



Poetry month panel explores the comedic muse

Humour in writing is more than a memorable kneeslapper or a good guffaw. It's a way of looking at the world, a way of outlasting a Canadian winter. It's a strategy for writing.

Those are just some of the observations from three Canadian writers during a panel discussion kicking off National Poetry Month at the University of Regina. The panel was part of Talking Fresh 2, a weekend celebrating writers and writing. The panels, readings and workshops were held at Luther College at the University of Regina, which co-sponsored Talking Fresh with the Saskatchewan Writers Guild and the League of Canadian Poets.

The panel on April 2 was called "Humour and Poetry." However, the three panelists - Dave Carpenter, Jeannette Lynes and Sheri-D Wilson - tended to draw on all forms of writing, and their own experiences writing in different forms, during their discussions.

Carpenter, a writer in several genres and

winner of a Saskatchewan Book Award, used the example of six of his favorite authors from different eras. All of them, he noted, included humour even in their tragic writings.

"All of these gloomy guses included some amazingly funny scenes, even in their tragic works, like Shakespeare's 'King Lear,'" Carpenter said. He added that there seems to be a Canadian neurosis that poetry and humour don't mix. He cited one Canadian poet who subscribes to this view, but who occasionally "falls off the wagon of high seriousness, and writes a very funny poem."

Carpenter also said the familiar Greek masks of tragedy and comedy are closely interrelated.

"You can learn a lot about the world from either mask," he advised the audience. "Don't turn your back on half the wisdom you have available."

Jeannette Lynes suggested that humour is about not giving up on life. She credited

humour with helping her survive a long, snowy Nova Scotia winter.

"Sometimes humour can be used as a weapon," she observed. "It's about who has the power; and who doesn't. It can also be a mask, a protective device."

Lynes also said that humour has great humanizing power. As an example, she related her thought during yet another university English department meeting, "If only someone would just laugh." Her observation drew a mix of loud laughter and nods of agreement from the audience and the other members of the panel.

Sheri-D Wilson said most tragic events are also the funniest, and that the more serious you get, the funnier you are. She related her experience as a high school actor in Arthur Miller's "The Crucible," a play about the shocking witch hunts in colonial New England. "My Mom laughed all the way through," said Wilson. "She said I had a

funny nose. I resisted at first, but eventually I had to agree with her. I didn't have a tragic nose."

Wilson also suggested that part of the power of humour for writers is the ability to remove masks and reveal more of the truth to the reader or the listener.

"Talking Fresh 2" also featured an evening of readings by the three panelists, who were joined by Saskatchewan's poet laureate Glen Sorestad. Wilson, Lynes and Carpenter also gave workshops as part of the weekend event.

"Events like Talking Fresh are important because they bring great writers and their readers together," said Gerry Hill, a professor of English at Luther College and one of the organizers of the event. "From Luther's perspective," he added, "it reinforces the college's commitment to the liberal arts and makes new connections between Luther and the larger community, literary or otherwise."

CAMPUS LIFE CALENDAR

Thurs., Apr. 8 - 4 p.m.

Humanities Research Institute Profiling Scholarship Series

"Edward Ahenakew's Representation of Plains Cree Culture: Collaborations, Distractions, and Apprehensions"

Speaker: David R. Miller

Student commons area, First Nations University of Canada

Info: 585-4443

Thurs., Apr. 8

UR Ready Workshop

Workshops about the U of R for new students attending in the fall semester

Robert Usher Collegiate

Info: 1-800-644-4756

Fri., Apr. 9 - 7:30 p.m.

Music presentation

Featuring the direction of Kathryn Laurin and narration by David Barnard

Campton College Chapel

Info: 359-1244

Fri., April 9

Good Friday

University Closed

Thurs., Apr. 15 - 6 p.m.

