The L.M. Montgomery Institute: Projects and Possibilities

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This L.M. Montgomery and Vision Forum is just one of the latest examples of how the L.M. Montgomery Institute (LMMI) at the University of Prince Edward Island supports research on and the informed celebration of Montgomery's life, work, and legacy. As the Chair of L.M. Montgomery Studies, I want to take this opportunity to let you know what the LMMI has been up to recently, has planned in the future, and ways that you can become (more!) involved, whether you're a student (at UPEI or anywhere else), a researcher (inside or outside the academy, focused on Montgomery or interested in exploring her and work in scholarship), a potential postdoctoral researcher, a reader, or a fan (or all of the above).

First of all, I'll (re)introduce you to the LMMI community, showcasing some of the people who contribute so much to the LMMI, including a lot of work that happens behind the scenes. People—on PEI, across Canada, and around the world—are the lifeblood of the LMMI, and at the centre of it all is the LMMI's management committee:

- **Dr. Philip Smith (chair)** is a UPEI Professor of Psychology and steady hand at the helm of the ship LMMI.
- **Dr. Elizabeth R. Epperly** is the founder of the LMMI. She is a former UPEI University President and English Professor, whose contributions to Montgomery Studies are legendary and whose many (many) Montgomery publications include the recently re-released *Imagining Anne: L. M. Montgomery's Island Scrapbooks* (Nimbus, 2019). Her research on Montgomery is wide-ranging, including romance, visuality, and developments in psychology.
- **Dr. Lesley Clement** is the current LMMI Visiting Scholar (2019–21),

mastermind behind the L.M. Montgomery and Vision Forum (formerly known as the L.M. Montgomery and Vision Conference and L.M. Montgomery Vision Virtual Conference Space), and co-editor of the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* (beginning 1 July, 2020), including forthcoming collections on "L.M. Montgomery and Vision" and "L.M. Montgomery and Mental Health." She is also co-editing *L.M. Montgomery in Conversation about Children and Childhood(s)* with Rita Bode, Margaret Steffler, and Holly Pike, currently under review.

- **Dr. Tracy Doucette** is another LMMI committee member from Psychology, who provides an objective voice of calm and encouragement to the Institute.
- **Dr. Dave Hickey** is an Assistant Professor of Applied, Communication, and Leadership at UPEI. As a photographer and star-gazer himself, Dave explores Montgomery's own interest in these visual mediums, and you can get a taste of his work here.
- **Melanie Fishbane** is the LMMI's Digital Media Manager. She also writes fiction, including a YA novel *Maud*, and scholarship on Montgomery—in 2018, she presented on Montgomery's time in Saskatchewan and has published on the therapeutic value of writing.
- **Dr. Jean Mitchell** is Professor of Anthropology at UPEI (and another former LMMI Visiting Scholar). Jean is a *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* consulting editor and with Lesley will be co-editing a special collection on "L.M. Montgomery and Mental Health." Jean is co-editor with Rita Bode of *L.M. Montgomery and the Matter of Nature(s)*, 2019 winner of the Gabrielle Roy Prize.
- **Donald Moses** is University Librarian at UPEI. Donald's many contributions to the LMMI include building and continuing to support, with library colleagues, the website for the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* and advising the LMMI, alongside librarian Simon Lloyd, on all technological, archival, and copyright issues.
- **Dr. Laura Robinson** is a former LMMI Visiting Scholar (2015-17) and current Dean of Arts at her alma mater, Acadia University. Laura is a consulting editor for the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*, and her research interests focus on gender, as is reflected in the edited collection, *L.M. Montgomery and Gender*, currently under review and co-edited with Holly Pike. Laura has been an academic consultant on various projects, including Historica Canada's L.M. Montgomery Heritage Minute.
- **Dr. Kate Scarth** (that's me) as the Chair of L.M. Montgomery Studies.
- **Dr. Emily Woster**, another former LMMI Visiting Scholar position (2017–19), is founding co-editor of the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*. Emily is creating a database of Montgomery's reading and all of the literary allusions in her works; watch Emily introduce this project in her 2018 LMMI keynote.

We're also grateful for the support of UPEI's Dean of the Faculty of Arts, **Neb Kujundzic**. Beyond the management committee, the LMMI is sustained and inspired by its networks, including the Heirs of L.M. Montgomery, Inc., especially Kate Macdonald Butler and Sally Keefe Cohen, the Friends of the L.M. Montgomery Institute, conference participants, former LMMI Visiting Scholars, student assistants, and Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado, the Honourary International Patron of the L.M. Montgomery Institute. The *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* expands this network, including our authors (nine and counting); thirty-seven editorial board members, including our honourary patron, Jane Urquhart, and honourary editors, Elizabeth Waterston, Mary Rubio, and Elizabeth Epperly; our, so far, forty peer reviewers; and, you, our readers.



