

# Leader's Wok & Roll columnist takes his stories and humor on the road

## Audiences get a taste of his musical and cooking skills

Mary Stirrat | Staff writer

ST. CROIX FALLS – A multifaceted program that touches on history, geography, bringing in humor and life stories and culminating in a cooking demonstration complete with generous samples doesn't sound like your typical library program.

But it's typical for Leader columnist Peter House Kwong, who has begun a series of speaking engagements at local libraries to entertain and inform audiences, and also introduce his recently-published book.



Author, chef, musician and speaker Peter Kwong takes his audience on the journey from Hong Kong, the land of his birth, to northwest Wisconsin.

With his usual approachable and friendly way, Kwong invites the audience into his life by sharing tidbits of his journey from Hong Kong – the land of his birth – to California, Texas, Georgia and finally to Milwaukee. When Kwong's son and daughter-in-law in the Twin Cities area had a child, Kwong and his wife wanted to be closer.

As he described it for his audience, Kwong's son wanted them closer, too. But not too close. That's how Kwong and his wife, Colleen, ended up living in the country outside of St. Croix Falls.

Talking graciously about those who helped him find his place in the north country, Kwong shared that his passions are writing, cooking and singing.

While continuing to share his story, he started the rice cooker he had on a table in front of him. Explaining how he measures ingredients – he uses his grandmother's methods of "handfuls" and "glugs" – he starts his chicken cooking.



Explaining that the utensils in his hands are named Ike and Tina Turner, Kwong tells jokes and stories as he cooks up some rice, chicken and vegetables. The turner in his right hand is Tina, joked Kwong, because that's the one that does all the work.



Colleen Kwong, right, and Friend of the Library Amy Middleton serve up samples of Peter Kwong's cooking.

He even shares the secrets of his marinade recipe and tool kit, and the sauces that he uses in his dishes. A brief geography lesson informs the audience of where different varieties of Chinese foods come from and how weather and culture influence the different culinary traditions.

Delicious aromas fill the air as he talks. Finally it is time for each person to have a sample, while Kwong offers to sell and sign copies of "Wok & Roll."

A barbershopper and member of the Indianhead Chorus, Kwong loves to sing. He combines passions for singing and cooking in his "Dinner and Song" fundraisers, "cooking up a marvelous feast while revealing the story behind the food," his website says. He then "serenades" the guests as they "digest."

Guests at his program last week at St. Croix Falls got a little sample of this as well, as he ended the evening with a love song to his wife.

Kwong will be giving presentations at the Frederic Public Library this Friday, April 27, at 6 p.m. and at the Larsen Family Public Library in Webster on Thursday evening, May 17, at 7 p.m.



Oyster and black bean sauce, both available "over the counter," are the only sauces that Kwong uses in his cooking. He passed around the black bean sauce for the audience's inspection.



Simple but delicious food preparation is part of Peter Kwong's program, demonstrating how easy it can be to entertain people while making them a wonderful meal.



Peter Kwong has entertained readers for more than two years with his "Wok & Roll" column in this newspaper. Some of those columns along with new material have been published in his book of the same name.

Photos by  
Mary Stirrat



The Friends of St. Croix Falls Public Library hosted the April 20 program by Leader columnist Peter Kwong. Kwong wove together his three passions – writing, cooking and singing – in the 90-minute program.



Peter Kwong ended his program by serenading his wife, Colleen, with a love song.