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Baby Point residents pen book on neighbourhood's history

Bloor West Villager

Baby Point residents Pam Slaughter and Robert Galway's new book about the history of the neighbourhood they both have called home for the past several decades would not have been written were it not for the loss of one of the area's historically significant homes.

In November of 2010, an original, 1920s Arts and Craft Robert Home Smith-designed one-and-a-half storey cottage was torn down to make room for a new house almost double its size, despite the community's opposition and efforts to save it.

"The book wouldn't have happened without the impetus of the destruction of one of the original houses, one of heritage value," said Galway, a 40-year resident of Baby Point Road. "It was a wake-up call."

Motivation for the book, *Baby Point: The Place Where We Live* was borne out of that "unfortunate" loss, agreed Slaughter.

"One of our goals is educating people, giving them a tool that let's people know about the place they live," she said. "We want to help people understand why this place is unique."

The book is a comprehensive, 178 page collection of the historical, archeological/geological and architectural record of the area and includes lots of photographs, historical and archival material and maps. Members of the Baby Point Heritage Foundation, a group founded in part in response to the years-long battle to save 66 Baby Point Rd. from demolition, encouraged Galway and Slaughter to write the book. Both experts in the health field, she an epidemiologist, adept at researching the causes and consequences of illness and disease, and he, an orthopedic surgeon, are accustomed to research, said Slaughter.

"We treated (the book) as something we had to get done. We weren't intimidated by it," she said.

From pen-to-paper-to-print, the book was a four-month process that started at the end of February. Self-published through blurb.com, an online book publishing site, 'Baby Point' is a fundraiser for the Baby Point Heritage Foundation and is currently for sale. Slaughter has shopped the book to a few local stores as well.

"It's been fascinating to get their response," she said. "The book has emotional attachment to both of us."

The area boasts archaeological significance; it is situated next to the Humber, designated a heritage river, and to the Carrying Place Trail.

"I never realized the wealth of information that is out there through the City of Toronto Archives and Toronto Public Library. My biggest surprise was the depth of information at the City of Toronto," said Galway.

In order to capitalize on episodic sales offered by the publisher based on volume ordered, the books will be ordered this month. Depending on the sale price achieved, publisher shipping costs and taxes, the current estimated cost is \$60 for the soft cover and \$70 for hard cover. These costs include a donation to the Foundation. Pre-ordering copies helps reduce the published price.

To order a copy, call 416-604-1399 or email pmslaughter06@gmail.com (<mailto:pmslaughter06@gmail.com>)