



# Angelic Exhibit Blesses a New Year



by Jethelo E Cabilete

The UNB Art Centre began its first exhibition of the year with Geoff Butler's, *The Angel Looks Series*, on January 15, 1995. The opening day of this interesting and thought-provoking exhibit began with opening remarks by guest curator, John Murchie. Mr. Murchie started his speech with a definition of angels, drawn from a recent dictionary source. He provided a well-composed commentary of Geoff Butler's background in the artistic field, noting the artist's matter-of-fact and workmanlike demeanour that expresses his humour through the vehicle of his art. As Mr. Murchie insightfully points out, *The Angel Looks Series* is a "...critical representation of modern social and cultural values..."; an exploration of the relationship between the divine and the mundane, and as in many artistic achievements, "...the relationship between the art maker and the art object itself."

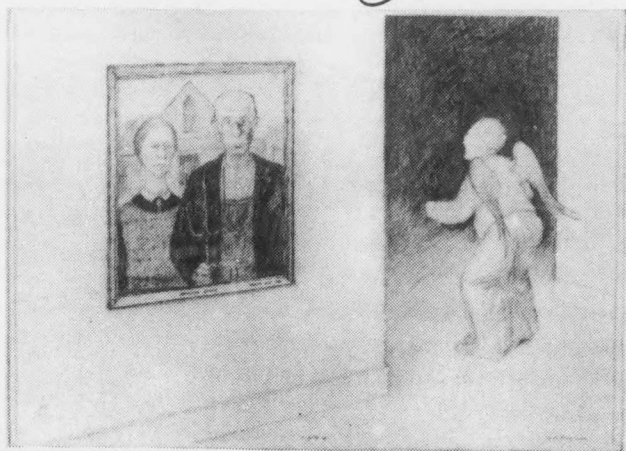
Born in 1945, in Fogo, Newfoundland, Geoff Butler began his foray in the art community when he joined friends in a painting class "on a lark."

Discovering that he had an affinity with painting, he took several art courses in Nova Scotia, and at the famous Art Students' League in New York. His artistic history includes *Stages on Life's Way* (Kingston, 1978), *Ars Sacra* (Halifax, 1984) and *Fear of Others/Art Against Racism* (Vancouver, 1989). In 1990, Butler's self-published book, *Art of War: Painting It Out of the Picture*, was released; a presentation of years of artistic focus on the theme of war. It was also at this time, that the idea of *The Angel Looks Series* began, with his first piece, *How many angels can dance on the head of an ICBM?* This first exploration into the subject of angels was a result of Butler's desire to convey the sub-

ject of war in a more positive outlook. From this, was born a number of remarkable works with angelic themes.

The *Angel Looks Series* is Butler's serious, and often light-hearted, examination of the question "if there were angels, how would they look at us?" The series of paintings and drawings in this exhibition are not aesthetically pleasing portrayals of sweetness and goodness reminiscent of escapist art, but rather a critical exploration of modern social and cultural values. A walking tour of the exhibit was provided by the artist during the opening. Each piece was carefully explained, with time spent on various details of a particular work of art. *Soul Music* (1993) is the artist's con-

ception of music as the language of angels; a simple, yet beautiful piece. *Lighten Up!* (1994) is a message to dour people to stop and smell the roses once in a while. *Dream by the babbling stream* (1992) is a beautiful piece evocative of life and hope represented in the vivid green of the individual in the painting, and the gently flowing stream. *Then & now* (1994) is a sketch of past and present views of angels; from powerful avenging spirit to whimsical observer and guardian. Some of the more comical pieces include: *Holy Moley* (1994) - a saintly mole reading, *Keeping in touch* (1994) - angels using the telephone system, and *School photo* (1993) - what if angels had to go to school to become angels? The 50 works in *The Angel Looks Series* spans Geoff Butler's artistic composition between 1990 to 1994. Each piece is a wonderful look at the merging of the divine and the mundane, of the heavenly and the human. Not only do the works represent the unity of the sacred and secular in the outside world, but they also represent that same unity within each person. The exhibition continues from January 15 to March 12, 1995; make sure to drop in and see it before it ends.



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Saturday January 21

A ceilidh in honour of the celebrated Scottish poet, Robert Burns, will be hosted by the Fredericton Society of Saint Andrew on Saturday, January 21, 1995 at the **Wandlyn Inn** with a reception beginning at 6:00 pm and dinner at 7:00 pm. With a first rate line-up of local entertainers and featuring traditional Scottish delicacies it promises to be a sell out.

### Harvest Jazz & Blues Festival

"Mardi Gras at the Market"

The Harvest Jazz & Blues Festival is once again bringing the south to Fredericton for Mardi Gras - this time they've gone all the way to Rio! This latin dance party will warm the **Boyce Farmer's Market on Saturday, February 25th**. The show will feature **Salsa Picante**, a ten-piece latin dance band from Halifax and will open with local group, **The Michael George Quartet**. Tickets are now available at Mazzuca's, Tony's Music Box, Magic Forest Music Store, Purple Haze (60 Regent Street) and at the Festival office 81 Regent Street. For more information, call the Festival office at 454-2583.

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