

NEWFOUNDLAND WRITERS' GUILD



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

THE PAGE

February 2008

Note from the Editor:

I have been very fortunate to have the opportunity to provide The Page to members of the Guild for the last three years and to act as Publicity Director. It has been my pleasure to gather together the news from the membership and to provide information members find useful. However, I have had to recognize that my professional and personal commitments are such that I can't carry on this rewarding, but time-consuming work for the Guild. As a result, I've submitted my resignation as Publicity Director for the Guild. Thank you so much for all your help and support over these years, especially to Kathy Knowles, who started me well on this path. If anyone is interested in filling this role, please let Joan Scott know: I will be happy to give you all the help I can. Lori Savory

MEMBERS' NEWS

TRUDY MORGAN-COLE'S short story won Third Place in the Antigonish Review's 3rd Sheldon Currie Fiction Award during the Fall of 2007.

BERNICE MORGAN, novelist and Tom Henihan, Poet, were the featured readers at WANL's January reading, Monday, January 7, 2008 at the LSPU Hall Art Gallery

ANNAMARIE BECKEL'S third novel, Silence of Stone, will be released by Breakwater Books in February 2008. The novel relates the story of Marguerite de Roberval, a young French noblewoman who was abandoned in 1542, along with her

lover and a servant, on the Isle of Demons, somewhere near Newfoundland and Labrador. Marguerite survived. Based on historical accounts, *Silence of Stone* imagines a story of romance, a fierce will to live, revenge, and the redemptive power of love.

ANNAMARIE BECKEL'S was a featured speaker at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Department of Women's Studies, and Speakers' Series (Winter Semester 2008) on January 30. Her talk was entitled "Imaginary Indians: Our fascination with the stories of Shawnawdithit and Demasduit, the last of the Beothuk". Annamarie Beckel spoke about her research on the Beothuk and other aboriginal people for *All Gone Widdun* (Breakwater Books 1999), a novel about Shawnawdithit, the last surviving Beothuk, and William Cormack, who brought Shawnawdithit to St. John's to study. The novel's narrative alternated between Shawnawdithit's point of view and Cormack's, illustrating their disparate world views. Annamarie discussed the interplay between historical "fact" and imagination, together with the way in which her simultaneous experience of researching *All Gone Widdun* while working on an Ojibwa reserve shaped the novel.

PAUL O'NEILL was the recipient of ACTRA's regional Award of Excellence in an award ceremony that took place on December 18, 2007. The award recognized excellence in and contribution to the theatre arts. Paul's career in the theatre began when he was a young man, graduating from St. Bonaventure's College and heading off to the National Academy of Theatre Arts in New York, and continued over the next fifty years. He began CBC's "Weekend Arts Magazine" and "Musicraft" during his lengthy stint with CBC in this province. He founded or co-founded such groups as Terra Nova Theatre, the Corner Brook Playmakers, St. John's Theatre Arts Club, and ran the Buckmaster's Players. He also mentored local actors, including Mary Walsh and Andy Jones.

PAUL O'NEILL's children's book, *How Dog Became a Friend* was launched at the Cathedral Crypt on November 24, 2007.

ESTHER SLANEY-BROWN was featured in the Twenty Questions segment in The Telegram, Sunday, January 13, 2008.

HILDA CHAULK MURRAY'S *Of Boats On the Collar: How It Was In One Newfoundland Fishing Community* was launched on Sunday, December 16th at the Admiralty House Museum and Archives (23 Old Placentia Road, Mount Pearl).

Georgina Queller, Helen Fogwell Porter and Gerri Rubia at the launch of *How Dog Became a Friend*.

Illustrator Cynthia Colosimo and **Paul O'Neill** at the launch of *How Dog Became a Friend* at the Cathedral Crypt

Esther Slaney-Brown reading from *Labours of Love* at its launch at Bianca's, in the fall, 2007.

