



# NEWFOUNDLAND WRITERS' GUILD

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

## THE PAGE

February 2006

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**Lori Savory - Editor**  
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### FROM THE BOARD:

At the Board meeting held on January 26, 2006, the Board discussed the following:

- Alternating workshop days: The current workshop schedule was intended to allow people who had commitments that prevented them from attending on weekday evenings/ Sunday afternoons, to attend at least some workshops, and also to accommodate those who dislike driving at night. It was felt that this schedule meets the needs of as many members as possible, and it was decided that we would maintain the status quo;
- The Rejection Slip Brunch: The issue of contests being included in eligibility for the Rejection Slip Brunch was discussed at length, and it was determined that for this year (2005) contests would be excluded. It was felt that contests should not be included because no notification is received that you have entered and/or that you have not been successful, therefore it would be impossible to verify the number of contests entered. The one exception will be entries for the Arts and Letters Awards: adjudication will be required for verification. If members feel that this issue merits further discussion it can be addressed at the AGM in October. Members should be prepared to discuss the matter in detail at that time. Lily Bursey has asked that anyone with rejection slips provide them to her immediately.
- Advertising in The Page: The Board determined advertisements in The Page would create significant difficulties and thus it was decided that we would not accept advertisements for inclusion. However, it was agreed that if members wished to bring printed advertisements/ flyers to workshops this would be permitted to the extent that it was not disruptive to the workshops.

### EVENTS

#### Christmas Party

The Annual Guild Christmas Party was held on Saturday, December 10, 2005 at the Longside Club. After a lovely potluck supper, the winners of the Christmas Poetry Contest were announced by judges Roberta Buchanan and Gerry Rubia. (The entries are reproduced below) The theme was "Home" but the caveat was "no sentimentality". First place went to Lori Savory, second to Bobbi Brennan and third place to Melba Rabinowitz. Helen Fogwell Porter and Georgina Queller also read their contest entries. All entries are reproduced at the end of this newsletter.

As is the tradition, recitations were given by Helen Fogwell Porter, Jennifer Morgan and Lilly Bursey, and at the request of John Bursey, Roberta read an account of an isolated Christmas from the book *A Klondike Christmas* edited by Anne Tempelman-Kluit.

We then distributed the gifts and tested our knowledge of Newfoundland Literature with Danette's yearly contest. Bobbi Brennan and Lori Savory sang "Christmas In Newfoundland" written by Lori and accompanied by Bobbi on the guitar, after which we had a carol sing-a-long, thanks again to Bobbi and her guitar. A wonderful time was had by all.

### **Honours and Awards Brunch**

On Sunday, November 27, 2005, the Newfoundland Writers' Guild held its annual Brunch in celebration of those members of the Guild who have been published during the year or have received some special award.

This year the buffet meal was catered by the staff of "The Bloomin' Teapot" in the Banquet Room at the Oxen Pond Botanic Gardens. All tables were filled and we were pleased to welcome Joan Clark, not a Guild member but a special friend and distinguished writer.

This year, at each setting was placed a souvenir bookmark, showing the names of those being honored and their books. They were: Roberta Buchanan, ***Mina Hubbard: the Woman Who Mapped Labrador***; Janet McNaughton, ***Brave Jack and the Unicorn***; and Paul O'Neill, ***No Need to Wear Rubbers***. A special certificate, prepared by Georgina Queller, was presented to each writer.

Joan Scott, who presented Roberta with her certificate, gave an interesting introduction to Roberta's book before the latter read an excerpt from it which made us all want to hear more.

Hilda Chaulk Murray introduced Paul and his book - his father James O'Neil's travel diary which details delightfully a two-month vacation in Europe in 1925. Everyone enjoyed Paul's reading from the book.

Janet was absent from the presentation because she is presently residing in Halifax. Her certificate was forwarded to her by post.

The following email was forwarded to President Lily Bursey by Paul O'Neill following the brunch:

Dear Lily

My sincere appreciation to you and the Guild for the Honours Award Winner certificate presented to me by the Newfoundland Writers' Guild at the luncheon

in the Botanical Gardens November 27, 2005. Not only was the luncheon itself enjoyable, and the awards presentation, but seeing so many very dear friends from my years with the Guild was extremely pleasurable. I cannot believe the number of years that have passed since we formed the organization but it is wonderful to see it still attracting members and doing what we, as founders, intended it to do. My thanks to you and all concerned.

