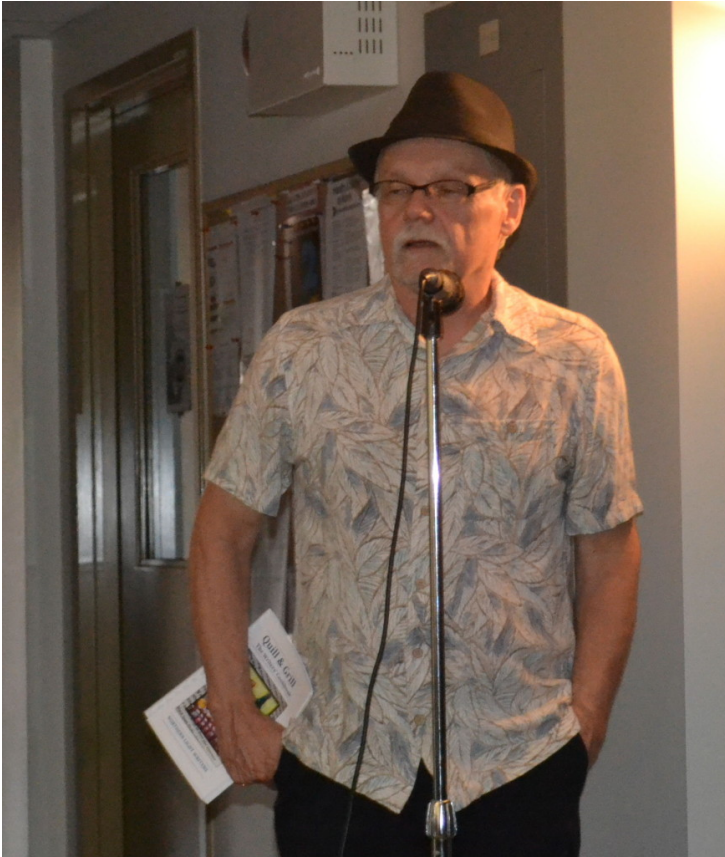


Local writers launch new poetry cookbook



By Tony Pearson

?I wish I knew the truth of life, I wish I knew the point
But give me chocolate, give me wine
And truth will bubble out?

So says Jen Lister, one of the Northern Lights writers' group, in 'Philosophy 101', a brief poem that fits perfectly into the group's latest venture. The new work is called Quill and Grill, and it's both a cookbook and a poetry anthology. For \$10, readers can sample nearly three dozen original recipes, plus an equal number of poems. As the introduction puts it, 'The Writers' Cookbook is dedicated to everyone who enjoys a good read and a good repast ? to those who love to share a good meal with family and friends and curl up with a good book.?'

And sales revenues go to a good cause: Community Care North Hastings, which runs a number of seniors and disability support programs, such as Meals on Wheels and foot care clinics, as well as volunteer drivers and the TROUT transportation system. Board member Dennis Purcell thanked the authors on behalf of CCNH.

The recipes cover breakfast, lunch & dinner, and desserts & snacks. The titles of the dishes are certainly intriguing: 'Apples in Ambush Breakfast Cake?', 'Poetic Licence Salad?', 'Celebrate the Booker Prize Chicken?', as well as 'The Great Canadian Novel Dinner?'. Overall organizer John Keith describes the governing idea behind the meals as 'practical and local?', meaning that the food isn't fancy but is both tasty and locally sourced ? 'real meals for real people cooking for real families?', as he puts it.

The book, which arose out of the Northern Lights regular Saturday morning writing sessions, took about a year to come together ? 'a year of great fun?', according to Lister. An apt rationale for this blend of composition and kitchen craft can be found on the introductory page, in a quote by famed American writer Joyce Carol Oates: 'If food is poetry, is not poetry also food?'

Some of the poetry, like Doris Douglas' 'My Cheese?', relates to food, but many other subjects are touched on. Several have family themes, such as Douglas' 'Mother's Musings?', and Maureen O'Hara's 'I Looked Down?'. Nature and its pull are the topic of others, like John Keith's 'Ode to Spring?' or Bob Pearson's 'This Ol' Black Spruce?'. Some deal with large issues of the meaning of life, as

in Jen Lister's 'Lost and Found', and John Keith's 'Aware Prayer'. Some even combine food with love and romance, as in Bob Pearson's 'The Olive'. And some are pure whimsy, like Maureen O'Hara's 'Reflections of Me'.

Although Friday was the official launch of the book, it has already sold over 100 advance copies, so perhaps readers and cooks should 'git 'em while they're hot'. The book can be purchased at Ashlie's Bookstore, and at a number of other outlets in Bancroft, including Harvest Moon, the North Hastings Family Pharmacy, Home Hardware, and the Heritage Thrift Shoppe.