

Attention News Editors:

Penguin Group (Canada) to become the official book publisher of L.M. Montgomery 100th Anniversary Editions

TORONTO, Oct. 26, 2007 - Penguin Group (Canada) announced today it will undertake a major Canadian and international publishing program in celebration of the 100th Anniversary of Anne of Green Gables, including publication of an official prequel, to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the book's original publication in 1908.

To further celebrate this significant anniversary, Penguin will publish a special collectible 100th anniversary edition of Anne of Green Gables, featuring the original cover art of M.A. Claus and W.A.J. Claus. A third project, *Imagining Anne: The Scrapbooks of L.M. Montgomery* will bring to life Montgomery's own thoughts and interests using selected pages from her own scrapbooks from the years 1893 to 1908, covering her time as a college student, teacher and writer, and the years in which she created the character of Anne Shirley, leading to the publication of *Anne of Green Gables* in 1908. The significance of the souvenirs and clippings Montgomery collected will be explained by Elizabeth Epperly, Ph.D., Professor of English at the University of Prince Edward Island and the Founder of the L.M. Montgomery Institute at UPEI. *Imagining Anne* will be a full-colour giftbook, releasing in March 2008. Penguin holds world rights in all languages to both the prequel and the scrapbook.

The prequel, *Before Green Gables*, which tells the story of Anne's early life in foster homes and an orphanage in Nova Scotia, will be written by Governor General's Literary Award finalist Budge Wilson. Budge Wilson has published twenty-nine books in more than 10 countries and her stories have been included in over 90 anthologies, including the first Journey Prize Anthology. Her many awards include nineteen Canadian Children's Book Centre "Our Choice" awards, the Canadian Library Association Young Adult Award, the Marianna Dempster Award, the Ann Connor Brimer Award, the Lilla Stirling Award and the City of Dartmouth Book Award. Her latest book, *Friendships*, is a finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award.

Wilson offered the following comments: "When Penguin asked me to write this prequel, I was faced with an enormous challenge. But it was this challenge that made me want to write the book.

"Given the appalling deprivation and emotional starvation of Anne's years in the Thomas and Hammond households and during her four agonized months in the orphanage, one is mystified as to how she became the person she was when she made her first journey to Green Gables with Matthew Cuthbert. How could she have become so vibrant a person, so talkative, so articulate, so optimistic, so full of extravagant dreams? This was the enticing puzzle that drew me into the project."

Wilson will spend several chapters getting to know Anne's parents and will bring other people into the story who will introduce Anne to the magic of words and literature, the

possibilities for solace and joy in an active imagination, and the experience of giving and receiving love.

"I will, of course, try to be true to the astonishing character that Lucy Maud Montgomery created," said Wilson. "For this, I am grateful to her. But I would not - in fact, could not - presume to tell my part of Anne's history in Montgomery's voice. I will do this in my own voice, hoping that she would approve of the project if she were alive today."

Penguin is delighted to have the full support of the heirs of L.M. Montgomery and will work in co-operation with the family to create an exciting national marketing plan to make 2008 especially memorable as the year of Anne and of L.M. Montgomery.

L. M. Montgomery's grandson David Macdonald, speaking for the family, said, "We are delighted that Penguin have undertaken to publish a prequel to Anne of Green Gables for 2008 and have selected respected author Budge Wilson to write *Before Green Gables*. We think she is a terrific choice." He continued, "It's an added bonus that Budge Wilson like Anne, comes from Nova Scotia. I think my grandmother would have thought it appropriate for an author who grew up in Nova Scotia to write about Anne's life before she came to Prince Edward Island and Green Gables."

Commissioning editor Helen Reeves commented on the tremendous opportunity presented by the 100th Anniversary, saying, "The character of Anne Shirley continues to be loved around the world. Growing up in the UK, I read all the Anne books and it's tremendously exciting to see a different part of Anne's story brought to life by one of Canada's most celebrated contemporary writers. We look forward to 2008 with great anticipation."

Founded in 1974 as a distribution company for Penguin books from all over the world, Penguin Group (Canada) began publishing Canadian and international titles in 1977, and quickly became known as one of Canada's pre-eminent publishers of literary, thought-provoking fiction, and non-fiction. Penguin is internationally recognized as the world's predominant publisher of classic literature; in Canada publishing both *Modern Classics* and *Black Classics*, including works by Susanna Moodie, Stephen Leacock and L.M. Montgomery.

For further information: Yvonne Hunter, Director, Publicity and Marketing, (416) 928-2409, yvonne.hunter@ca.penguin.com