

Recipes: It's 'all in the knowing'

It's more than how to make a good meal

By Katherine Lacaze
For Cannon Beach Gazette

Recipes are powerful pieces of knowledge, not simply because they provide a process for developing one new creation from different materials but also as artifacts that can make connections between people across time, distance and culture.

After all, the word "recipe" has its roots in the Latin word "recipere," which translated means to receive back, to take or to exchange, Jennifer Roberts, a facilitator from Grants Pass, explained during her program "Stone Soup: How Recipes Can Preserve History and Nourish a Community" at the Cannon Beach Museum and

History Center on Feb. 9.

The program was part of the Oregon Humanities' statewide Conversation Project, which is designed to bring Oregonians from all walks of life together in small groups to discuss important issues and ideas. Various local nonprofits or groups host a Conversation Project program on a topic relevant to their community. An Oregon Humanities facilitator leads the conversation, allowing their personality and those of different audience members to shape each discussion.

Roberts, for example, has a fascination with the history of science and medicine, and her study of alchemy and early pharmacology sparked her interest in recipes of all kinds. She is currently working on a novel set in the 17th century that involves witchcraft, alchemy and recipes.

To start the conversation, she shared how a single

17th-century cookbook often contained all sorts of recipes — for pies; eye washes made with pigeon dung; snail water to treat consumption; perfume; and much more.

"The common thread is that you're taking a list of things and you're creating something out of raw materials," Roberts said. "So it's materials and process."

What now would be described as recipes originally were called receipts — also from the term "recipere." Doctors wrote receipts for patients, who then took them to an apothecary for the listed materials. That history also lies behind the symbol for medical prescriptions, Rx.

The etymology of "recipe" exposes a confluence between a scientific or medical concept and the idea of community and history. It supports the idea of recipes as "amazing historical artifacts that can kind of trans-

port you," Roberts said.

Community growth

During the program, participants collectively read Marcia Brown's 1975 version of "Stone Soup, an Old Tale Retold," a Portuguese fable that has been retold through multiple adaptations.

In Brown's version, three soldiers happened upon a town. "The peasants of that place feared strangers," the story goes, so when the soldiers asked for food and shelter for the night, the peasants pretended they had neither to offer.

The soldiers began making a soup using nothing but a stone, and explaining to the peasants what they were doing to create the dish. In the process, individuals from the town began contributing to the meal, starting with vegetables, milk, barley and meat for the soup, and then expanding their offerings to roast, cider, bread and,



KATHERINE LACAZE/FOR CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Jennifer Roberts facilitates the discussion for the Oregon Humanities' Conversation Project "Stone Soup: How Recipes Can Preserve History and Nourish A Community," hosted at the Cannon Beach Museum and History Center.

eventually, "the best beds in the village" for the soldiers to rest for the night.

Before the soldiers left, the peasants expressed gratitude for what the soldiers taught them.

"It's all in the knowing how," one of the soldiers replied.

Through a group discussion, participants agreed on several main ideas or morals

to be drawn from the story and applied them to contemporary views of community. In the story, each person from the town provided their own unique contribution when making the stone soup.

"There's an element of trust when you're doing something as a community, and everybody's doing their part," said Bonnie Neugebauer, of Cannon Beach.

County praised by speaker for opting out of lawsuit

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"Let the county commission know you agree and support a balanced approach (in harvesting state forests) and that they should go to Salem to lobby for a balanced approach. You should have direct contact with your elected officials," he added.

During his presentation, entitled, "How to Protect 50,000 Acres in Clatsop County," Van Dyk discussed the history behind the creation of Oregon's state forests and the current lawsuit filed by Linn County.

The class action lawsuit is seeking \$1.4 billion in damages for 15 counties. Linn County claims that the state has not maximized the logging that could be done in the state forests and that this has resulted in less income for counties to pay for public services.

Although Clatsop County was included as a plaintiff in the lawsuit, the county commission voted 3-2 last month to opt out of it.

Earlier in January, the Cannon Beach City Council voted 4-1 to send a resolution to the county commission urging the county to withdraw from the lawsuit.

