



Personal Perspective of L.M. Montgomery

Quaile Reviews by Deborah Quaile

Author Alexandra Heilbron has collected first-hand reminiscences of the friends, family, neighbours and servants of Lucy Maud Montgomery, former Norval minister's wife and famed author of the "Anne" and "Emily" series of books.

Remembering Lucy Maud Montgomery was published in October. It's a collection of interviews with people in Prince Edward Island and Ontario, including many locals in the Norval area. Notably, author Mary Maxwell, who wrote *To Walk A Country Mile*, and *Marion Laird* is featured, as well as a photo supplied by Mayor Kathy Gastle. The frank interviews are interspersed with old and new photographs, some of which have never before been published. Articles about Montgomery both during her lifetime and after her death offer further insight into one of Canada's best-loved authors.

Since most of L.M. Montgomery's books were warm and humorous, readers assumed that the author's life was also like that. However, when Professors Rubio and Waterston of the University of Guelph published Montgomery's series of journals, readers uncovered a dark side to the writer, with numerous episodes of pain, heartbreak and dismay. Through the juxtaposition of the two opposites, readers began to pose a question: what was Montgomery really like?

By discussing this with people who knew Montgomery, Ms. Heilbron has written recollections about her daily routine, relationships with family members, writing, community involvement and more. The interviews were transcribed from tape, and have not been completely edited of the speakers' exact words, so that the reader can derive their own truth from the stories.

"I first thought of doing the book when I met Elsie Bushby Davidson in Uxbridge in 1995, when I was covering their annual LMM Day for The Avonlea Traditions Chronicle (a magazine for fans of LMM and Anne of Green Gables)," Ms. Heilbron comments. "She was one of LMM's first maids, and I decided to interview Mrs. Davidson for the magazine, with the thought that if I could find enough people, my findings could one day make a very interesting book. The interview ran in the magazine in 1996, and we had a lot of positive feedback from readers, so I decided to go ahead with my plans. I'm very happy with

Remembering Lucy Maud Montgomery; it's exactly what I had in mind when I first came up with the concept."

Not only do the interviews change readers' perspectives, but they have also changed the author's perceptions of the woman behind the journals.

"After reading her books and her journals, I still had no idea what Lucy Maud Montgomery would have been like to personally know or meet. Nowhere in her books or her journals do we see the side of her that I saw when speaking to people who actually knew her. I didn't meet anyone who had a negative impression of her, or who didn't like and respect her. She was a cheerful, happy, generous person by all accounts and some people I interviewed were really angry that the journals had been published, because they didn't think they presented a true representation of LMM at all. I believe and several people I interviewed said this as well - that she used the journals only as an outlet when she was depressed, angry or sad, to get negative thoughts and feelings off her chest."

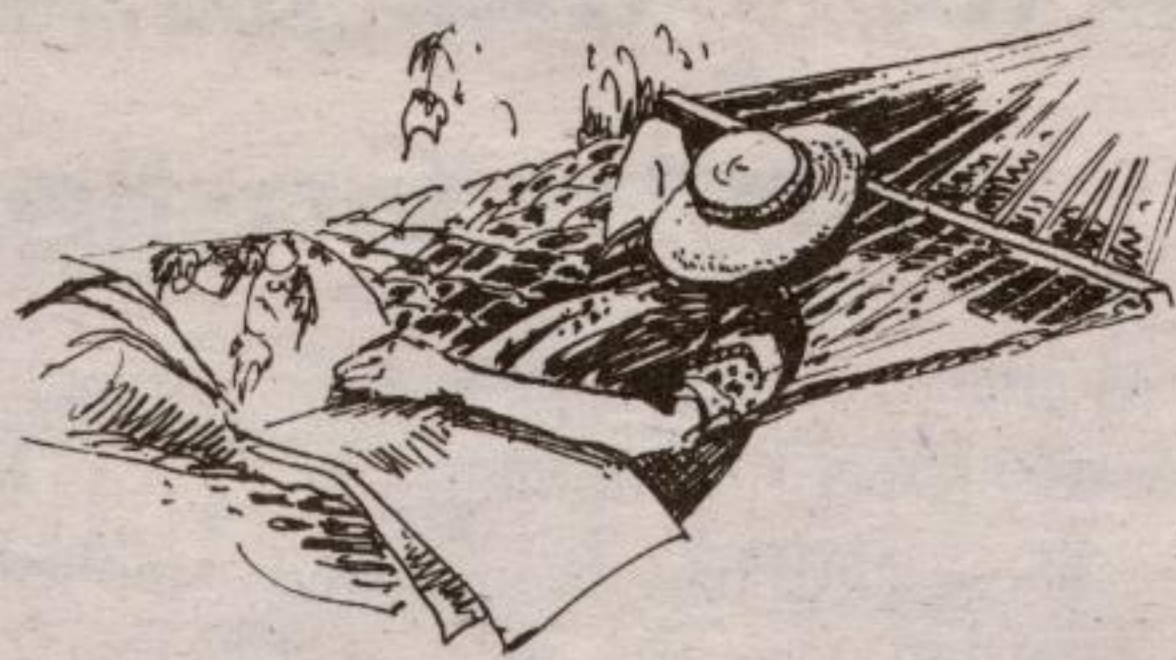
"The interviews were conducted between 1996 and 1999, and it was really a race for time to get them completed."

