



## NEWFOUNDLAND WRITERS' GUILD

P.O. Box 1133 – St. John's  
Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada A1C 5M5

# THE PAGE

February 2005

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### IN MEMORIAM

Grace Butt, a founding member of the Newfoundland Writers' Guild, passed away on January 22 at the age of 95. Dr. Butt was a pioneer in Newfoundland writing, a playwright and poet. She founded the first theatre company in Newfoundland, the St. John's Players, and won many awards for her work within and outside the province. In 1981 she received the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from Memorial University. In 1986 she was recognized with a writing award by the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. As a gesture of remembrance, the family has requested that friends purchase a book by a Newfoundland author. The Guild Board is discussing ways in which we can also honour her request as a group. A tribute to Dr. Butt, as read by Lillian Bouzane at her Memorial service, is included in this newsletter.

### MEMBERS' NEWS

Janet McNaughton has been invited to present at the World Con International Science Fiction Convention being held in Glasgow, Scotland, August 4-8,

2005. **Esther Brown** won First Prize in the annual Christmas contest sponsored by *The Shoreline* with her story "The Year Santa Lost His Cool." **Esther** and **Fran Baird Innes** have both had poems published in The Poet's Corner section of *The Telegram*. **Helen Fogwill Porter** and **Kathleen Knowles** have had entries selected for publication in *The Globe* Challenge.

#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I know we're well into 2005 but I'd still like to wish everybody a Happy New Year and I hope that 2005 will be an exciting and rewarding year for us all. Twenty members attended our AGM October 27, 2004, at the Longside Club. Our membership currently is 38. At the AGM we welcomed a new treasurer, Joan Scott, in the place of Laura Morry Williams, but could not find a secretary to replace Violet Squires Ruelokke. I am pleased to report that Bobbie Brennan has agreed to fill this position. We now have a full slate on the Board. They are:

Hilda Chaulk Murray - President  
Lillian (Lily) Bursey -Vice-President  
Barbara (Bobbie) Brennan - Secretary  
Joan Scott - Treasurer  
Kathleen(Kathy) Knowles - Publicity Director  
Esther Brown -Member- at-large  
Geraldine Chafe Rubia - Member- at- large

We had a capacity crowd at "The Bloomin' Teapot" for our Honours and Awards Brunch, November 28, 2004. All agreed it was a very nice spot for such an event. We honoured Jennifer Morgan, Janet McNaughton, and Paul O'Neill. I hope everyone enjoyed the Christmas Party held at the Longside Club. In our meeting in

November we had planned the list of Workshops for the year and I took the list along to the Christmas Party to find hosts for these. We had several people sign up and since then we've had hosts volunteer for February and April, but May is still open. I really appreciate all your support during the past year, and being president has made me learn a few things I wouldn't have bothered about otherwise. Like group e-mails! Kathy shouldered that extra burden during 2004 for me along with being editor of The Page and looking after publicity. I'm looking forward to a wonderful 2005. Best wishes to you all.

Hilda

### WINNING POEMS FROM THE CHRISTMAS POETRY CONTEST

To My Snapdragons in December, by Roberta Buchanan

My brave little soldiers  
gritting your teeth in the face of winter  
as we turn the page to December  
Blooming on, when all beside you  
has withered and died  
Your bilabiate flowers – whose lower lips opened  
to welcome summer's bee – now  
small pursed mouths snap/  
dragons defy the encroaching frost

By Sheilah Roberts

December

It's here again,  
Jagged snakes of people feeding cash registers.  
Smiling faces, too many teeth.  
10,000 choices for loved ones  
blur into glitter gold and plush red and green.  
Oh God! (Who says religion is gone out of Christmas) Christ!  
How much should I spend? What do I buy?  
No wonder Janus has two faces,  
constantly looking out for bill collectors.

December, by Lori Savory

Dark wraps her cloak around the day  
Slow the time to winter solstice.  
The yule burns steadfast to the twelfth night, cricket basks on the  
hearth.  
Maiden ripe and wise awaits the birth of her Bright Son.  
Mistletoe sways heavy and gleaming in its promise  
Cup is passed, hand to hand/  
There can be no light without shadow –  
Earth gives the longest night to her children  
in which to rest our souls.