Van Dyk took his audience back to 1920, when private companies owned the forests

in Oregon. But following the Great Depression, the counties gained ownership of the properties when much of the land had been logged and timber companies couldn't pay their taxes. The counties then turned the forests over to the state to manage in the "greatest permanent value" for all Oregonians.

Following several fires that devastated the forests from 1933 to 1951, the state Legislature authorized bonds to replant the forests.

The state Department of Forestry oversees more than 800,000 acres. Revenue from harvesting those forests — including portions of over a half-million acres in Clatsop and Tillamook counties — is given to the counties annually to finance schools and other public services. Clatsop County is the largest state forestry timber producer, Van Dyk said.

Harvest targets are set by management plans adopted by the state; the latest Northwest Oregon plan was adopted in 2010.

In addition to harvesting timber, the plan includes strategies for maintaining a diverse forest of tree species and growth levels, watersheds, recreational uses, wildlife habitat and carbon storage.

Poet laureate reflects on human condition

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second book "Luminaries of the Humble" is a compilation of her reflections as she observes everyday life.

Before each reading, she preceded the selection with anecdotes that prompted her writings. Her collection of poems in "Wind Movement" describes important elements that were important to her father. Comparing his beloved Navajo language to the wind, Woody explained, "It's like the wind, you can't name it; it is just there — like energy."

"Rosette," for example, is the desire to learn the art of beading from her grandmother who, when asked, informed Woody that she already was an expert beader. Disappointed with this answer, Woody threw away the medallions she had beaded. Her grandmother fetched them from the trash, sewed pins to the backs and wore them to an event; proudly telling everyone her granddaughter had made them.

Another reading evoked the memory of her grandparents telling stories every morning during breakfast. Reflecting, Woody imparted on how much in love her grandparents were and how often they giggled. She told of the time her grandfather visualized her grandmother as "a beautiful little girl on a beautiful horse with beautiful long glistening braids."

Surprised, Woody exclaimed, "And I thought he was talking about me."

Another involved an outing to a powwow. Woody wanted to dance, but thought she was not suitably dressed. Her grandmother answered her plea, "Of course you can dance. This is your dress, your invisible dress," she said as she lifted Woody's hand and touched her arm.

Though the conversations sometimes rambled, they were engaging and transparent. Learning from her family's traditions and learning the meaning of words broadened Woody's understanding of how the power of language can draw people in and not shut them out.

As a child, Woody remembers limited availability of reading material: the Bible, an encyclopedia and the dictionary. Fascinated, she read the entire dictionary because she "wanted to know what the words meant."

Falling in love with words, she sought out books to read. One of the first was Dr. Seuss and one of the earliest poems that moved her was "A Cat Named Sloopy" by Rod McKuen.

Buffy Sainte-Marie, a songwriter and activist for indigenous people also proved an inspiration. "Sainte-Marie's unwavering voice could not be suppressed," she said.

During the 1970s, Sainte-Marie was blacklisted from having her music aired on American radio stations. "Simplicity is profound," said Woody, "it takes a lot from within to overcome people trying to stop your livelihood. You can't let it suppress the human spirit."

When asked about writing poetry, Woody says she doesn't really know how the poems come about, "but it's about what I think ... sometimes it connects and sometimes it doesn't."

She likes to write her

thoughts down before retiring at night and rising in the morning. "Over time, it becomes easier and if you go back and read what you've written, you'll notice a pattern. Poetry makes words good again," Woody said.

She was named as Oregon's eighth poet laureate by Governor Kate Brown in 2016 and will serve a two-year appointment. Woody is the first Native American to hold the title.

Woody received the 1990 American Book Award for "Hand Into Stone." She received the William Stafford Memorial Award for Poetry in 1995 and was a finalist for the Oregon Book Awards that same year. Woody also writes short fiction, essays and is a visual artist. She is currently working on her next book.

As laureate, Woody will spend her two years as an ambassador cultivating the art of poetry, promoting creative expression and literacy on Oregon life and culture.



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