

Capturing the Literary Legacy of Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador's literary legacy has taken centuries to produce. Now a team of English professors at Memorial University are working to gather this diverse entity into one volume and share the unique depth and breadth of this legacy with the world.

The Literary Companion to Newfoundland and Labrador will not be an encyclopedia, a dictionary, or a collection of essays, but will incorporate elements of all three. The tome will be modelled on The Oxford Companion to English Literature, an alphabetical listing of authors, plots, characters, allusions and other literary features. Significantly, it will cover both the written and the oral traditions, even incorporating folksongs, riddles and Native stories.



"Literature about Newfoundland goes back 500 years if you include exploration and travel literature," says Dr. Ronald Rompkey, university research professor and principal editor of The Literary Companion to Newfoundland and Labrador. "We have been writing about ourselves— and people have been writing about us—for a long time. Part of the identity of this place is reflected in its literature, but we have no single volume to help the general reader and researchers. Such a volume will go a long way towards changing that."

The notion of creating The Literary Companion to Newfoundland and Labrador was first broached by the head of the department of English, Robert Hollett, who believes there is a gap to be filled. He notes that books have been produced such as the Dictionary of Newfoundland English, Family Names of the Island of Newfoundland and compilations of place names in the province, but no reference text for our literature exists. Professor Hollett is part of the editorial committee, which includes Dr. Rompkey, Dr. Larry Matthews and Dr. Pat Byrne.

While the English department is spearheading the project, its net must be cast widely, encompassing disciplines such as anthropology, history, linguistics and folklore. An advisory committee, including editors from outside Memorial who have engaged in similar projects, will also lend its experience.

With this expertise on tap, all this multifaceted, multi-year project requires is time, a lot of effort and some serious support. Research grants are being sought, but because the project doesn't fit neatly into funding categories for national agencies, some funding will be needed from private donors to make it happen. Ideally, The Literary Companion to Newfoundland and Labrador will find a generous benefactor or two to give it wings.

The preliminary work is already underway, drawing on existing bibliographies. However, once financial support is secured, it will take several years to complete the whole project. The good news is that McGill-Queen's University Press has already expressed interest in publishing the completed work, which is expected to run between 600 and 1000 pages.

"We would like to see it as broad and inclusive as possible and include all genres," explains Dr. Byrne. "We need to consider, for example, who is a Newfoundlander and what is Newfoundland literature."

The targeted readership is expected to be broad, especially in educational quarters. "We anticipate that it will be useful as a reference text for schools and that it will find its way into international libraries," says Prof. Hollett. Dr. Rompkey expands on that: "It is a book intended for anyone who reads, not just academics and university students."

History bears out that optimism. The first edition of The Oxford Companion to English Literature, compiled and edited by Sir Paul Harvey and published in 1932, was not expected to sell widely. However, according to Oxford Reference online, the sixth edition, published in 2000, includes 8300 entries produced by a team of more than 140 contributors under the editorship of Margaret Drabble.

One thing that all the parties emphasize is that The Literary Companion to Newfoundland and Labrador must be a thorough presentation of our literary heritage, because it has the potential to offer a new perspective on Newfoundland and Labrador's place in the world.

As Prof. Hollett explains, "This will put solid shape to an important part of our culture and legacy. Our literature is a part of who we are and where we come from. It needs to be done."



Memorial
University of Newfoundland

The Faculty of Arts Winter 2006

ArtsWorld
EXPLORATION INSIGHT IMPACT



Theatre students have long benefitted from Dick Buehler's teaching—now they'll benefit from his financial generosity as well.



Generosity Helps Fund Student's Future in Performance

This spring, for the first time, a stand-out graduate of Memorial's Performance and Communications Media program will win the Dick Buehler Award to help fund his or her continued education or apprenticeship. The Faculty of Arts is proud to announce the creation of this new award, thanks to the generosity of Dick Buehler, a retired faculty member, actor and long-time Memorial supporter.

"I created this award because over the years that I taught theatre at Memorial, and was involved in theatre in general in St. John's, it brought me great joy," Dr. Buehler says. "I thought I would like to give back some of that joy."

Dr. Buehler came to Memorial in the 1960s to teach English and Folklore, but brought along his passion for the stage and worked in local theatre. In the late '80s, he was drafted into service in the university's theatre stream. His interest in fostering the talent of students was evident: a group of his students even started a theatre group called Dick's Kids Productions.

The Dick Buehler Award in theatre is one more way he can have an impact on the continuing success of promising students. Valued at approximately \$500, the annual award will go to a student who has completed the requirements for the Diploma in Performance and Communications Media, and who intends to continue training at an institution of higher learning or as an apprentice with an approved theatre or film company.

If you would like information on how you can create an award or scholarship, or to donate to an existing one, please contact Jennifer O'Neill, development officer, Faculty of Arts and School of Music at (709) 737-7539 or by e-mail at joneill@mun.ca.

Faculty of Arts NEWS and HIGHLIGHTS

There is never a shortage of new and interesting endeavours in our thriving faculty. Here, just a sampling of news:

Michelle Murdoch is the most recent recipient of the Sally Davis Award, a \$1000 scholarship awarded to a student in the master's degree program in Women's Studies. Ms. Murdoch received a research grant from the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies for her communitybased project about women with disabilities, adaptive technology and labour market entry.

