

# Gushue runner-up in Miss Teen pageant

## Babstock, Abbott selected for individual awards

By KEVIN HIGGINS  
*The Beacon*

Laura Gushue of Gander describes it, quite simply, as an amazing moment — standing in the final two at the Miss Teen Newfoundland and Labrador Pageant, holding the hand of Danielle Seward of Heart's Delight, waiting for the winning name to be announced last Sunday in St. John's.

And the amazement of the moment had not left her three days later, as she told *The Beacon* about her experience of being the event's first runner-up, while Danielle was crowned Miss Teen Newfoundland and Labrador.

"It was such a great experi-

ence, and I'm by no means disappointed in how I did," said Laura. "I tried my best, and I'm very glad that I made it as far as I did.

"Danielle is a great girl, and I'm proud of her. She will be a great Miss Teen Newfoundland and Labrador."

Laura said she actually felt very lucky to be among the 28 chosen to compete in the annual event, which began in 1996, with the goal to acknowledge the accomplishments of the province's young women in such areas of academics, fitness, public speaking, community involvement and volunteer work.

"The pageant wasn't something I followed or was interested in until I heard an

announcement at school, and my friend, Christina Oates, and I decided we would apply," said Laura. "We both have a sense of adventure, and both of us were lucky enough to be chosen out of hundreds of applications."

In preparation for her first pageant, Laura said she basically just tried to stay up on current events for the academic component, while continuing her gymnastics training for the fitness test. Her gymnastics skills were also used in the talent competition, earning second runner-up honours.

"I just basically did a gymnastics routine, and it scored very well," said the 16-year-old, who also listed photography, piano, scrapbooking, painting and reading as some of her other interests in her official pageant biography.

Laura said she knew when she signed up the negative connotations some associate with beauty pageants, but from her own experience, these suggestions are all misconceptions.

"A lot of people think it's a beauty pageant because they don't see all of what takes

place," said Laura. "If it was this, I don't think I would have gotten involved. You need to be an all around person in order to compete."

In the pageant, the academic test, fitness test and interviews were worth 75 per cent of a contestant's score, while the remainder comes from various other activities.

Laura said she isn't sure if she would enter another pageant in the future.

"It's stressful and hectic, so I'll just have to wait until the time comes to make up my mind," she said. "This was just an amazing experience and well worth it."

### Other local entries

In the list of 28 contestants, four besides Laura and Christina hailed from central Newfoundland, including Eastport's Leah Babstock, who was chosen Miss Teen Fitness and was a top 10 finalist, as well as Bridgette Abbott, who picked up the Miss Teen Friendship accolade.

Jennifer Stagg of Lumsden, Victoria King of New-Wes-Valley were the two other local competitors.



Submitted photo

**TEEN AWARDS** — Gander's Laura Gushue, 16, was the first runner-up at the Miss Teen Newfoundland and Labrador Pageant, which was held in St. John's Feb. 23-25. She also brought home accolades as the second runner-up in the event's fitness competition.

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Collegiate breakfast program starts

A new breakfast program for students at Gander Collegiate is to start today.

It will be offered on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from the high school's cafeteria. It's

Road, and in Greenspond, Aspen Cove, Ladle Cove, Frederickton, Noggin Cove and Gander Bay.

In the Gander area, the money is going towards resurfacing parts of Gander Bay Road and Benton Road, and adding a turning