Paul O'Neill

## **MEMBERS NEWS**

**Janet McNaughton's** new young adult science fiction novel, **The Raintree Rebellion**, will be released by Harper Collins Canada in April. Her novel **An Earthly Knight** is now shortlisted for the inaugural Stellar Award, which is run by the BC Library Association and voted on by high school students across British Columbia.

**Gerry Rubia's** Haiku "**calm harbour**" has been published in **Prairie Sunset**, an International Haiku Anthology, which is published by Hamilton Haiku Press.

**Trudy Morgan-Cole's** book **The Violent Friendship of Esther Johnson** is being launched February 7, 2006 at the Anglican Cathedral Crypt, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.. Reviews in both the *Globe and Mail* and the *Quill and Quire* have been glowing. The book is dedicated to the Writer's Guild "my mentors, my community, my extended family of writers, with all my thanks."

**Lara Mory Willams' book Becoming Sarah**, is being launched at the Ferryland Arts Centre, Bernard Kavanagh Premises, Ferryland on Sunday, February 12, 2006 from 2:00 - 4:00 pm..

**Gerry Rubia** has been invited to participate in the **2006 CBC Poetry Face-Off**, which will take place on Monday, February 20, 2006 at 7:00 p.m.. The other participants are Sean Panting, Susan Rendell, Amy Snook and Robyn McGrath. The venue is to be announced. You can find out more at [www.cbc.ca/poetryface-off](http://www.cbc.ca/poetryface-off).

**Roberta Buchanan's** book **Mina Hubbard: The Woman Who Mapped Labrador** has received several positive reviews, most notably Mark Callanan's review in *The Independent*, and Joan Sullivan's review in *The Current*. Roberta will be giving a talk about Mina Hubbard to the Natural History Society in February, 2006. Laurel Penney provided a supportive write-up of the poetry workshop Roberta gave at the WANL AGM in the most recent edition of *Word*.

**Bernice Morgan's** novel **Random Passage** was named the "Best Ever Newfoundland and Labrador Book" in the *Word from the Edge Forum's* online poll, which concluded on January 31, 2006.

The following members had poems published in the *Telegram* and the *Independent* :

- Lori Savory's poem "Home" was published in the December 10-17, 2005 edition of *The Independent*.

- Gerry Rubia's poem "Quidi Vidi Moments" was published in *The Telegram* in November 2005
- Bobbi Brennan's poem "Home" was published in *The Independent* in the December 18-24, 2005 edition.

## OF INTEREST

### POET LAUREATE CITY OF ST. JOHN'S CALL FOR NOMINATIONS:

St. John's City Council has created the position of Poet Laureate for the City of St. John's. The general public is asked to submit nominations for a Poet Laureate no later than February 27, 2006 at 4:00 to:

Kay Anonsen  
 Arts and Cultural Development Coordinator  
 Department of Economic Development, Tourism & Culture  
 City of St. John's  
 P. O. Box 908  
 348 Water Street  
 St. John's, NL A1C 5M2  
[kanonsen@stjohns.ca](mailto:kanonsen@stjohns.ca)  
 576-2563

They ask that you provide the name of the poet nominated, the reasons for the nomination (eg. awards, publications, etc.) with a list of the supporting documentation (books, reviews, awards, other) and attaching that documentation, and that you sign and date your nomination.

### POETRY CONTEST ENTRIES:

#### **Home (Her Own Mexican Equestrian)** Helen Fogwell Porter

Brown-skinned, debonair  
 he comes to her on horseback  
 bearing gifts and wine

They drink and Dally  
 fill her sturdy spouse appears  
 The party's over

#### **My Brother and My Neighbour**

They are just two boys  
 swaggering haplessly  
 down a hilltop trail

one lugging the axe  
 heavy on his shoulder  
 borrowed green flannel plaid  
 the other  
 clad in gloves  
 too big  
 towing the prized tree.

No snow  
covering blanket  
yet  
just dried grass  
crumpled lambskill  
in wait  
for their long sleep.