Since publication, at least five people interviewed have passed away. All the material gained from the interviews has been used, and the author believes that this is "the final piece of information. We see LMM from all sides now, and gain as clear a picture of her as we ever will... As a journalist, I wanted to present the whole truth, not a whitewashed version of it, or only the part of it that I thought would be pleasing to fans. One extremely fervent fan tried to talk me out of publishing the story about the boys having lice. It was an embarrassing moment for LMM, definitely, but it just makes her more human."

Alexandra Heilbron worked as editor of *The Avonlea Traditions Chronicle*, a fan magazine for L.M. Montgomery, for five years. In 2000, she won a writing award from the Prince Edward Island Museum and Heritage Foundation for her first book, *The Lucy Maud Montgomery Album*.

Remembering Lucy Maud Montgomery
Alexandra Heilbron
Toronto:
The Dundurn Group, 2001
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Idle



Pursuits

Local artist paints a bright future

by Deborah Quaile

Tucked back into the trees on Second Line in Campbellville is the home studio of artist Tina Newlove, where a bear-sized Newfoundland gives enthusiastic greetings and Ernie the bird cheerfully natters on in the sunny kitchen window.

"I've been working professionally since I graduated (in 1996)," Ms. Newlove commented. "I always wanted to be an artist ... in high-school I knew that I had to go to school for art or not at all!"

She graduated from McMaster University with a BA Honours (with distinction) in Fine Arts, and has since participated in numerous juried shows, held many exhibitions, and received awards for her work. Her first solo show was in 1994.

