

**Show Transcript
Deconstructing Dinner
Kootenay Co-op Radio
Nelson, B.C. Canada**

November 6, 2008

Title: The Kootenay Harvest Revival (Local Grain Revolution IV) / GE-Free Zones IV

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Transcript – Jessica VanOverbeek**

Jon Steinman: And welcome to Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated weekly one-hour radio show and podcast produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY in Nelson, British Columbia. This show is heard on radio stations around the world including 103.7 CFBU St. Catharines Ontario and 107.9 WRFA Jamestown New York. I'm Jon Steinman and I'll be with you for the next hour.

On today's broadcast we listen in on an exciting and celebratory event that took place in Nelson, British Columbia back in September of this year 2008. For those of you regular listeners who have been following the evolution of the Nelson-Creston Community Supported Grain Project and our Local Grain Revolution series, what perhaps was the climax for the project's success was an event hosted over a weekend to celebrate the monumental harvest of grain that took place just weeks earlier, the event was hosted to showcase the project as being a catalyst for what event organizers call, "a local food revolution."

The event was called the Kootenay Harvest Revival and on today's broadcast and into the next, we'll listen in on recordings from the event which for today will include musician Bessie Wapp, Master of Ceremonies and co-founder of Capers' Markets, Russell Precious, spokesperson for the Sinixt Nation, author and historian – Eileen Delehanty-Pearkes, and representing the Doukhobor communities of the interior of British Columbia, JJ Verigin.

increase music and fade out

JS: Well before we listen in on recordings from the Kootenay Harvest Revival, we did leave last week's broadcast somewhat hanging.

As was mentioned last week, on November 3rd, the City of Nelson BC, was set to vote on a resolution introduced by the 'Genetically Engineered Free Kootenays' campaign. In an October 20th presentation to the City Council which we heard on that broadcast, the group requested that city council adopt a resolution that would send a strong message that the municipality opposes the cultivation of genetically engineered plants and trees.

And so on the evening of November 3rd 2008, the City of Nelson officially became Canada's 3rd GE-Free Zone by way of a *unanimous* decision by all council members and the mayor.

Certainly a pinnacle to our GE-Free Zones series here on the show that has, since the group first met in November 2007, been documenting the evolution of the campaign. While Nelson is only one of many local governments the group intends to approach, it is the first in the region and lays a solid foundation from which the group can work towards its ultimate goal of creating an entire region that can be and remain free of genetically-engineered plants and trees.

Now Deconstructing Dinner did attend the November 3rd council meeting and we'll listen to a clip of that in just a moment, but first of interest is yet another important event that took place *prior* to the vote by council.

Here in British Columbia, residents will be heading to the polls on November 15th to elect *local* government representatives. The GE-Free Kootenays campaign saw the elections as an opportunity to make genetically engineered food an election issue. It appears that strategy was successful, and in part thanks to one of the GE-Free Kootenays' members running as a candidate for Nelson City Council.

Here's a clip of Nelson City Council candidate, Kim Charlesworth addressing an all-candidates meeting on October 30th.

Kim Charlesworth: Some of the other ways that we can support agriculture and food security with the City of Nelson is by passing a resolution for the Genetically Engineered Free Zone in the City of Nelson. (applause)

The goal is both symbolic and important in sending a message that we wish our food supply to be safe. This resolution was presented to city council on October 20th by the GE-Free Kootenays campaign of which I'm the founding member.

Jon Steinman: Now keep in mind that all of the *current* councillors and mayor were given the opportunity at that meeting to see the very visible and vocal support for the campaign that you just heard. Certainly quite the boost to the campaign's chances to have their resolution voted on only a few days later.

Also running for *mayor* is current councillor Gord McAdams. He too made the GE-Free Kootenays campaign an election issue.

Gord McAdams: So I'm going to focus on food security. My response to the question overlaps with my answer to the transportations - the two are closely linked. Providing high quality, locally produced food makes sense ecologically, environmentally and socially. It's logical to give this issue high priority attention and I've done that - last November I was pleased to be a facilitator at the Food Security Conference in Nelson. I have been a member of the GE-Free Kootenay working group along with Kim since its inception and I have been assured that that issue is coming to council table next month Monday night.

Jon Steinman: Now Deconstructing Dinner was of course in attendance at the November 3rd council meeting alongside the group's Steering Committee and a few devoted supporters including one gentleman who raised up a sign that read "say NO to GMO!" Now while the sound quality of this recording is not ideal, here's a brief sample of what it sounds like when local governments take action on genetically-engineered food.