Entrance of the Robertson Library. Anne Victoria Photography, 2018.

The Institute is firmly rooted at the University of Prince Edward Island —Montgomery's alma mater, by way of Prince of Wales College, one of UPEI's founding institutions. At UPEI, the LMMI has an office and Special Collections at the Robertson Library, hosts its biennial conferences, and is in particularly supported by the Office of the President, Marketing and Communications, and the Robertson Library. See Montgomery's and the LMMI's relationship with UPEI evolve with this timeline (created by LMMI student assistant Heidi Haering).

Montgomery's influence is, of course, strong in PEI, and the LMMI aims to contribute its strengths—research and informed celebration—to this community: LMMI members are part of the Anne-Montgomery Roundtable for PEI LMM stakeholders and have consulted on Montgomery projects, including Parks Canada's new interpretive centre at Green Gables Heritage Place and The Inspiring World of L.M. Montgomery—A Literary Tour.

The LMMI biennial conferences showcase the Institute's national and international reach. Researchers, from inside and outside the academy, from a range of disciplines and career stages, as well as representatives from Montgomery organizations like the L.M. Montgomery Society of Ontario and the Lucy Maud Montgomery Museum and Literary Centre come from across Canada. They are joined by international participants, usually representing a dozen different countries, which has included the USA, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Japan, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Poland, and South Africa.

The LMMI's Ongoing Projects:

Now I'll turn to some of the projects that the LMMI and researchers connected to the institute have underway:

- First up is the **L.M. Montgomery and Vision Forum**, which you've found if you're reading this piece. Although we are disappointed that the on-site conference couldn't happen in 2020 because of COVID-19, we hope that the forum will sustain everyone—with the connecting of the Montgomery community and the sharing of reading and research—until the next conference in 2022. We extend a particularly warm welcome to those who have never been able to come to Charlottetown but can now get a taste of the conference online!
- The **biennial LMMI conference**: To learn more about our 2022 conference—including the (so far, secret) identity of the next Visiting Scholar and conference theme—be sure to watch the Forum finale at noon, Atlantic time, on Sunday, June 28th! You can always visit the "Conference" tab on lmmontgomery.ca for the latest details and to learn more about past conferences.



Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies post card. 2018. *The Journal of L.M Montgomery Studies*.

● The ***Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies***: We publish scholarly essays, creative work, multimedia pieces and are always open to new, innovation submissions! We still have half a dozen "L.M. Montgomery and Reading" submissions to publish, with a print edition on its way too. We also have "L.M. Montgomery and Vision" and "L.M. Montgomery and Mental Health" collections coming up. We are eternally grateful to the creators of the journal website, which also supports the Vision Forum: with Donald Moses, Alexander O'Neill created the framework used by the journal website, while Rob Drew supports the journal as it continues to evolve. Jane Ledwell provides eagle-eyed editing and proofreading expertise for which we are grateful. The journal is a community effort as our Acknowledgements reflect.



Discover L.M. Montgomery's PEI Map. 2019. Created by Heidi Haering.

- **Map of Montgomery's PEI**: LMMI student assistant Heidi Haering has collected over 100 locations relating to Montgomery's life and works. Check out the map and suggest additions by emailing Heidi at lmmiassistant@upei.ca (until the end of August). Heidi also created the timeline celebrating Montgomery's connections to UPEI for the university's 50th anniversary and is creating maps of Montgomery's Charlottetown and Halifax.



I Shared My LMM Story! Did You? 2020. Created by Trinna S. Frever.

- **The World of L.M. Montgomery and Her Fans/The Your LMM Story Project:** Trinna S. Frever, tenured professor turned fiction writer (@trinna_writes on Instagram), and I are asking readers and fans of the world of L.M. Montgomery to answer a few questions about themselves and their relationship with LMM's life, works, and legacy. You can even share the "origin story" of how you discovered the world of L.M. Montgomery in the first place! Visit yourlmmstory.com for more information and here to share your story (age over-18 only, though parents/guardians can share a LMM story with or on behalf of their children). You can also follow us on social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter @yourlmmstory) or email us at yourlmmstory@upei.ca.
- **Database of L.M. Montgomery's Reading:** Emily Woster has spent the last fifteen years considering Montgomery as a reader, thinker, and rereader, examining how these roles influence and define her autobiographical work. With access to more Montgomery material than ever before, Emily has begun creating a full and

complete record of Montgomery's reading life as we (can) know it. Emily is (re)building this rich catalogue to share it more widely, including through visualizations.