Just boys  
now chosen  
to swing the axe  
to fall a tree  
on their own  
without guides  
only me  
tending  
to the picking.

I'm just a girl  
striding behind  
inhaling nature  
dreaming  
of silver strands of tinsel  
laid one by one  
over green boughs  
carefully selected.

And it begins to fall  
anointing our passage  
cold  
on our faces we look up  
giggling

rejoicing  
in the perfection of the day.

## Home

Home, where I was born.  
First school  
Just cross the street and go through the passages.  
Stay with your sister

One sunny autumn day,  
Came home from school to Mums out of their kitchens

They are going home.  
I feel at home.  
And it is a Christmas Eve  
that became  
a Remembrance Day.

Helen Thoms-Walsh

## **Home**

Floors shine from wax  
and elbow grease; windows gleam  
from vinegar and newspaper cleaning.  
Knick knacks show their true colours  
after a good dunking in water and Palmolive.  
New candles cast elegant glances  
at just polished furniture and  
newly washed curtains, fresh from  
the line and chilly air. Garlands of tinsel  
and shining balls dangle from tree and  
walls, windows and ceiling, catch  
candle light, send it dappling  
across the rooms. Boots and shoes  
are not welcome here, in this  
Christmas ready house, where scents  
of cinnamon and cloves vie for  
our attention. Soon turkey, salt meat,  
pudding and trifle will tempt us,  
find us weak, leave bellies full and fat,  
as we loll away the afternoon wrapped in  
family, memories and Christmas magic.

Bobbi Brennan

Out on the street talking about the declaration  
Summer, picked blackberries into a cereal box.  
Ran under trees  
Sheltering from a Battle of Britain dogfight overhead  
Ever a good girl, didn't spill my blackberries

Later school rivaled home  
Transforming education, where hot water came out of the H taps.  
Free, yet paid for in separations

Still later, I had to get independent, free, so I got married  
The attraction? He had a job in Canada to go to, when I, a teacher, could  
work anywhere

Newfoundland semi-solid precip.  
Bloody paws hung cross coves like laundry  
Joyful cold snow beauty,  
The hills a sleeping woman, offer delight  
Blueberries, partridgeberries  
A Canadian foretold, she will not like it there  
Made myself comfortable anyway - home

Joan Scott

### **261 LeMarchant Road**

that's Muffer James's house  
the hunter green one  
with cream trim there  
next to the fire hall  
where Muffer recruited  
boarders when Pop  
died and Muffer  
finished raising 8 of their 9

children in that house

her daughter, our mother,  
eloped at 16 and had her own 3 daughters before  
her 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday -  
Muffer's 1<sup>st</sup> grandchildren

at Muffer James' house we  
feasted on the Books of Knowledge  
with it's fairy stories, poems

pictures of Saturn and Pluto, we  
learned about the Milky Way  
were thrilled by colour plates of  
birds - exotic and domestic  
yellow finches and brown sparrows  
red cardinals and black crows

we sat on the long bench on  
the inside of her kitchen table  
muffer served us milky tea which  
her daughter never would  
we made sugar sandwiches  
in her pantry put the milk and butter  
in the back porch to stay cool  
and there was always  
“Pudding Muffer, Pudding Please”  
rice, raisin, bread, tapioca,  
cottage and egg custard every  
pudding her Devon ancestors  
handed down to her and her  
Welsh husband demanded

after, Muffer would bring us into  
her dining room put a coal  
fire in the grate and play  
Jesus loves me and  
light a penny candle on her organ

my eyes still wander around  
that room rest on the familiar...  
the brass candle sticks, the picture  
of Pop in World War I uniform  
the tiny earthen milk jug all  
on the mantlepiece, her bill and  
paper-piled open secretary  
and the iron rads we  
were warned from sitting

on lest we “get the piles”

a love seat with no back  
could be seen through french  
doors to the living room  
where the oak hardwood floor  
was inlaid with mahogany accents  
the love seat’s arms were  
shiny walnut and the ‘seat’ was  
covered in scratchy red pile  
the lovers had to sit in opposite  
directions on that seat ensuring  
that no love making took place

maybe that’s why our parents eloped  
at the little church in Topsail  
had a secret honeymoon weekend  
in a log cabin on the Placentia road then  
snuck back home to Lemarchant Road  
and Patrick Street until  
the fruit of that weekend  
began to bulge through

