

Muskoka Mosaic: Introducing Olivia Cain

By Paula Boon

Olivia Cain likes a challenge. "If you like something, you should go for it," says the recent graduate of Huntsville High School. "Try things. We all make mistakes, but you'll never know if you don't try."

Right now, Cain has her sights set on getting into the hair stylist program at Georgian College's Bracebridge campus. This can only happen if she finds someone with the time and space to take her on as an apprentice. "It's hard, but that's my goal," she says.

The petite 18-year-old is determined to persevere until she finds a position. "I've always wanted to be a hair stylist," she says, adding that her co-op experience at Oasis Hair and Tanning Spa last semester only made her more certain this was what she wanted to do. "I love playing with people's hair, making different styles and colours."

Cain, who completed three co-op placements while at Huntsville High School, says co-op is a great opportunity to get out into the 'real world' and find out about different jobs. She enjoyed her second co-op at Fitt Gym so much she still works there one day a week and is thinking about becoming qualified as a personal trainer.

The Huntsville Skating Club was a natural place for her to do her first-ever co-op because figure skating is Cain's other love. She started the sport at age four when she was living in Bolton and enjoyed it from the first minute.

Cain explains she was born in Bogota, Columbia and adopted when she was three

years old. "Columbia doesn't have any ice, so my mom decided to put me into skating so I could experience winter through a sport," says Cain. "She thought I would do it for a couple of years and then I'd do something else. Fourteen years later I'm still on the ice."

By the time she was eight and living in Kearney, Cain was skating three times a week in Burk's Falls. In Grade 9 when her family moved to Huntsville, she switched to the Huntsville Skating Club and practiced four times a week. "Free skate is my thing," she says.

This year the skating club chose Cain as the recipient of both the Program Assistant Award and the Senior Skater of the Year award in recognition of her efforts.

Her next steps are to take the National Coaching Certification Program Level 1 course and the Canskate coach training program. "I had to wait until I turned 18," Cain says. "I'm also trying to do as many skating tests as I can because the more I do, the more skills I can teach to kids."

Cain likes teaching the smallest children best. "A lot of them are scared. It's a big world out there for them," she says. "I always tell them, 'You can do it.'"

For example, Cain describes one little boy who didn't want to go on the ice, but by the end of the season he loved it so much he didn't want to get off the ice. "It was great to see that," she says. "It felt like I really accomplished something."

Her accomplishments don't end there. Cain was the valedictorian of the 2005 class

at Tawingo College and also did well at Huntsville High School, graduating last month as an Ontario Scholar and receiving a Stepping Stone Award for high achievement and a commitment to learning.

This is also her third year as a summer employee of the Great Vine. "I really like the people I work with. And Ken and Catherine (Cole, the owners) are great people to work for," she says.

When not working or on the ice training, Cain enjoys spending time with her boyfriend Stephen and her family, which

consists of mom Christine, dad Darrin and seven-year-old brother Mitchell. "I look up to my parents," Cain says. "They have supported me, encouraged me, and never let me down."

From them, Cain has learned to make goals and then work toward them, one day at a time. "Eventually it will come," she says. "You just have to wait for it."

Thanks to Catherine Cole for suggesting Olivia Cain be profiled. To explore the complete collection of Muskoka Mosaic profiles, go to www.thelifecollector.com.



READY TO HELP: Olivia Cain puts some clothes on a rack at the Great Vine, where she has been a summer employee for the last two years. Cain hopes to apprentice at a local hair salon in the coming year.

Town says goodbye to long-time barber Rudy Baker

By Laura MacLean



Rudy Baker had a way with people and with words.

He could start up a conversation with anyone and that conversation could last for hours. People and hair were his two lifelong passions.

Baker, 83, passed away peacefully at his Huntsville home on July 17.

For 54 years, he owned and operated Rudy Baker's Barbershop on Main Street. His closest friends will tell you Baker did not look at his job as something he had to do. In fact, it was more a labour of love.

He was born and raised in Huntsville and attended elementary school in a stone schoolhouse in north Huntsville.

In 1944, he returned home from having served in the army and began working at a dry goods store in Huntsville. However, when Loblaw's took over Baker wasn't interested in working for a big company, so he decided to follow in his father's footsteps and went on to pursue barbering. He attended the Ryerson Institute of Trades and became a licensed barber.

Baker never once thought about permanently leaving the small town he had grown to love.

He married Irma Bullock from South Portage on May 12, 1949 and together they had three children; Larry, Wayne, and Sheryl. He was a grandfather and a great-grandfather.

"The greatest story he ever told (about his wife) was that she was five years younger, he met her, fell in love with her, gave her a dime and said, 'When you're old enough and you turn 18, give me a phone call and I'll marry you.' And he did," says Baker's son Wayne, who took over his father's business many years ago.

A devoted family man, Baker also took great pride in his community. He had an interest in Canadian politics and stayed abreast of town issues by attending council meetings. He was not one to openly voice his opinion on political matters, but preferred to be silently involved.

In the late 1950s, Baker, who was a member of the town's parks board, helped build a road leading up to Lions Lookout and ran a campground for a few years along Camp Kitchen Road. He was a member of the Huntsville Lions Club and a dedicated church-goer at All Saints' Anglican Church.

He opened his heart up to many people with developmental disabilities and when it came time to move his barbershop around 20 years ago, a handful of Community Living residents came to help him without being asked.

He had many close friends and spent his extra time outside putting around in his backyard. He never judged people. He accepted them at face value.

"He could talk your ear off," says Wayne. "He'd go up to the mall after he retired, and he'd have a crowd around him talking. You'd have to stand in line to talk with him."

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Many thanks go to Mike and Rod and the retailers at the Huntsville Place Mall for their continued support of the program and allowing us to showcase the achievements of the students.

Kathryn Verduyn
Director of Education



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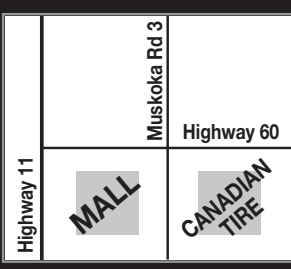
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