MaudCast: The Podcast of L.M. Montgomery Institute. 2020. Created by Heidi Haering.

- ***The MaudCast: The Podcast of L.M. Montgomery Institute*:** Here's the podcast host describing this new venture: "*MaudCast* is the podcast of the L.M. Montgomery Institute. In the *MaudCast*'s quest to discover cutting-edge scholarship about the life and works of Lucy Maud Montgomery, we welcome to the microphone leading academics, emerging scholars, local researchers, and imaginative readers and writers from around the world. Hosted by Dr. Brenton Dickieson, with technical direction from Kristy McKinney, we broadcast from the beautiful campus of the University of Prince Edward Island."
- **@foundlmmontgomery on Instagram**. L.M. Montgomery is all around us.

LMMI student assistant, Alyssa Gillespie—with your help!—is sharing these sightings of L.M. Montgomery in the "wild" (in art, posters, books, etc.) on Instagram. Send your findings by direct message to @foundlmmontgomery (on Instagram) or tag the account in Instagram posts. Find posts with #foundlmmontgomery. You can also get in touch with Alyssa (also the Journal's editorial assistant) at montgomeryjournal@upei.ca. Be sure to participate in the #foundlmmontgomery challenge happening over the course of the Vision Forum launch!

Future/possible projects:

- **Heritage**: The LMMI is always interested in engaging with Montgomery-related heritage projects. Dr. Betsy Epperly is exploring possibilities for interpreting the history of the Macneill homestead kitchen. The kitchen where Montgomery wrote *Anne of Green Gables* and which served as Cavendish's post office was returned to the Macneill homestead (where Montgomery grew up) in summer 2018. CBC describes the return here and Beth Cavert of the L.M. Montgomery Literary Society provides its history here.



The Artful Astronomy of L.M. Montgomery. 2019. Created by David Hickey.

- **Technology**: L.M. Montgomery was herself interested in the latest technologies—photography, astronomy, cars, telecommunications. Dave Hickey has

explored Montgomery's interest in astronomy, as mentioned above, through an interactive digital exhibit, and he reflects on future possibilities, "I love the idea of highlighting Montgomery's talent for photography, perhaps through a walking tour of her favourite compositions. ... It would be possible to set up a few Kodak Brownies and show people what Montgomery would have seen through her viewfinder. Or you could simulate the view on a smartphone. ... It would definitely highlight her abilities." The LMMI is exploring further virtual reality and interactive possibilities based on the success of the Marco Polo Virtual Reality experience, commissioned by Betsy Epperly from the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design. With this VR experience, you can experience, alongside Cavendish townspeople, including a young Montgomery, the sinking of the fastest ship in world, the Saint John, NB-built, *Marco Polo*. The VR experience is overlaid with a reading of Montgomery's first prose publication describing this event.

- **Archival Research**: Much Montgomery research is just waiting to happen in the Robertson Library's Special Collections, which preserve publications relating to PEI, including Montgomery's life, works, and legacy. The Ryrie-Campbell Collection, generously donated by Donna J. Campbell, contains many Montgomery artifacts—book covers, postcards, stories, and poems published in periodicals—and much of this material can be browsed online at KindredSpaces.ca. Researchers can contact librarian Simon Lloyd (slloyd@upei.ca) for more information or to arrange a research visit. Meghan Kirkland, Ryrie-Campbell Graduate Intern, is currently researching and describing items in the Ryrie-Campbell Collection/KindredSpaces.ca. For the most recent, very exciting, donations see Simon Lloyd's tribute to LMMI donors.
- **Popular Culture**: It is an exciting moment to explore Montgomery's legacy with the many, and varied, references to her and her work in popular culture. This includes novels—Fishbane's *Maud* and Sarah McCoy's *Marilla of Green Gables*, for example; the band The East Pointers's livestream of readings of *Anne of Green Gables* (and now *Anne of Avonlea* and soon *Anne of the Island*), including a chapter by Megan Follows, to raise money for musicians who can't tour because of COVID-19 (check it out @EastPointersMusic on Facebook); and of course CBC/Netlfix's *Anne with an E*, particularly the strength of the #renewawae movement on social media and on billboards in NYC and Toronto.
- **Education**: UPEI's Department of English offers a course on Montgomery every two years, right before the LMMI conference. Recently this course has been taught by former PEI Poet Laureate, Deirdre Kessler. The LMMI is currently developing an

online, open-access course to bring the joy of studying Montgomery to more people.

