

# Cooked and Eaten serve up literary goods

*Reading series begins eighth season during Artsweek with ever-popular 20-minute word project*

URSULA PFLUG

The Cooked and Eaten is a Peterborough-based readings series founded by Esther Vincent in 2000. Emerging writers find C&E's open mic nights a fun and comfortable venue to try their hand at reading their own work in front of a live audience for the first time, and are always welcomed, supported and appreciated.

Vincent's commitment to literature began not just with her own writing but her eight year proprietorship, with

partner Ryan Kerr, of Marginal Distribution, a Peterborough-based international distributor of edgy, indepen-

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dent fiction and non fiction books, magazines and comics. Her purview even at the outset of her career was in many ways the antithesis of the mainstream CanLit scene, and has continued to inform the series she now runs with the help of a board, and, for the first time in 2008, operational funding from the Ontario Arts Council.

It was originally hoped there would be enough interest to host a few events over the course of one season, but writers and audience alike demanded the series continue. At the outset writers were drawn only from Peterborough and the Kawarthas, and varied from teenagers to Trent professors, but in later years nationally touring authors including Emily Pohl-Weary (Kiss Machine), Hal Niedzviecki, (Broken Pencil) and Jim Munroe (No Media Kings) have made pit stops at C&E.

Readers are usually paid forty dol-

lars per reading, dependent upon sponsorship, which, sadly, waxes and wanes as with other arts funding. Still, this is one of the many things which makes C&E special. In Toronto, where it seems there's a reading series on every corner, it's rare for readers to actually get paid. Food on the table for reading your poems aloud! If life were like that, you wouldn't need Visa, or Food Not Bombs.

During Artsweek, C&E will be hosting The 20 Minute Word Project. This is a favourite annual Cooked and Eaten event and definitely not to be missed - "A feast of short order writing," according to the press release. The Secret Ingredient is a sentence randomly selected from a pot full of suggestions provided by audience members. A panel of six writers have to prep, fry and serve up a satisfying, rib-sticking meal of a story within 20 minutes. Each writer then serves their writing to the assembled crowd and the winner is chosen by show of applause. The winner receives accolades, fun prizes and the pride of knowing they can write well under ridiculous pressure.

Come on out and contribute a sentence. The author of the winning sentence receives a prize as well as having their words immortalized by a talented Peterborough writer. If

you are interested in writing, come on out and grab a free ticket into a lottery to win your chance to write.

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This year's writers include: Jean Grieg, anya gwynne, Dean Pappas, Wes Ryan, Esther Vincent and You. The 20 Minute Word project will take place on Tuesday, September 30, 7pm, at The Spill, 414 George Street North.

*Ursula Pflug is author of the novel Green Music. She will read from her new story collection After The Fires at Catalina Hair Salon, 131 Hunter Street West, on Thursday, October 9. Doors open at 7 pm.*