

SOUTHBURY MAKERS SPOTLIGHT



Kristen Frederickson, cookbook author

By Kelly Keenan, SEDC Arts & Culture Subcommittee

Photos courtesy of the artist

Our April spotlight features cookbook author Kristen Frederickson, who divides her time between Southbury and London. Not only can you read about her life and inspiration here, you can also enjoy some of her recipes in the 350th Celebration Community Cookbook, available for purchase at the Town Clerk's office and Local Gourmet, while supplies last. Her cookbooks "Tonight at 7:30" and "Second Helpings" are available on Amazon [here](#) and [here](#).

Q: How long have you been in Southbury? What brought you here / keeps you here?

A: I am a former art history college professor turned NYC gallery owner, then we moved to London in 2005 where I became a cookbook writer. We had bought our little Southbury house in 2004, falling in love with the 1810 farmhouse, which we adore. It's a historic home so there is a bit of pressure to keep it up, but we just love it, and the neighbours on Sanford Road. We decided to keep it after we moved away, and we return for about six weeks twice a year, especially for corn and tomato season!

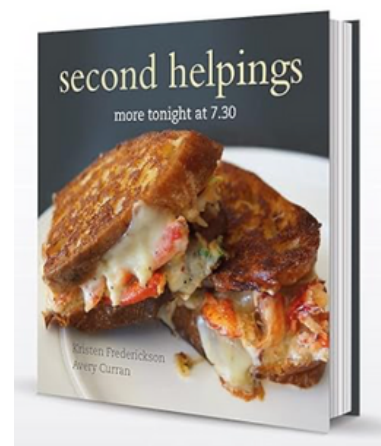
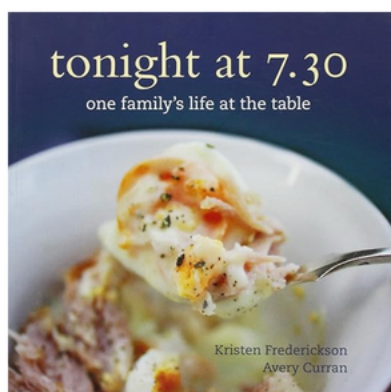
Q: How did you get into cookbook writing / judging / coordinating? How long have you been doing it?

A: I started a blog called 'Kristen in London' when we moved, and realised it was mostly about food! So I worked on a cookbook whilst raising our little daughter, and she grew up to be my photographer for both my personal cookbooks, "Tonight at 7:30" and "Second Helpings." I became a member of the prestigious Guild of Food Writers after writing some articles for a wonderful NYC magazine called "Vintage," and a website called "Handpicked Nation." Now I get to judge food inventions for the Great Taste Awards, who award 1, 2, or 3 "stars" for wonderful products, and also the Quality Food competitions, and now the Guild Annual Food Writing Awards, but that's a bit secret, so I can't tell you more! I've been writing about food since 2006 and have two more cookbooks coming out in the coming years, one for my personal love of writing, and one to support a food-surplus charity in London.

Q: Why do you think cookbooks are important in this day and age?

A: I think cookbooks are important right now because personal, healthy, inspirational food is important to happiness. Also, I love reading cookbooks almost as fiction, and I hope my books provide wonderful stories.

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Q: Do you have a favorite subject matter, cuisine or source of inspiration?

A: I am inspired by ingredients I see in the markets, dishes we eat out (though we don't very often!), and other people's work. I became obsessed with sourdough - but before the pandemic! - and now I'm obsessed with marmalade. I tend to get... obsessed! I love all cuisines, and try to pay attention to them all: Italian, Indian, Japanese, everything! Our inspiration in Southbury is our little acreage, which we share with a neighbour's cows, and occasionally borrowed chickens.

Q: Tell us about your process. What is your favorite part of the process? Least favorite?

A: My process is generally to listen carefully to what I and my husband (now our daughter's grown up and on her own) are in the mood for, then experiment. If it turns out well, I can tweak it for a recipe for an upcoming book. My most favourite part of the process is feeding people! I often invite people for an experiment, which makes my husband very nervous, but it almost always works out well, and I love feedback. My least favourite is converting the measurements in my recipes from British to American and the other way around! Also writing a cookbook index, which is sheer misery! But it has to be done.

Q: Is there a particular author or chef / cook whose work you admire?




A: I admire many chefs. My current favourite is Ixta Belfrage, a disciple of the wonderful chef Ottolenghi. She is Brazilian/Italian/Mexican, and her fusion food, especially her shrimp lasagne, is amazingly inspiring.

Q: Are there any other special talents or creations you'd like to share with the community?

A: My biggest talent is probably people skills, especially children. I teach a volunteer Cooking Club at our local primary school, and the little 7-10 year olds are a constant source of joy.

Q: Do you have any advice for emerging creatives who are trying to find their voice / style / genre?

A: My advice to other cooks and writers is simple: Keep cooking! Don't get lazy. My doctor yesterday suggested I try cooking and serving 30 different vegetables and fruits every week! That's quite a challenge, and I'm ready for it. Once you've cooked, try to think of how to describe your experience, things you'd change, the way your family and friends received it. Is there a story to your choice for that dish? Write it down.

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