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**SWANSEA MEMORIAL LIBRARY-FRIENDS**

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TO: Toronto Public Library Board  
c/o Nancy Marshall  
Secretary  
789 Yonge Street  
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From: Susan Zalepa  
Swansea Memorial Library – Friends  
95 Lavinia Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6S 3H9

Re: Print Media Coverage  
Swansea Memorial Library Article

Please find attached an article from the Gleaner, regarding the Swansea Memorial Library Remembrance Day Service. We would ask that you circulate this article to all Board members and consideration be given to placing the article in the print Media Coverage booklet.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sth/my documents/ smlf December 1

# YOUR VILLAGE

## Library honour veterans

Local residents tenacious in fight to keep branch



By MATT LANG

It's one of the smallest libraries in the city, but the Swansea Memorial branch nonetheless plays a big part in this community's rich history.

Dedicated to the 170 Swansea residents who enlisted in the First World War, and the 22 who did not return, the library was born in 1919, when Swansea was still an independent village. Funding came from the then Women's Patriotic League—which hotly debated whether to use their remaining resources on a cenotaph or library to memorialize their fellow citizens' efforts.

"Books are at the heart of democracy," said Swansea Town Hall board member Bill Roberts, explaining the rationale behind why a library was ultimately chosen. "What better way is there to honour those who fought and died for democracy?"

The library existed in Swansea public school on Windermere Avenue for 40 years, during which time iconic Canadian author Lucy Maud Montgomery had a stint on its board from 1938 to 1940. Montgomery lived in Swansea from 1935, until her death in 1942.

The library was moved to its current location at 95 Lavinia Ave. in 1959, when the Swansea Town Hall was built. The library joined up into the ranks of the Toronto Public Library (TPL) that same year, before becoming an official branch in 1967.

"It's very convenient. You can order anything from the system and it can be here in a reasonable amount of time," said Swansea resident Chris Dempniak. "I have an attachment to it because I've been going for a long time."

Since then, the branch has remained a staple of Swansea Village—its residents have been

tenacious in their fight to keep it alive, after multiple attempts by the TPL to merge it with a larger centralized branch.

"They wanted to remove the library and save the deposit collection, but there was very strong community resentment towards that idea," said Swansea Town Hall board of management chairman Jack Slaughter.

"Every three to five years, there's another review by TPL with a new strategic plan, to close the small community libraries and replace them with large regional libraries," he added. "Which is a good way of distributing consumer goods, but a terrible way of providing library services to the community."

"Also, we have a lot of seniors in Swansea and it's not easy for a lot of them to get to even Runnymede library because of traffic conditions."

Although Slaughter credits the

TPL for its efforts to maintain a bright entrance, it's not always apparent to anyone walking into its doors whom the library was made for. The TPL controls the inside of the branch and hasn't yet authorized much war memorabilia for its walls.

"It might be [not obvious that it's dedicated to veterans] to some of the younger users of the library," said Sybil Wilkinson, treasurer of the Swansea Historical Society.

"But I think the older people in the community have kept the memory alive. I don't think we've ever lost sight that it's a memorial library. I personally haven't got that feeling."

*The Swansea Library (95 Lavinia Ave.), is open Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.*

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