Our [Multimedia Language Centre \(MLC\)](#) has been extensively upgraded to make it an even more valuable resource within the Faculty of Arts. The 10-year old language-learning facility was expanded into a multi-functional teaching facility. Here, students have access to authentic materials, and can hear languages via the web, audio clips or live TV feed. New eMac computers and headsets grace the 42 work stations—a benefit for those studying French, Spanish, German, Russian, linguistics, classics or English as a second language. Students can use the centre for individual lab time and get immediate feedback from the computer. Professors also use the MLC to access material online or conduct comprehension exercises using audio feeds. The MLC is located in the Science Building, SN-4022.

Dr. Trevor Bell, Department of Geography, was awarded an inaugural Coracle Irish-Newfoundland Fellowship to study submerged archaeological landscapes around Ireland and Newfoundland. Dr. Bell will explore the techniques Irish researchers use to map underwater landscapes and evaluate their potential for near-shore Newfoundland. He will also compare prehistoric settlement models for coastal environments in Newfoundland and Ireland.

Introduced in 2005 as a way to strengthen ties and promote beneficial exchanges between our province and Ireland, the Coracle Fellowship is available to academic researchers at Memorial University and in Ireland, as well as senior civil servants and leaders in labour, business, culture, the arts, or the professions.

This Fellowship will allow Dr. Bell to travel twice to Ireland to facilitate the project.

The [Law and Society](#) interdisciplinary program and a growing interest in Canadian legal history has resulted in the recent publication of *Two Islands: Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island*, part of the prestigious Osgoode Society series, *Essays on the History of Canadian Law*. The volume examines the unique developments and disputes that influenced the law on the two islands. Six of its 13 essays were penned by Memorial undergraduate students, each of whom won an annual Law Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador essay competition with their efforts. Historian **Dr. Christopher English**, co-ordinator of the Law and Society program, edited the book, which was funded by a generous subvention from Memorial University.

Memorial's burgeoning [Department of Classics](#)—which is now enjoying its highest enrolment ever—has two new popular 4000-level courses. In 2006, department head **Dr. Tana Allen** is offering her students a chance to explore Pompeii, its history and culture. Through an examination of textual and archaeological material, students are reconstructing the city's 600 years before a volcanic eruption buried it. In the spring, she'll give students the opportunity to explore Pompeii for real when she takes them to Rome for two weeks as part of the intersession Roman Topography and Monuments course.

Freedom and rock 'n' roll star in the latest issue of *Postscript: a journal of graduate criticism and theory*, produced by graduate students in the Department of English with articles from a wide range of disciplines, and from across Canada and abroad. This issue—edited by Adam Beardsworth, **Adam Lawrence** and **Helena Staveley**—features articles on Bob Dylan; Victoria's Secret lingerie ads; independent record stores versus big chains; representations of capitalist culture in hip hop music; the prevalence of Shakespeare in heavy metal lyrics; and Newfoundland's identity in the musical iconography of St. John's. "It's all focused on the increasingly complex relationship between freedom and rock 'n' roll, art and industry, creativity and capital," explained Mr. Beardsworth.

To learn more or receive a copy, contact him at adambeardsworth@hotmail.com.



Memorial
University of Newfoundland

The Faculty of Arts Winter 2006



New Options for Academic Success

Arts students have two new options to better guide their academic careers at Memorial. In 2005-06, entering firstyear students were able to declare an intended major right away. Known as “direct entry,” this option is something Peter Ayres, associate dean (undergraduates), calls “an expression of intent, like an engagement—it’s not binding.” Students are not required to indicate an intended area of study, and those who do are free to change their minds.

The move to direct entry allows departments to better plan for enrolments and to begin communicating with students at the earliest possible time. Most importantly, it provides those students who are ready to follow a distinct path the chance to plan their academic career from the outset.

The Faculty of Arts has also added an academic adviser to its team to help students navigate the sometimes confusing requirements of their bachelor of arts degree. Marie Donovan, who has many years of experience advising on campus, holds individual and group advising sessions, and is always available to talk with students.

Memorial playing Big Role in OECD Study

Memorial University will play a role in a major international study undertaken by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to examine the role of higher education institutions in fostering regional development. Wade Locke, Department of Economics, will serve as the project’s regional co-ordinator and principal researcher for Atlantic Canada—the only participating Canadian jurisdiction. About 14 other countries are also taking part in the study, which will include internal and independent external assessments of how universities and colleges are influencing economic, social and cultural development.

In addition to providing an opportunity to share information and learning on a global scale, Locke believes the project will help raise awareness and support for the role universities and colleges can play in fostering local well-being and economies. Political science professor Stephen Tomblin will also participate as a provincial co-ordinator on the project.

Arts World is produced by the Faculty of Arts at Memorial University.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE: Leslie Vryenhoek, Tracey Mills, Jennifer O’Neill, Steve Wolinetz, interim dean, Faculty of Arts

For information on supporting the Faculty of Arts, contact: Jennifer O’Neill, development officer, (709) 737-7539; joneill@mun.ca