*Wok & Roll by Peter Kwong, (Frederic)* Inter-County Leader

**Cooking with my Scandinavian friends**

Our mentor of the Writer’s Carousel, Carolyn Wedin, just had a season-ending gathering with all the writers getting together to celebrate another successful season. What a joyous occasion indeed.

I volunteered to make the meal for the occasion with the help of my trustworthy buddies. It was a crew of six: Phil and Joanne, Robin and Irene, Geezer Bob and Nanette. What a fun time it was ... at least, for me. We cranked out six courses in two hours.

Yes, six courses. Do you believe it? Not one of which was peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, folks. They were mouthwatering entrees, and our guests all claimed that they were much better than the restaurants that they visited. Well, after a glass or two of wine, everything tasted great. We cranked out a feast for 20-plus more guests within two hours. Unbelievable, you might say. No, I say, we had great sous chefs and everyone knew what they were supposed to do. It was like singing in a chorus, when everyone knows their part and could chime in at any given moment, what joy it was. All I did was bark orders:

“Dinner is served at 4 p.m. and this is 2:45 p.m. So, move, folks. Chop, chop.” Obediently, they all moved accordingly without any resentment or questioning my authority. Oh, how I love that. I never got that at home.

Our six-course meal consisted of:

* **Bruschetta**, pronounced “Bros/ka/ta.” I got my head bit off one time from my Italian colleague when I said "Bro-she-ta," so, for your health, learn how to say Bros/ka/ta and live a longer life.
* **Garlic toast** with fresh minced garlic
* **Pork piccata** with capers and fresh lemon juice
* **Chicken cacciatore** with tomato sauce and a lot of wine
* **Ensalada Italiana** with black olives, hard salami and tons of cheeses
* **Fettucini Alfredo** with fresh cream and more cheeses

So, we divided the team with different tasks. Right when our guests showed up at 4 p.m. the meal was ready to be served. Everyone was amazed. How could it be done? Well, how could our grandmas do it year after year, serving us all these great meals single-handedly? It’s planning and executing. Grandma did it all by her lonesome self. As far as I know, Grandpa’s job was to stick his head in the kitchen every half an hour, and yell, “How much longer for dinner? I’m hungry.”

Well, I want to share with you the team effort of Phil and Geezer Bob, as their garlic toast was a hit. I always judge the success of the meal by looking at the leftovers. There were only two pieces left out of the 30 or more that they made.

Most restaurants’ garlic toast is toasted bread sprinkled with garlic powder with Spanish paprika on top, and that is it. Well, this garlic toast takes a little bit of work, but it is absolutely delicious. Here is the recipe:

**Garlic toast** (**serves four):**

* 1 loaf Italian or French bread
* 1 cup garlic, minced
* 1/2 pound. butter
* 1 cup Italian parsley
* 1 cup of three cheeses, shredded
* Paprika to sprinkle on top

Turn oven to 375 degrees. Slice the bread at an angle, 1/2-inch thick. Layer the bread evenly on a baking sheet pan. In a saute pan, heat up the butter and then add minced garlic. Cook until brown, then spoon the butter/garlic mix onto each piece of bread. Use a brush to make sure that the bread is coated evenly. Put in oven for 10 to 15 minutes until nicely brown and toasted. Remove from oven, then generously add the three-cheese blend on top, and put back in oven again for another 5-10 minutes. When cheese is melted, remove from oven, sprinkle with paprika and add a small pinch of Italian parsley on top. Viola! It is great just to serve as is, with a glass of wine or complementing any entree.