

## Facts about fiction from Anne of Green Gables expert, former Westmounter Elizabeth Waterston

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

To create fiction, Elizabeth Waterston maintains, a writer needs five things that start with the letter "F": facts, a focus, a flash, a frenzy and a fix.

Lucy Maud Montgomery apparently had all of these when she first started to write *Anne of Green Gables*, the book for which she would become most famous.

Waterston, who is an authority on Montgomery, is a professor emeritus of English literature at the University of Guelph. The former Westmounter was the

Atwater Library's Lunchtime Series speaker on June 3. Her book, *Magic Island: The Fictions of L.M. Montgomery*, is a reader's guide to Montgomery's most important work.

She said Montgomery was influenced by some of the popular escapist literature of her day - *Kim* by Rudyard Kipling, *Kidnapped* by Robert Louis Stevenson and *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain. By this time, she had already published several hundred short stories and was developing a following of readers.

The "flash" of inspiration came to Montgomery when she picked up an old clipping from a newspaper that said, "Elderly couple send for boy to help with the farm work." As anyone who is familiar with the plot of *Anne of Green Gables* knows, a girl ends up being sent by mistake.

Montgomery, who had been raised in a Victorian and post-Victorian world where boys were considered more important than girls, had always resented the fact that she had been put down as a mere girl.

According to Waterston, Montgomery is very likely to have said to herself, "I can make a book out of this; I can make a book about an orphaned girl who is imaginative and creative and spunky and makes the whole world love her."

Waterston, who has been teaching English literature for more than 60 years, lived on Clarke Ave. in the late 1940s when she



Elizabeth Waterston, June 3, at the Atwater Library.

was on the faculty of Sir George Williams College (now part of Concordia University).

At that time, one of her students was future novelist Mordecai Richler. Another, Muriel Gold, sat in the audience last week to hear Waterston speak at the library.



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### NEWS YOU CAN USE

#### *Easy Ways to Give Your Bathroom a Fresh New Look*

The bathroom might be one of the smallest rooms, but it's one of the most important if you're selling your home. Here are some quick tips to freshen up your bathroom to give yourself a space you enjoy relaxing in, whether you are moving or not.

**Clutter** - Bathrooms attract a lot of bottles and jars that create clutter. By putting them in a closet or throwing away those you haven't used for a long time, you'll immediately make your room look more spacious.

**Fixtures and fittings** - It can be expensive to replace bathroom fixtures, so focus on new towel racks, mirror, and hardware. Replacing a toilet seat can also make a difference.

**Flooring** - A big turn-off for many house-buyers is carpet or linoleum in the bathroom. A simple white ceramic tile is a good choice. The caulking between tiles gets very dirty. Clean it—and you'll immediately make your bathroom fresher.

**Towels and shower curtain** - Replace your towels with a new, fluffy matching set and keep an inviting pile waiting on a shelf or in a closet. And replace your shower curtain for a new one that matches the décor.

**Paint** - Freshen up the room by giving it a coat of light, neutral-coloured paint.

- The Habitat for Humanity ReStore has relocated from LaSalle to a more convenient location for Westmount renovators; it is now located at 4399 Notre-Dame O. This is a great resource for new building materials, including bathroom fixtures, all donated by suppliers to Habitat for Humanity.

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