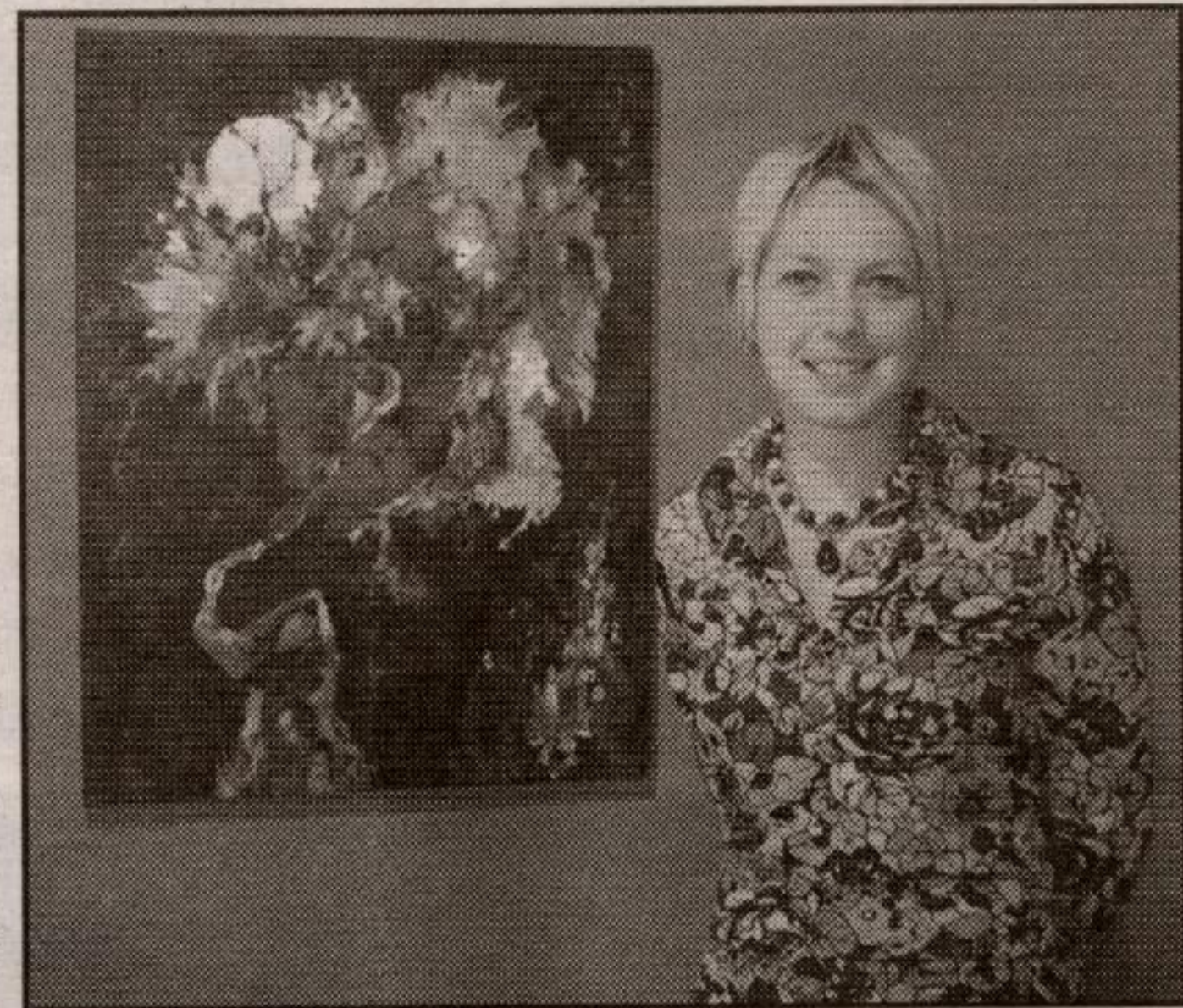
In 2001 alone, she has had

three solo exhibitions, and been involved in "Insights" at the Wellington County Museum; the Members Juried Exhibition at The Arts & Letters Club in Toronto; and in the Spring Art Show & Sale, The Hummingbird Centre, National Ballet of Canada, Toronto.

Closer to home,

Ms. Newlove has a current showing at Country Laine Café in Campbellville, running through to the first week of January 2002. On the walls are various samples of her work, mostly oil on canvas but some watercolour as well.

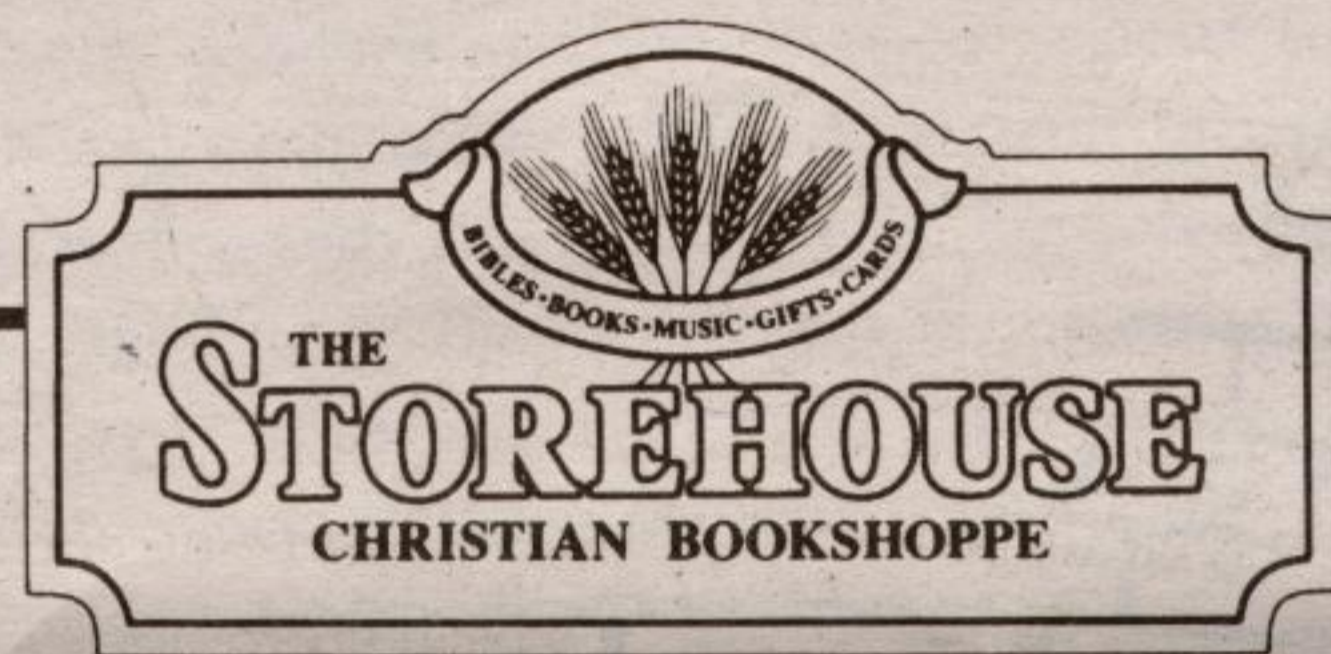
The artist says she paints "out of my head; most things are recog-



Tina Newlove

nizable but with odd twists and turns." She has painted "a lot of fish," but the new focus is on trees - winding, writhing, reaching, or weeping, some with a strong J.R.R. Tolkien feel, grasping onto rocky footholds and often standing alone in shadowed skies. She has sold

(Continued on next page)



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