

Library fundraiser meets the red carpet

By Anne DeGrace

Last year, the Nelson Public Library teamed up with the Kootenay Country Store Co-op to create a literary cookbook that would be a source of information and local culture while raising money for the Library. The result is Seasonings: a year of local flavor in words and recipes, a full-colour book featuring contributions by some 50 cooks and wordsmiths. The book is now up for a national culinary book award, with the winner to be announced November 7th.

The best of both worlds

Publishing a book can be a daunting prospect. The Library was fortunate to have on staff someone with experience in the writing and publishing industry, so the sometimes bewildering steps of self-publishing weren't a barrier. The Co-op staff's food and recipe expertise ensured culinary quality, and both organizations believed that good photography and design were essential elements, so experts in both fields were brought on board.

"It's great to be able to produce something that the community can really take pride in," says Nelson Public Library Chief June Stockdale. "The icing on the cake—if you'll pardon the pun—is that the book, which came out in October of 2010, had earned back in sales the initial investment of \$16,000 by Christmas, and has gone on to earn an additional \$15,000 for the library to date."

The Kootenay Country Food Co-op paid for half the costs of production. Its investment recouped, the Co-op now turns 100% of sales over to the Library.

The laws of attraction

Within a few months of publication, *Seasonings* attracted the attention of a national publisher. This presented some unforeseen hurdles when it came to contributor copyright and compensation, as original contracts for voluntary submissions honoured the book as published by the Library and Co-op.

"It's a happy problem," acknowledges Stockdale, who explains that the original plan to go national was temporarily put on hold pending a fair solution. All contributors—and the Library and Co-op—agree that

Canada-wide distribution is a worthwhile goal. A second publisher has recently expressed interest.

Making the grade

Early this summer the Library and Co-op received word that *Seasonings* is shortlisted for the English-language Culinary Culture Category of the 2011 Canadian Culinary Book Awards, sponsored by Cuisine Canada and the University of Guelph.

"Of course, we're thrilled," says Stockdale. "But we also know that, whatever happens, when it comes to community-building and fundraising, this one's already a winner."

Awards will be presented at a gala reception held during the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto on November 7th. The event dovetails with Cuisine Canada's second annual student chef competition, Canada Cooks the Books!, which will be based on recipes found in this year's nominated books.



Library patrons Alison and Eliot buy a copy of *Seasonings*, designed by Eliot's daddy, Steven Cretney. Photo by Steven Cretney.

Anne DeGrace is the Adult Services Coordinator at the Nelson Public Library and co-editor, with the Kootenay Co-op Marketing Manager Jocelyn Carver, of *Seasonings: a year of local flavor in words and recipes*.