Cougar Women's Hockey 6th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction

An evening to support the national reputation of excellence in athletics and academics

Saskatchewan Centre of the Arts

Info/tickets: 585-4018

Apr. 20-23

UR Ready Workshop

Workshops about the U of R for new students attending in the fall semester

Winston Knoll Collegiate, A.E. Peacock Collegiate, Martin Collegiate, University of Regina, D'Neil High School, Campbell Collegiate, Queen City Collegiate

Info: 1-800-644-4756

For a complete calendar of events at the University of Regina visit our Web site at www.uregina.ca



UNIVERSITY OF REGINA



University of Regina bachelor of fine arts graduates co-exhibit with a collection of sculptures by BFA grad Griff Baker titled REcollect, an exhibit at the MacKenzie Art Gallery. L-R, Regan Fraser (standing), Julie Heinrich (kneeling), Baker and Twyla Exner.

Council proposes broader access to research results

"A manager for the City of Regina recently told me, 'I don't want to have to research the research,'" says David Malloy.

Malloy, assistant dean with the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at the University of Regina, tells the story to illustrate major changes that are taking place in approaches to research in the humanities and social sciences.

These changes are reflected in the growing number of transdisciplinary research projects being undertaken at the University by scholars from various academic disciplines. Many of these projects are being supported by a transdisciplinary fund established by the University to encourage those initiatives.

Change is also evident in the growing number of cross-listed courses in the U of R's course catalogue. Students and their teachers recognize that tackling the complex problems of the 21st Century will require broad knowledge, and a team approach. There's also growing recognition that researchers and teachers in the humanities and social sciences must also get the results of their work out to people like the manager at City Hall, who can apply it to the city's programs and policies.

They're also hearing similar messages from Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

(SSHRC), which provides about \$200 million annually to researchers in the country's universities, think tanks and research institutes.

In a recent speech at Memorial University in Newfoundland Marc Renaud, the head of SSHRC, said: "No matter how brilliant or creative, there is no way a solitary thinker could puzzle through the complex issues of today's world as deeply and comprehensively as a group of people from different fields, different areas of expertise, different disciplinary training and perspectives, and spanning several generations."

Renaud and other senior SSHRC people have been holding town hall meetings at universities across the country as part of a consultation process the SSHRC is conducting on its future direction. The title of its consultation document, "From Granting Council to Knowledge Council" illustrates the shift in focus that is taking place.

"In the past," Malloy explains, "a researcher who received a grant from SSHRC would present the results of their research at conferences associated with their discipline, and publish an article in a scholarly journal. What the Council is saying is that the knowledge created by the research has to be more accessible to governments, interest groups and the public. Researchers in the humanities and social sciences are being encouraged to disseminate the

results of their work further. For example," Malloy adds, "with a bit of alteration a scholarly article could be suitable for publication in a periodical read by large numbers of the public."

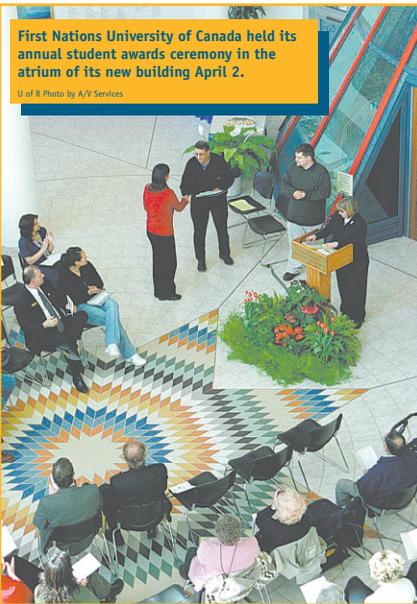
Malloy acknowledges that the SSHRC's consultations have brought varied reactions. The U of R's Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research supports the council's thinking in principle and practice. However, he adds, some researchers - SSHRC calls them "human scientists" in its document - feel threatened by what they're hearing. They perceive the shift as a move toward "practical" research, and away from "pure" research.

"I don't believe that is what the SSHRC is saying," Malloy says. "There will always be areas of research that don't avail themselves to collaborative work, and I believe the council understands that."

SSHRC will gather the input received from the consultation over the summer. However, there's no indication when it will reveal the final results of its "transformation" exercise. Malloy declines to speculate on what may happen, or when.

"The Council will digest all that it has heard and read, and make changes, or not," he says.

More information is available at the U of R web site. Go to www.uregina.ca/gradstudies and click on "SSHRC Renewal"



First Nations University of Canada held its annual student awards ceremony in the atrium of its new building April 2.

U of R Photo by A/V Services