

Fred Mundle

Campbellton poet wins prestigious prize

ADAM HODNETT
THE TRIBUNE

The life of a writer is a private thing – both the work and the rewards. When Fred Mundle found out he received the Alfred G. Bailey Prize for Poetry, he was alone at his computer, much like the other poetic accomplishments that have sent him “over the moon” throughout his career.

Some may know him from the Victory Lighthouse church in Dalhousie where he co-pastored with his wife for eight years. Others may know him from his 30 years at the New Brunswick Community College here in Campbellton, or the nearly 20 years teaching adult education classes in Listuguj.

Aside from the list of publications in literary journals, anthologies and self-publications, he has written often for The Tribune. His first column was called “Tot Spot,” where he published children’s stories, drawings and poems in the 70s. He later had a Christian column called “Straight Talk,” which became “Catch the Light.”

He has steadily pursued writing, but in different forms.

“I flip-flopped all my life,” he said.

He actually began writing at 14, while working out lyrics for songs. He would later win first place in Restigouche Regionals for best song in the 90s.

“Oh, here’s a good idea, where will it

fit?” he said, speaking of his process. “Is it a poem, is it just a lyric, and then is it a song, is there music in it, you know? Does it have a story? It fits into some frying pan somewhere, you know, so cook it up, if you can.”

He says he probably should have stuck with poetry, but he didn’t. He did continue to pick away at it, even during periods where his focus was on songwriting, or other endeavours.

The manuscript that won him the prize in June is called *Seasons of Diversity*. It has some bits of poems that started as long as 20 years ago. And reflections that stretch back even further.

“(It’s) a whole lifetime of odds and ends,” he said. “This ended up being a smattering of all of that.”

The poems in the collection are organized by themes, such as “Seasons of the River,” or “Tobacco Harvest” and “Midlife: Hell and Beyond.”

“There are many diverse seasons that one can experience in his life,” he said.

The prize is named after Alfred Goldsworthy Bailey, a poet, ethnohistorian and all-around supporter and builder of the literary culture in Fredericton and New Brunswick, who died in 1997. He founded the Bliss Carmen Society in his home, which later became the Fiddlehead – Canada’s longest-running literary journal. He collected a long list of achievements during his life. The New Brunswick Literary Encyclopedia says

that, “in a sense, he created the field of ethnohistory in Canada.”

In some ways, the culture that Bailey fostered helped encourage Mundle himself. He received encouragement from different writers, professors and publishers who helped him continue on.

“We are mentored moment by moment, or week by week, or even in a certain season of our life, and so that happened,” Mundle said. “You get these little words of encouragement every now and then – they sort of prompt you on. Push you on.”

Another source of encouragement that Mundle learned to recognize was the rejections slips, that continue to pile up to this day.

“Actually, you can start feeding on rejection slips,” he said. “All the positive rejections slips – even though they were rejections – sort of boosted the moral ... I’d say, ‘OK, there’s something good in this package.’ Then I’d try to get the dirt out of it, or whatever it was.”

Mundle has learned lots of things about the pursuit of writing, like what it takes to actually produce. He had one highly creative period that he says he is still “harvesting” from.

“What it was – was write every day, at a certain time, whether you like it or not, whether it’s any good or not. Write it, and just do it,” he said. “Out of those things came a lot of inspiration. Even though it’s all perspiration, as they say.

One per cent inspiration, just makes it all work after a while.”

After many years of work, Mundle said the prize is a nice recognition.

“I’m pleased enough,” he said. “As an old man – time for the old man to say, ‘OK this is it, you know. I’ll take this home with me when I go.’”

“I did say, when I was walking to the podium to receive the prize – you know, it’s such a long distance – that it took me decades to get there.”

For now, Mundle has set his sights on collecting rejection slips from American Universities. He says he likes the challenge of trying to get published internationally “on whatever scale.”

“So far the scale is minuscule,” he said.

He is very modest about his work, which seems useful for pursuing the hardest of the literary pursuits – which are difficult in any capacity, even in the best of circumstances.