Lily Bursey and Hilda Chaulk Murray at the launch of *Labours of Love*.

POETRY AND PROSE ENTRIES– CHRISTMAS PARTY CONTEST

THE GIFT

I lived in a woods town. When strangers talked about us – they would say things like – 'They live in that woods town'. Our town was at the end of a railway spur. The railway sometimes brought in the strangest people but it always brought out pulp

logs. One of the strangest people that ever came to our town was the man who walked on stilts. I think he stayed only one summer. He lived with the Joys. They were strange too, but I'm not going to tell their story. This man, the one who walked on stilts, had different stilts than us kids. Ours were made out of small spruce trees. To stand on them we attached crushed milk cans. We would use the little spruce trees as a kind of walker to hold us up. But this strange man had his stilts concealed inside his pant legs so we never saw what they were like and his shoes were at the bottom of those contraptions. He walked like a penguin and stood more than seven feet tall. I was afraid of him. So were all my friends. One day I was walking up the Back Road – we had only two roads in our town. I was walking up the Back Road and he was coming down. I was alone but I decided I would not turn and run. When I got up to him I looked in his face. He had the bluest eyes and they were not kind. I panicked and bolted past him. His face has haunted me ever since. I wondered about the little Joy girls. There were three of them. But they lived on the Back Road and I never got to know them.

Another stranger that the railway brought to our town was a beautiful young woman. She stayed with the Venos on the upper part of the Front Road. Mr. Veno worked with the company and they had two girls. The oldest girl had a beauty shop in their home and when I was twelve my mother allowed me to go there to get a perm. I didn't like the smell of the chemicals and the stink of burning hair. Nor did I like the look of it when it was finished. It was a bush. I never again had a perm. I digress. I want to tell about the beautiful young woman that one summer stayed with the Venos. She looked different from the people in our town. Her dresses were store bought. That's what I heard my mother say about them. My mother made all our clothes. This young woman wore very flimsy looking shoes. We didn't have paved roads and everybody in our town wore sturdy leather shoes. The upper parts of her shoes seemed to be made of fabric and they never slipped off her feet. I know all this because we lived on the Front Road and in order for her to go to where the store, the post office and the church where she had to pass our house and I often

saw her. And I stared at her both coming and going. I don't know if I ever heard the young woman's name. But she gave me ideas. I told myself when I got as big as her I was going to have store bought clothes and lovely shoes.

But the strangest person who ever came to our town was Mosie Murrin. He was a tramp and he came every summer of my childhood and stayed until the snow came. It was odd to see a full grown man walk around the town with no work to do. He used to live somewhere down by the post office. He begged all his meals. Sometimes he came to the back door of our house and my mother would give him a lunch which he ate on the step. While he was there I stayed in my room. I don't think my mother encouraged Mosie to come around because my father was often away from home. People said Mosie was harmless but I didn't like the look of him. He was not tall but he was big and burly. I avoided him when I could. One Sunday morning I couldn't. I was on my way to church. I guess I was about eight at the time. I was running because I was late. I had a cent for collection in my hand. Then all of a sudden it wasn't there. I looked at my empty hand and started to cry. I turned back and began scouring the road. But no cent. I began to howl. I was almost on my knees when a shadow appeared over me. Mosie. I was stuck dumb. I began backing away from him. And then he spoke:

What's wrong my child?

My grandfather hadn't spoken kinder to me.

I've lost my cent for collection.

He dug in his pocket and came up with a number of coins. He selected one and handed it to me. It was a Newfoundland five cent piece. It had a little bend in it. It glittered in my hand like a jewel. I was speechless.

Run on to church now, he said.

Yes sir, thank you.

I pelted down the road. But when I got to the steps of the church, I stopped and looked back up the road. Mosie had turned the corner. I took the five cent piece and

stuck it down in my shoe. When the collection plate came round I could feel the five cent piece just near my heel but I didn't bend down to get it.

