Anna Maria Tremonti moderates A Novel Dinner. The event runs Saturday, Oct. 18, 2014 at Algoma's Water Tower Inn.

Readers may know these books, but not the authors. Anna Maria Tremonti wants to change that Saturday.

The host of CBC Radio's The Current hosts A Novel Dinner. The Algoma Fall Festival event brings together Terry Fallis (The Best Laid Plans), Ross King (Defiant Spirits: The Modernist Revolution of the Group of Seven), Dr. Paul Zehr (Project Superhero) and Jeanne Beker (Finding Myself in Fashion) for dinner, and a talk, at Algoma's Water Tower Inn.

“You can read peoples' books, but it's fun to hear about why they write what they write,” said Tremonti in a recent telephone interview from Toronto.

Beker, Fallis, King and Zehr will circulate during dinner for more informal talks with diners before Tremonti gathers them together for a panel discussion.

Fallis won a Stephen Leacock Award for Humour for The Best Laid Plans, a book that started as a podcast.
Zehr used his science background to consider how the average mortal would fare as the Caped Crusader in Becoming Batman: The Possibility of a Superhero.

King's Leonardo and the Last Supper explores how the Italian painter created his work of Jesus Christ's final meal with his apostles.

Beker hosted Fashion Television from 1985 to 2012 and also penned Strutting It: The Grit Behind the Glamour and Jeanne Unbottled: A Life in Fashion. She recently appeared on Tremonti's show to discuss fashion and feminism after models carried pro-feminist signs at a show by Karl Lagerfeld.

“'You can pick up a book and you can think, 'I never knew that I could be interested in this. Why is that?'” said Tremonti. “It's because of the people behind it. I want to tease some of that out of them.”

Tremonti is keen to see a room filled with readers interested to learn more about four Canadian writers.

A lot of people care about books and stories,” she said. “When they can get the storyteller in the room and actually see them, and listen to them, it's a great experience. It's a great experience.”

Tremonti savours meeting with authors she enjoys reading such as Lawrence Wright (The Looming Towers). The Pulitzer Prize winner talked about his new book, Thirteen Days in September: Carter, Begin, and Sadat at Camp David on The Current last week.

“It's just so cool to talk to this person because I've always admired his work,” she said. “It's just kind of interesting to meet the people who put these words together.”

While required reading for her nationally broadcast radio show are read cover to cover in “one long sitting,” Tremonti is enjoying reading Jung Chang's Empress Dowager: The Concubine Who Launched Modern China in “fits and starts.”

“It's a big, giant book and it's just kind of fun to dip into it,” said Tremonti. “It's so interesting to read about other parts of the world that you know nothing about.”

She's also working her way through Sally Armstrong's The Nine Lives of Charlotte Taylor.

Tremonti may pen a book, or two, in the future following the path of other major Canadian journalists including Knowlton Nash (Kennedy and Diefenbaker: The Feud That Helped Topple a Government), Joe Schlesinger (Time Zones) and, most recently, Lloyd Robertson (The Kind of Life It's Been).

“'Yes, I would like to write books, but can't be more specific until then,” said Tremonti.

She is doing double duty Saturday. Tremonti is also moderating a discussion about the Group of Seven with King, Nancy Lang (Spirit Land: In Search of the Group of Seven) and Tom Smart, former chief executive officer of McMichael Canadian Art Collection.
That discussion, Saturday at 2 p.m. at Algoma's Water Tower Inn, is free to attend. Art Gallery of Algoma hosts a Group of Seven exhibit until Oct. 26.

“They all know a lot about the Group of Seven,” said Tremonti. “But they each know very specific things too that I can focus in on with each of them and then they can kind of build on each other.”

Tickets to A Novel Dinner cost $95 for adults and $75 for students. Tax and box office surcharge are extra. They're on sale at Community Theatre Box Office at Station Mall or online at www.ketc.ca

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