen Parsons wants to make Labrador West proud.

The 20-year-old former Miss Teen Newfoundland and Labrador is competing in Miss Canada Scholarship Pageant from Aug. 27-30 in Niagara Falls, ON.

While winning the pageant would be a dream come true for the young woman, she says just being able to participate is an honour in itself.

"I've been contacted [several times] for four years to take part," she explained how she found out about the pageant. "I was supposed to take part in the Miss Teen Canada Scholarship Pageant when I Miss Teen Newfoundland and Labrador, but public [exams] at school prevented me from doing it."

She was contacted every year after that to participate in the pageant, but the competition always fell on a date when something important was going on at university, so Ms. Parsons was never able to participate.

This year, however, she finally saw a window of opportunity.

"We were going to Niagara Falls for vacation anyway this year," she noted. "They called me four or five weeks ago and asked me to represent my hometown and province, so I decided to do it."

While Ms. Parsons has had some pageant experience with her win as Miss Teen Newfoundland and Labrador in 2002, she said the Miss Canada Scholarship Pageant is a little different.

"It's not just a pageant night," she explained. "There a lot of other competitions involved within the pageant. I'm going to be doing the talent competition, the photogenic competition, the TV commercial (competition) and the spokesperson (competition). So that gives you the opportunity that even if you don't win the pageant, there are still sponsors, scouts and acting and modeling agencies there, so you might be able to win somewhere else."

She especially likes that it's a competition based on more than beauty.

According to Ms. Parsons, the competition emphasizes intelligence, style, personality and culture and the winner gets more than a crown.

"You can get money towards school, you get the opportunity to get



Submitted photo/Kristen Parsons is competing in the Miss Canada Scholarship Pageant this week and while she would love to win, she said she mostly hopes she'll convince other young girls in Labrador West to give pageants a try.

Mon, August 28

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\$35,000 worth of prizes like getting to do charitable work in another country for a year, you can get a year contract in acting and modeling and then you get money to put into a charity that you believe in," she stated with a smile. "I think it's a really great pageant."

Ms. Parsons isn't sure how many contestants she will be competing against this week, but at last count there were 15 participants. She noted there is representation from every province and some provinces get more than one contestant depending on the size of the area.

Ms. Parsons said thousands of girls were screened for a pageant, but only a handful were selected.

"It's a lot of work just leading up to the pageant," she stated emphatically. "No matter if you win the pageant or not you have to work on a panel for a year. I chose school bullying as my panel because Newfoundland and Labrador is the only province that doesn't have an organization on school bullying."

School bullying is on the rise according to Ms. Parsons and she believes it's an issue that needs to be addressed across the country. It's something that can follow children into adulthood, the young woman noted, so she's been working hard over the last few weeks researching her panel.

She will also have to sit in on a number of seminars in the next couple days, which will teach the contestants about world events, how to represent their panel, how to interview with judges and even how to dress.

She explained the pageant itself is broken into two nights: the preliminary pageant and the grand finale.

"The preliminary pageant is on the 29th and what that includes is your interview with the judges, your poise and how you carried yourself throughout the event, along with your fitness wear, your evening wear and that will bring you into the Top 10," she recalled the layout. "The finale pageant is on the 30th, so if you make it into the Top 10 you have a speech on your panel, and interview on stage and you'll also have an impromptu question."

The young woman said she would love to make into the Top 10 category and would be ecstatic with a win, but she added she's pleased to be able to take part at all.

She's excited, but has no expectations and she hopes that will help her in the long run.

"When I competed in the Miss Teen (Newfoundland and Labrador) pageant, not many people knew I was going," she explained. "So I went in with no weight on my shoulders; I wasn't trying to prove anything to anyone. It's the same thing with this one. I don't have to prove anything to anyone, just to myself and if I don't win I'll still look at this experience as a great accomplishment. Winning would be a bonus."

Ms. Parsons really hopes her decision to take part in the pageant will help other young girls feel like they can compete at the provincial and national level as well.

She's glad she's getting the opportunity to represent youth in Labrador West and she intends to bring up issues that some people tend to take for granted.

If Ms. Parsons doesn't win she plans to head back to university in the fall and complete her Bachelor of Science and Nursing degree. After that she hopes to get a Biochemistry degree and eventually get into medical school.

At some time in her life she'd like to do relief work overseas as a doctor and Ms. Parsons said that's one of the main reasons she decided to do the Miss Canada Scholarship Pageant.

The winner gets to go the Dominican Republic and do charity work and she would love to do that.

"Education is the most important thing to me, but if I win this pageant, I would gladly take some time away from school to have these experiences," she said. "If it takes me a little longer to get my degree

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then that's OK. I'm young and I truly believe everything happens for a reason. I guess we'll just have to wait and see what happens."

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**COLUMNS: ANDREW KELLY - On Another Note**



**THE SOUNDTRACK TO MY LIFE**

If it weren't for music, I don't know who I would be right now.

I mean, yes, I would still be Andrew – a kid born in Labrador City, raised in Wabush and recognized because of my outrageously curly hair.

That isn't who I am because all th...

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