### ARTS AND LETTERS AWARDS

The closing date for entries in the 2005 Arts and Letters Awards is February 25.  
For more information and application forms : [www.gov.nf.ca/artsandletters](http://www.gov.nf.ca/artsandletters) or phone  
729-5253.

## MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees were due at the workshop on Jan. 23. The following are members in good standing: Raoul Anderson, Bobbie Brennan, Lillian Bouzane, Roberta Buchanan, Lily Bursey, Mary Connolly, Libby Creelman, Stephanie Darby-Coombs, Eileen Dicks, Jean Dohaney, Annie Ferncase, Fran Innes, Kathleen Knowles, Eleanor McKim, Janet McNaughton, Alison Melvin, Marylynne Middelkoop, Bernice Morgan, Jennifer Morgan, Trudy Morgan-Cole, Hilda Murray, Angela Otto, Paul O'Neill, Helen Porter, Marilyn Porter, Georgina Queller, Melba Rabinowitz, Sheilah Roberts, Geraldine Chafe Rubia, Violet Squires Ruelokke, Lori Savory, Joan Scott, Elizabeth Siegel, Laura Morry Williams, Patricia Casson-Henderson, Michael Bruce-Lockhart, Helen Thoms Walsh. If there are errors or if you would like to be reinstated please contact treasurer Joan Scott, 754-8116, [joans@mun.ca](mailto:joans@mun.ca), 15 Appledore Place, St. John's, A1B 2W8.

## NEWS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

We have had a suggestion recommending that refreshments be served before or throughout the workshop. The Board has decided to maintain the present practice of having refreshments after the meeting, but agreed that the workshops could run more efficiently. To that end the Chair for the evening will be asked to make sure that the meeting starts on time, to assign a specific time for each piece being discussed, and to make sure that at least a half hour remains for socializing at the end. Pieces being read should be no longer than 4 to 5 pages, double-spaced. On occasions where there are a large number of members present, it may be advisable to have only half the members speak on each selection.

The Board is considering asking for a donation of \$1.00 from members attending workshops to be used towards the cost of the workshops.

Any comments and/or suggestions regarding the above can be directed to any of the Board members for consideration at the next meeting.

## WORKSHOPS

Remember to notify hosts if you plan to attend.

Sunday, Feb. 20, 2-5 Trudy Morgan-Cole, 185 Freshwater Rd. 753-2375

[tmorgancole@warp.nfld.net](mailto:tmorgancole@warp.nfld.net)

### WORKSHOPS

**Tuesday, March 15, 7:30** Lillian Bouzane, 115 Forest Rd., #303  
Remember to notify hosts if you plan to attend.

[girelamo@nl.rogers.com](mailto:girelamo@nl.rogers.com)

Sunday, Feb. 20, 2-5 Trudy Morgan-Cole, 185 Freshwater Rd. 753-2375

[tmorgancole@warp.nfld.net](mailto:tmorgancole@warp.nfld.net)

**Monday April 18, 7:30** Bernice and Jennifer Morgan 18 Shea St. 722-2097  
**Tuesday, March 15, 7:30** Lillian Bouzane, 115 Forest Rd., #303

[morganjlee@hotmail.com](mailto:morganjlee@hotmail.com)

**Monday April 18, 7:30** Bernice and Jennifer Morgan 18 Shea St. 722-2097

**May - TBA DESIGNATED WORKSHOP**  
[morganjlee@hotmail.com](mailto:morganjlee@hotmail.com)

**May - TBA DESIGNATED WORKSHOP**

**Friday, June 24- Monday, June 27** Eastport Retreat

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**Sunday, July 24, 12 noon** - Kathy Knowles, Middle Cove afternoon writing retreat, pot

luck, workshop  
pot luck, workshop

**Sunday, August 21, 12 noon** - Marylynne Middelkoop, Heart's Content

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**Monday, October 17, 7:30** Annual General Meeting

**Friday, Sept. 9 - Monday Sept. 12** Eastport Retreat

Note that the May workshop is a designated workshop. If you wish to present your work contact Esther Brown, workshop co-ordinator at 726-2411.