“You know its not you, it’s coming from somewhere, whether it’s coming from the lord or not,” he said. “If it’s any good at all, it’s his, I would say. Because, we’re only human beings.”

the river mirror (The Restigouche River)

my canoe cut through the cloud caps at good speed then on through blue expanses between

snow-like drifts

sometimes it sliced treetop tips of pines and spruces or slipped between boughs of birches and mighty maples

alders as their reflections reached out from shore added their stretching fingers to try to tangle my anchor dangling on its rope over the bow

occasionally i knifed the rocky beds upon which rails of relaxing train tracks stretched as well when passenger cars clickety-clacked i glided across their windows cutting glass and steel like butter

i struck the Matapedia bridge when crossing a placid pool severing its concrete which joined Quebec and New Brunswick

later i bounced over broken bits of blue and white and black of rushing rapids slapping at the gunnels till calm waters restored the view as i ripped the mountain in two on my way toward the pebbled shore

Be the first to know. This story was posted July 29 on tribunenb.ca

Dalhousie

Another step toward constructing new nursing home

ADAM HODNETT
THE TRIBUNE

Dalhousie will finally be getting a new nursing home. Construction began Wednesday.

It was around this time – four years ago – that the Liberal government of Shawn Graham started moving forward with a similar project, only to have it delayed and ultimately cancelled when the Conservatives took over that September.

Upon further review, the Progressive Conservative government decided that a new facility was actually needed, and this \$22.5-million project was announced.

On Wednesday morning, Social Development Minister Madeleine Dubé, Nepisiguit MLA Ryan Riordon and members of the Dalhousie Nursing Home Board were at the Dalhousie Nursing Home to announce the progress.

Maxim Construction Inc. from Saint John has been awarded the tender for the 90-bed replacement facility. The original, Liberal, plan was for a 105-bed facility, at the considerably higher price of \$31.5 million. It was part of \$400-million plan to replace 11 facilities and build two new ones, announced Dec 3, 2009.

“The people of Dalhousie, and the

region, have been patient over the last years,” said Dalhousie Mayor Clem Tremblay.

Tremblay expressed some scepticism, but said he was “confident that it will start.”

“Thirteen years is a long time, and I can assure the mayor that we will be going ahead with construction,” said Alden Appleby, the chairman of the board. “I signed the contract yesterday for \$17.5 million. If it doesn’t go through, I’m responsible.”

The facility is being built at 284 Goderich St., which has been owned by the Board since 2010.

The sod was turned at that site on Aug. 23, 2010, and then it was delayed. During the delay, the Dalhousie Nursing Home Board had to pay between \$7,000 and \$8,000 a month for the mortgage. The board accumulated \$2,700 in interest every month on the \$31-million loan taken out from a Moncton bank.

The delay carried on for well over a year as the government assessed priorities and projects throughout the province. The government said it was looking for inefficiencies in the planned projects.

On March 15, 2012, Sue Stultz – the minister of social development at the time – announced \$2.2 million in renovations, instead of the new facility.

Premier David Alward insisted that there was a proportioned reduction in public services across the province.

The Tribune reported around that time that Appleby had stated that renovations were pursued five years earlier, but it was determined that a new facility would be easier than rebuilding parts of the home.

The east and west wings of the building were built in 1966, making the nursing home among the oldest in the province.

On July 18, 2013, the Conservative government, announced plans for a new facility, citing damages caused by ventilation and water infiltration.

“It’s things the engineers couldn’t have known in advance, like behind the

walls, for example,” said Dubé on Wednesday.

The new building’s completion is expected for the summer of 2016.

“We’re very positive about the future,” said Appleby. “It’s a great Dalhousie nursing home. A great day for the Town of Dalhousie.”

Appleby admitted that there were a lot of frustrations over the past 13 years as the board lobbied for a new facility, but was very thankful for Dubé.

“She promised that she would come up to Dalhousie last year, look at our nursing home, and she decided for herself,” he said. “Once she saw the need, she realized.”