Muffer James’s house  
was as much home as home  
till I was 6 when we made  
our pioneer move to Churchill Park  
But there was always Shank’s mare  
or the West Loup or the Belt Line  
to take us across  
LeMarchant Road on Sundays  
to join Muffer James  
on her front verandah  
and watch passers-by  
when knitting and auction 45s  
were Wesleyan Sunday Sins

Georgina Queller

## Home

115 Cochrane Street. It is home but it is not really.  
I lived there fifty years ago, before the houses had street numbers  
When the bench swing was attached 40 feet up in the Maple Trees  
And Mrs. Guy still listened in on the party line.

The front bedroom had the only matching furniture in the house.  
A bed, dresser and chest made of cherry wood, second hand.  
A white George Washington bed spread graced the room

Along side an elegant braided rug made of rags by Mamma King.

A beautiful 30 inch, untouched bride doll in white lace  
Hung on the bedroom wall, by the window, behind the bed  
A Christmas gift from Tom, my brother, paid for a few dollars  
At a time, working part-time after school at Mr. Muse's store.

At the end of the bed sat a cedar chest, a hope chest  
Built from a kit in shop class by my brother, Jess and  
Paid for by my mother from her meager salary at a shirt factory  
A chest like the chest that all mothers wanted for their daughters.

The room was often used by cousins who came to find work.  
Or Uncles/ Aunts from New York, Kansas or North Carolina  
Sometimes, my friends and I, three or four, slept cross-wise  
The George Washington bed spread carefully folded away.

It was a room of elegance, inspiration and hope, symbolic of  
The possibilities, against a house with only two bedrooms  
For a growing family of four children and the used fold out  
Couch in the living room where I usually slept with my younger brother.

It became the room where I slept with my husband  
Or my daughter, depending on who went home for a visit.  
And the room where I slept in, in September, after my mom's funeral  
And the room I will go home to in February, probably for the last time.

Melba Rabinowitz

## Home

I headed home on the twenty-third  
every year,  
no matter where I was living.  
This was her time to shine.  
Months of planning -  
Church window cookies, cherry cake,  
shortbreads we cut out and  
adorned with icing, sprinkles.  
Weeks of cleaning evident,  
the smell of paint,  
the new carpet, or linoleum

or couch put in place.  
We would decorate the tree,  
Her and I.  
She, sipping her annual lemon gin  
and me indulging her tinsel addiction,  
silver strands one at a time.  
Each ornament had its story,  
told as it took its place.  
The clanking ladder  
against the eave  
as I passed strands of lights up to her.



Waking Christ  
my sister and  
opened our sto  
even as grown  
in flannel pyja  
still digging fo  
she had left us  
Mouth waterin  
aroma of roas  
savory, onions  
drifting into m

Now we potluc  
take turns  
in the civilized  
so as to share  
There is an ab  
we work aroun  
Christmas can  
without her in

Lori Savory

## WORKSHOPS

- February 26, 2006** 16 Princess Anne Place, St. John's - 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
hosted by Lily Bursey 726-0252) and Bobbi Brennan(368-1580)
- March 19, 2005** 16 Parliament Street, St. John's - 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. hosted  
by Lori Savory (726-0498)
- April 26, 2006** Longside Club, 41 Shaw Street 7:30 p.m.  
(Wednesday)
- May 24, 2006** Longside Club, 41 Shaw Street 7:30 p.m.  
(Wednesday) Designated
- June 23-26, 2006** Eastport Retreat
- July (Date TBA)** Hosted by Kathy Knowles
- August (Date TBA)** Hosted by Melba Rabinowitz
- September 8-11, 2006** Eastport Retreat

## HOME

Home was never where we lived.  
Home was "out home"  
It was even "out home" to those of  
born there.  
I went out home - twice.  
The first time my mother visited frie  
My father and I went to the graveya  
The second time my father and I visited the  
graveyard.

Lillian Bouzane

The Newfoundland Writers' Guild was established to help writers develop their writing skills in a workshop setting. It is open to writers at all levels. The Guild holds monthly workshops and two annual writing retreats. For further information, contact