

# Opinion

## MUSKOKA MOSAIC

### Introducing Ashley Lima



BY PAULA BOON

When Ashley Lima and her co-worker Melissa Greaves show up in their District of Muskoka truck at water access points, well-meaning men often rush over and try to help them put their boat in the water.

The two young women appreciate the gesture, but they really don't need assistance. In fact, in their second summer working as water quality monitoring technicians, the pair have ample experience getting their vessel on and off the trailer. After all, they do it every day.

And despite drawbacks like extreme temperatures, wind, bugs, and the occasional kilometre-long portage through the bush with their testing equipment and an aluminum canoe, they love their job.

Lima, who will be entering her fourth year at the University of Guelph in the fall, says she can't imagine a better way to spend her summer.

A cottager for her first 11 years and resident of Huntsville ever since, Lima says her most vivid warm-weather memories involve being on and in the lakes: boating, waterskiing, swimming and canoeing.

"If I could spend every summer day out on the lake, it would pretty much make my life perfect," Lima says.

Working as a water quality monitoring technician also allows her to visit parts of the district she wouldn't otherwise know about, spot wildlife and help protect the lakes she has

always loved.

On the other hand, Lima notes that her work has been eye-opening.

"The main part of our job is to monitor and assess the impact that human activity has on the lakes in Muskoka," she explains. "Every day we see waterfront properties with completely altered landscapes and shorelines. It's depressing knowing what healthy properties and shorelines should look like and witnessing the destruction occurring every day all across Muskoka."

Lima finds it frustrating that although there is lots of information available about protecting lakes and shorelines, it's not being accessed or adopted.

When asked what she wants people to know, Lima replies, "To keep your property healthy is to keep it natural."

She explains that vegetation is a lake's main defence against erosion and helps prevent pollutants from entering the water.

Many people mistakenly think cement or stone walls will better protect shorelines from erosion, says Lima, but a lack of vegetation allows contaminants like lawn fertilizers and pesticides to run freely into the lake, upsetting the delicate balance that nature struggles to maintain.

"A waterfront property doesn't exist in a vacuum," Lima says. "Every action people take has an effect on the lake and the other systems to which it is connected."

As for Huntsville's environmental policies, Lima thinks their underlying intentions and ideas on the right track. But she's not happy to see the urbanization of waterfront access areas.

"When Avery Beach Park and Hunters Bay Trail opened, a majority of the land and shoreline was left natural," she points out. "Unfortunately, over the years, vegetation along the shore has been removed, and larger and larger sections along the trail mowed into lawn. This is not a good, healthy way to beautify or make the lake more accessible to people."

Lima hopes areas of the River Mill Park will be allowed to grow wild. "Natural areas will preserve the environment and maintain the beauty of Huntsville — the reason tourists come in the first place!"

Overall, says Lima, "Huntsville needs to show its commitment to preserving and protecting the main attraction and greatest asset we have: nature."

So what's in store for Lima? "I'm thinking about teachers' college," she says. "I would like to educate children to protect, respect and enjoy the earth in its natural state."

When her education is complete, she plans to return to the area.

"I would love to spend the rest of my life here," says Lima. "And I will keep the environment as a major focus in all the work I do."

## Help is now easier to access at Chrysalis



BY JENNY CRESSMAN,

Crisis counselor/administrative assistant for Chrysalis

Help has always been just a phone call away for women who are living in abusive situations and now, that call is free. Chrysalis, Muskoka's second shelter for abused women and their children has added a toll-free phone number to make support services easier to access at the Huntsville location.

The new number is 1-866-789-8488, which echoes the shelter's local phone number, 705-789-8488. Callers can now reach a crisis counsellor at Chrysalis any time, even without a quarter for a pay phone. And, it's important to note, all incoming or outgoing calls are masked so that phone numbers are not displayed and confidentiality is maintained.

Chrysalis adheres to a strict confidentiality policy and offers a support services and accommodation to abused women and their children 24 hours a day. Operated under the umbrella of the Muskoka Women's Advocacy Group, which is run by a board of volunteers, the facility works in

tandem with Muskoka Interval House to help women throughout the region escape from abusive situations and establish safer, healthier homes, free from the threat of domestic violence.

Services at Chrysalis include emergency shelter for women and their children; crisis counselling by phone or in person; safety planning; support and referrals to other agencies; public education on issues of abuse and violence against women; emergency transportation; group programs for women and children; distribution of recycled household goods and clothing to women in need; and assistance with applications for affordable, supportive housing units at Chrysalis.

In addition to providing key services, Chrysalis has 10 supportive transitional housing units intended for vulnerable women and children. These include studio apartments, as well as one- and two-bedroom units.

For further information on any services or for confidential support please call Chrysalis at 789-8488 or toll-free 1-866-

789-8488. You can also reach Muskoka Interval House at 645-4461 or toll-free 1-800-461-1740. Trained crisis coun-

sellors are ready to assist at any time of the day or night. Freedom from assault is every person's basic right.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

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When sending letters to the editor be sure to include your name, address and phone number. Unsigned letters cannot be used.

### Photographic Memory



**STREET SENSE:** This photograph of downtown Huntsville was taken circa 1930 at the corner of Main and Centre Streets, in front of the Dominion Hotel on the right, looking toward the east.

Huntsville's Main Street remains vibrant in 2007, with a healthy mix of shops and services. On Aug. 18, Downtown Huntsville will be celebrating its 29th annual Sidewalk Adventure with an entertaining street fair and sale, a classic and antique car show, and much more.

For information on Downtown Huntsville, please call 705-789-1400 or check [www.huntsvilleadventures.ca](http://www.huntsvilleadventures.ca) online.



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### LETTER

## Silly String should not be banned

I recently attended the Midnight Madness in Huntsville. There were a lot of things for everyone to do, but mostly it was about the children.

That's why I was shocked when I found out that the Huntsville BIA shut down the Got To Have It store's right to sell silly string to the children. This is a regular item that they sell in their store. They do not just

bring it in for midnight madness, they sell it all year long. Yes, it does make a big mess on the streets, but that's half the fun.

The mess on the streets of Huntsville was not silly string but pop bottles, popcorn and confetti. The silly string left behind was cleaned up by the many Got to Have It staff and volunteers.

I remember quite clearly, a young man

sweeping Main Street in front of Got To Have It for most of the night. Many residents and tourist were unhappy with this decision and I personally would not be shocked if this disciplinary action the Huntsville BIA took upon Got to Have It hurts their turnout next year.

Justin Crawford  
Huntsville

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