The current nursing home will still receive \$2.1 million in renovations. It is

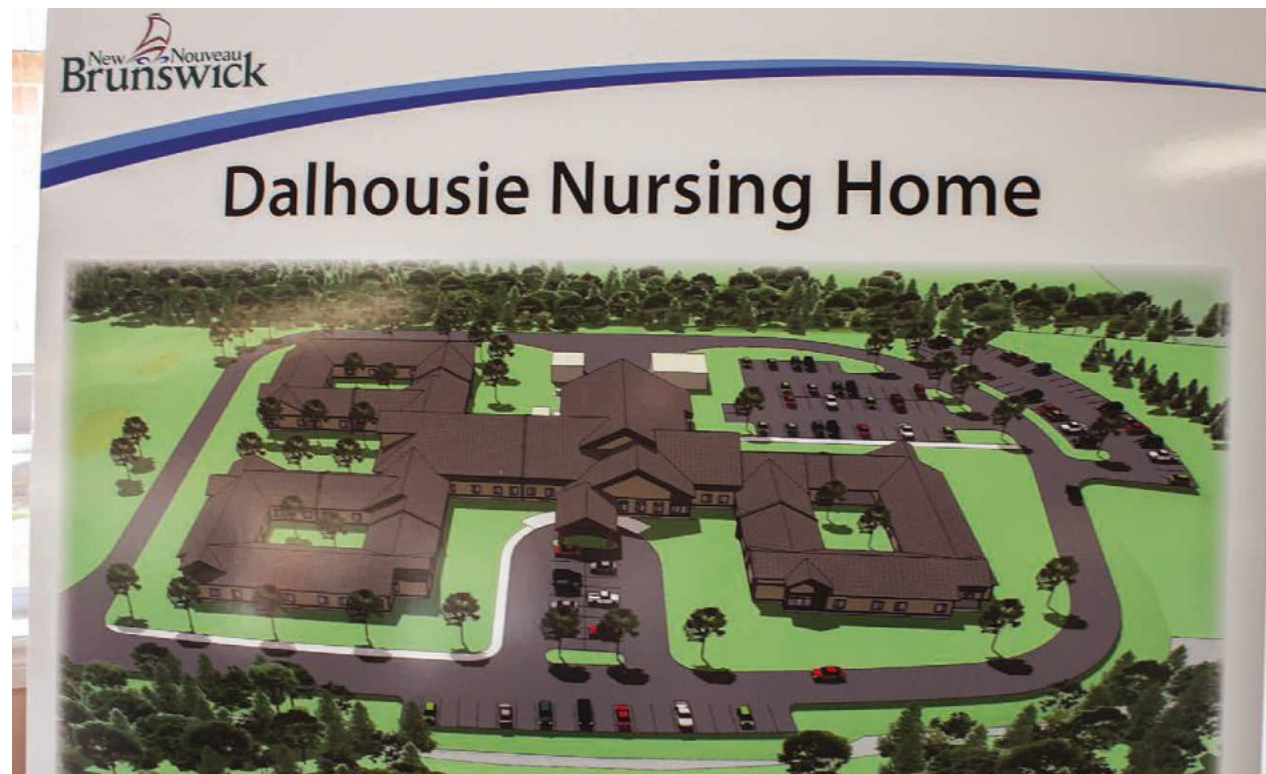
hoped that it will extend the building’s life for 10 years or more.

“We’re looking at others services that we may be able to provide in this facility,” Appleby said. “So we’re very pleased that we’re getting renovations here.”

Liberal MLA for Dalhousie-Restigouche East, Donald Arseneault, was at the Nursing Home on Wednesday. He was minister of natural resources when the Liberals planned for a new facility.

“It’s nice to see the continuation of the project,” he said. “I also have to say that it’s kind of mixed feeling in the part that – instead of unveiling the design today, we could have been moving residents in to the new home.”

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The design of the new nursing home in Dalhousie. PHOTO: ADAM HODNETT/TRIBUNE

Rotary serves Volunteer Action Association clients



Members of the Campbellton Rotary Club served a barbecue lunch to clients of the Restigouche County Volunteer Action Association in Campbellton on July 24. From left are John MacDonald, May Nazair, Alex Caissy, Dan Willet and Roy Rushton. PHOTO: SUBMITTED

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