

FSJ's civic poem

FORT ST. JOHN — The reflections, ramblings or even rants of Fort St. John residents are going on the record.

Residents will have the chance to record their tantalizing thoughts or whimsical witticisms in a so-called civic poem that will be launched by the Fort St. John Poetics Research Group on Canada Day.

"We were trying to think of something to do," said Greg Lainsbury, who teaches literature at Northern Lights College. He said he hopes to uncover some "authentic poetic longings in Fort St. John."

Members of the Fort St. John Poetics Research Group will be on hand at the city's July 1 celebrations at Centennial Park to take submissions. Any resident who wants to can jot down a line or two about what's on their mind these days.

Lainsbury expects the contributed prose to cover a wide range of subjects, from city taxes and potholes to civic and national pride.

"The door's open, and that's what

were trying to see," he said.

The task, he said, will be editing the fragments into a cohesive, yet varied expression of consciousness.

"We're going to take away what we have and see if we can put it together," Lainsbury said.

Lainsbury said the project is modelled in the tradition of Canadian poet Dennis Lee, whose collection *Civil Elegies and Other Poems* was awarded the 1972 Governor General's Award.

"I'm interested to see if there is any pattern to the civic consciousness," he said.

Once compiled, he said the poem will be presented at a literary arts gathering where local artists will also present selections of original work.

Deeply rooted in "traditional" art forms, Lainsbury said Fort St. John residents have enough on their mind to push literary arts in new directions.

"I think we do," he said. "It will be interesting to see what will come from such a thing."