What would you like to see added to this list?

As past engagements with Montgomery show, many, many methodological, thematic, and disciplinary approaches can help make sense of her life, works, and legacy—the "Welcome to the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*" gives a good sense of this variety to date! As well as the projects mentioned above, I'm really interested at the moment in material culture (a.k.a "thing" theory), and I think this conference at the University of York, UK, on small things is so fascinating for its possibilities of bringing everyday life in the past alive. (I'll be exploring this idea more in a MLA 2021 Roundtable on *Rilla of Ingleside*, which will celebrate the novel's 100th anniversary and will include other LMM scholars, Lesley Clement, Andrea McKenzie, Heidi Lawrence, Laura Robinson, and Rita Bode. And I will also be thinking more about Montgomery and material culture in conversations, as part of the LMMI mentorship program, with Allison McBain Hudson who is doing her Ph.D on just that topic.)

How can you get (more) involved with the LMMI?

UPEI students:

- Apply for the Avery Award: Anne won the Avery Scholarship and now UPEI students can too! As well as a scholarship, the successful recipient of the Avery Award receives mentorship from the LMMI and experience writing for the web. Michaela Wipond, the award's first recipient, contributed massively to the LMMI's social media, and is now a master's student at Queen's University. She plans to be a Montgomery scholar. The second recipient, Amy Lynn MacQuarrie, was a Psychology major, and wrote three blogs about Montgomery's experience as an Island teacher. (You can read the first installment here.)

- Become a Student Assistant: The LMMI employs student assistants to work as social media, journal editorial, and research assistants. Currently, Alyssa Gillespie is the Journal's editorial assistant (and so much more!) and Heidi Haering works on a whole range of digital projects: maps, virtual exhibits, timelines. (Here she is

interviewed by CBC on her Montgomery map of PEI.) All positions are advertised on UPEI Human Resources Job Postings.

Researchers:

Student Researchers:

- Participate in the **mentorship program** launched by current LMMI Visiting Scholar, Dr. Lesley Clement. If you'd like to be involved in the mentorship program as a mentee or mentor, you can contact Lesley (lclement@lakeheadu.ca).

- Apply for the **Elizabeth R. Epperly Award for Outstanding Early Career Paper** (deadline for papers on "L.M. Montgomery and Vision" is September 1, 2020). Bonnie Tulloch is our inaugural winner of this award.

(Future) Postdoctoral Researchers:

- We'd love to welcome postdocs to the LMMI and could support various (inter)disciplinary research, public engagement, and digital humanities possibilities. Possible funders include SSHRC and Mitacs. Reach out to me (kscarth@upei.ca) to discuss opportunities; I'm happy to chat with you, even if a postdoc is still a ways off.

All Researchers:

-Consider applying to the **Visiting Scholar program** (to give you a sense of what the program entails, here's the most recent call for visiting scholars).
-Contact Simon Lloyd (ssloyd@upei.ca) about conducting research in the **UPEI's Special Collections** relating to Montgomery.
-Co-edit a special ***Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*** **collection** ("L.M. Montgomery and Mental Health" is an example). We're open to your suggestions: special collections can range in size (they can be as small as three or four publications) and can include myriad disciplinary, media, or thematic approaches. Contact me (kscarth@upei.ca) to share ideas.

Readers, Fans, Everyone!:

-Attend the biennial conference: see you in Charlottetown in late June, 2022!
-Read, watch, listen to material on the L.M. Montgomery Vision Forum and *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*.
-Read our past readalongs (on *Anne of Green Gables* and *Emily New Moon*) and participate in future readalongs.
-Listen to the *The MaudCast: The Podcast of L.M. Montgomery Institute*.
-Check out #KindredFriday. On the LMMI's social media every Friday, we share material from the LMMI's Special Collections. Follow #KindredFriday to learn more.



1 May 2020 Kindred Friday. 2020. @LMMInstitute on Instagram.

-Visit our website lmmontgomery.ca and follow us on social media (@lmminstitute on Facebook and Instagram; @LMMI_UPEI on Twitter)

Finally, reach out to me with questions and ideas! I'd love to hear from you (kscarth@upei.ca or @katescarth on Twitter).

Back to top

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