For years I hid that coin underneath the skirting board in my room. When no one was around I would take it out and look at it and gloat over it.

When I was about twenty-five my mother wrote me telling me that they were selling the house and wondered if there was anything I wanted from it. I told her the story of the coin and where to find it and asked her to save it for me.

I just go up from the computer and went to my coin collection and, yes, it's still there with its glitter and its little bend. **Lillian Bouzane**

GOD BLESS TOMMY JONES

God bless Tommy Jones our cat.

We never know what he is at.

He skulks around the house all day.

And then at dusk goes out to play.

We hear the howls.

We hear the yowls.

We wonder if he's in a spat.

Tis then we pray for Tom our cat.

But sometimes we hear a muted purr.

Gently coming through our door.

The brindle cat from down the street.

Has deigned to come our Tom to greet.

Lillian Bouzane

Gratitude

Out in the cold, the stars shine bright

Crisp, white in the frozen night;

Across the sky, pale curtains dance

Causing many to give an upward glance.

Out in the cold, forms huddle tight
Dirty, dark, in the frozen night.
Across the city, sirens prance
Causing not even a sideways glance.

Lord - on this cold, deep, starry night
Send your blessings to those whose plight
We would ignore, as we give thanks
That we're not caught in life's lonely dance.

Bobbie Brennan

May You Find Peace

(Dedicated to female victims of violence)

Would that you stand on your own
Awaken your mind to an inner drone
Break the cycle of anger and fear
That shatters your spirit, brings despair
Would that circumstances prevail
To support and nourish you in travail
Empower, heal and strengthen you so
That doubt and fear would lose its hold
Would that you find peace of mind
Responsive to caring humankind
Who feel compassion for your strife
And pray violence not define your life

Lily Bursey

OF INTEREST

The Arts and Letters Awards deadline is February 15, 2008 at 5:00 pm. Prizes are awarded in the following categories under the Senior Division Literary Arts Section:

· Poetry - 6 awards of \$1000.00

- Short Fiction (maximum 5000 words) – 5 awards of \$1000.00
- Non-Fiction Prose (maximum 5000 words) – 3 awards of \$1000.00
- Dramatic Script – 2 awards of \$750.00

Only one entry is permitted in the Literary Arts Section.

In addition, submissions are invited for the David C. Saxton Humanitarian Essay (1 award of \$1000.00).

Entries must be accompanied by an Entry Form. They may be mailed to Arts and Letters Awards, P.O. Box 1854, St. John's, NL A1C 5P9, or can be dropped off (call 729-5253 for scheduled drop-off times).

For entry forms and further details, go to www.gov.nl.ca/artsandletters.

The jury for the Winterset Awards has been announced. Noah Richler, Danine Farquarson and John Doyle are this year's jurists. Submissions are now being sought for the awards. Books in any genre by a native-born Newfoundland or Labradorian or resident of the province, published in 2007 are eligible. Submissions must be made by the publisher.

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 President Joan Scott at 754-8116

Sunday, Feb 17th Regular Workshop at Sobey's Howley Ave (Mt. Cashell Community Room.) Hosts Sheila Sullivan and Bobbi Brennan

Sunday Feb. 24, Rejection-slip and Awards Brunch – at Baccalao

Contact Georgina Queller to confirm attendance

Sunday, March 16th Raoul Andersen and Don Steele. Location TBA

Wednesday, April 23rd Sobey's on Torbay Rd., near the Seniors' Resource Centre

Cathy Daley and Joan Scott,

Wednesday May 28th Designated Workshop. Location TBA

Friday June 20th to

Monday, June 22 Eastport Retreat: Readings, Book donation, Event for 40th anniversary

Sunday, . July Day Retreat – Date and location TBA

Sunday, August Day Retreat – Date and location TBA

Friday Sept. 5th, to Monday, September 8 Eastport Retreat

October 20th AGM - Location TBA

Remember to notify hosts if you plan to attend.