**Monday, October 17, 7:30** Annual General Meeting

Note that the May workshop is a designated workshop. If you wish to present your work contact Esther Brown, workshop co-ordinator at 726-241

**A TRIBUTE TO GRACE BUTT, by Lillian Bouzane**

Grace Hue Butt was a founding member, and later honorary member, of the Newfoundland Writer's Guild. I met Grace in 1970. I had known about her writing for many years. The first time I heard her speak was on CBC radio. It was a Sunday afternoon. I was still a schoolgirl and was writing my weekly essay at the kitchen table, and on the radio, Grace was reading a piece about the joys of owning a cabin with one room that had one bunk from which you could reach everything else. I stopped writing and listened to her describing that cabin. I have never forgotten it.

When I returned to St. John's in 1970, I went to the Arts and Culture Library where Grace worked, specifically to meet her. She was there, but my nerve failed me. I couldn't think what I would say to her. It was a good thing my nerve did fail me because Grace had about her a manner that suggested that life was not a frivolous matter.

When I did meet her - at one of those early Guild meetings where we used to have guest speakers, she and I talked about poetry. She asked me where my poetry had been published and when I told her it hadn't, she told me in no uncertain terms that if I were serious about my poetry I would have to publish. That, I believe was the first advice I was given about the business of writing. And I took it. We became rather good friends after that.

Grace was foremost a playwright. In 1945 she was the first Newfoundlander to write a full length play - *The Road through Melton*; In 1969 she entered another play *Part of the Main* in an international playwright competition in Ireland and won

first prize. Her play was staged in the great Abbey Theatre. She and her husband, Bert, travelled to Dublin for opening night. I believe Grace was the first Newfoundlander to win an international award for her writing.

Sometime in the late seventies, Grace told me she would have liked to have had her plays published in book form. I suggested she get a grant and have it done. No, she said, I'm too old for that now. No you're not. I told her. I'll get the forms and fill them in for you. And I did. I was working at the CBC building in Churchill Square at the time and Grace came there, signed the forms, I put them in the internal CBC mail. Grace got her grant and her plays were published - *Persons*.

One night in the early eighties we were having a workshop at Helen Porter's house and I heard Grace read a poem about a Salvador Dali painting. At the cup of tea we have at the end of these events I asked her if she were interested in doing a book of poetry with me. I had published by that time and she agreed immediately. That collaboration resulted in our book of poems - *Point Blank*.

Grace wrote the first local newspaper columns on the arts. She may have been the only Newfoundlander to have done a review a Margaret Duley novel while that writer was alive.

Grace was a friend. And often after she went to live at Manuals I would go out there, pick her up and we would go down the road to a small restaurant for lunch or afternoon tea, I would have the tea. Grace would have a glass of beer. I am sure anyone who was in the Newfoundland Writers' Guild in the 70's and 80's can tell similar stories about Grace.

To honour the memory of Dr. Grace Hue Butt I will read her poem about the Salvador Dali painting *Santiago el Grande*. The painting, which hangs in the Beaverbrook Art Library in Fredericton depicts, astride a stallion, the Christian martyr Saint James whose bones were interred at Compostela and who became the patron saint of Spain.



### **Santiago el Grande at Fredericton**

From Compostelaplace of starshome of relicscome your boneso Santiagoto  
Fredericton.

Fleshed in Dali's passionyou rise exultantbefore our victory-less eyesour martyr-less  
heartso warrior sainto Jesus man.Mounted you ride your spirit,your sturdy  
footrepudiating passivityyour human legsemlacingthe explosive animalitythat bears  
us allthere at Judea, burning for a Messiahor here at Frederictonbeside the river, the  
grass and trees.Your rearing joyeruptsand your eager arminflexible in faithstretches  
to elevate the ChristWhose humble hands support the linked universeenjoining saint  
and artist and crucifiedand Judea and Compostela and Frederictonand aspiration and  
sacrificeand man and stallion.And I stand asidesmall in my creationmy tiny  
faithdraped in non-entity.and the trees of Frederictonremain austerethe Green  
innocentthe river unknowing.