Gord McAdams: Alright so 5A is the Genetically Engineered Food Kootenays proposal. Members of the Genetic Engineering Free Kootenay working group on October the 20th and requests that council pass the motion that the City of Nelson be free of genetically engineered plants and trees. The City of Nelson does not support the cultivation of genetically engineered plants and trees in the Municipality of Nelson and further that council will not purchase for its own operations GE plants or trees. The City of Nelson agrees to revisit this as pertinent new information becomes available that affects this resolution and further that the City of Nelson shall forward copies of the resolution to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Union of BC Municipalities, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Health Canada, CropLife Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, local MLA and MP offices and any interested and related groups for comment.

Jon Steinman: Now for those of you who were unable to make out the dialogue there, that last voice was Councillor Gord McAdams reading the proposed GE-Free resolution.

Here again is the resolution Councillor McAdams read, “The City of Nelson does not support the cultivation of genetically engineered plants and trees in the Municipality of Nelson and further that council will not purchase for its own operations GE plants or trees. The City of Nelson agrees to revisit this as pertinent new information becomes available that affects this resolution and further that the City of Nelson shall forward copies of the resolution to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Union of BC Municipalities, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Health Canada, CropLife Canada, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, local MLA and MP offices and any interested and related groups for comment.”

Councillor McAdams continued by suggesting that the City’s Official Community Plan can help guide the Council to address the issue of genetically-engineered food. As was suggested in the proposed resolution by GE-Free Kootenays, Councillor McAdams recited the following goals from the City’s Official Community Plan. “Number 1, to maintain and enhance Nelson’s environmental quality and to safeguard it for future generations. Number 2, to ensure Nelson’s economic stability and well-being by promoting environmentally sustainable economic development. And Number 3, to act locally toward the solution of regional, national and global environmental problems.”

A small exchange among the mayor and councillors ensued whereby the proposed resolution was suggested as being similar to the bottled water and municipal pesticide bans that the City has enacted, and without any delay, the council voted.

Nelson City Council: Moved by Councillor McAdams, second by Councillor Stacey. All in favour? All opposed? Carried, thank you very much.

Jon Steinman: Again, the council voted unanimously to support the GE-Free resolution, and while not legally-binding, the policy now lays the framework for taking future action should the cultivation of genetically-engineered plants and trees ever become a problem. The group will now work towards bringing other local governments in the region on board as they work towards their goal of creating a Kootenay Region free of genetically-engineered plants and trees.

soundbite

Jon Steinman: Another exciting initiative that Deconstructing Dinner has been covering for quite some time is Canada's first Community Supported Agriculture Project for grain, which is *already* providing an alternative to farmers in the Creston Valley to grow non-genetically-engineered crops.

Except for a slight shortfall in the expected yields, the first year of this innovative project has indeed been successful. In early September, the three farmers harvested their crop of Red Fife Wheat, Khorasan Wheat, Hard Spring Wheat, Spelt and Oats, and on October 26th, some of that grain even arrived in Nelson via *sailboat* following a 56-hour journey on Kootenay Lake by a fleet of four sailboats.

Now more on that sailing journey will be shared on an upcoming broadcast, but first we can track back to September 19th, 2008, when Deconstructing Dinner alongside the Nelson-Creston Grain CSA and All Seasons Café, teamed up to host a weekend harvest celebration. Of course the grain harvest is a rather monumental one considering locally-grown grains have *not* been commercially available in the region for decades, but more importantly, because the project may represent a promising future for a thriving local food system not only for the region it serves, but perhaps for other communities in North America wishing to take on a similar initiative.

The weekend was titled, "The Kootenay Harvest Revival" and was made up of an evening of speakers and music followed by a full-day of tasting locally-grown grains.

Now having been directly involved with the event, I can certainly suggest that the angle that we took in putting this event on, is definitely one to recommend to other communities wishing to inspire the creation of a more local food system.

On the first evening of the event, a series of speakers were invited to share a history of agriculture and food in the Kootenay regions of British Columbia. The hope was, that through the exploration of what was *once* possible in the area, the event would help project what is *currently* possible to grow, process and consume with respect to food. Certainly the Grain CSA is one of those projects unearthing the potential of the region.

Of course community support and sponsorship is necessary to put on such an event, and alongside support from Deconstructing Dinner, the event was made possible by the Columbia Basin Trust, Selkirk College, the All Seasons Café, the Nelson-Creston Grain CSA, Kootenay Country Store Co-operative, Kootenay Co-op Radio, the Kootenay Food Strategy Society, Hall Printing, the Nelson Daily News, Express Newspaper, Creston and District Museum, Creston Food Action Coalition, West Kootenay EcoSociety and Wildsight.

Over the course of today's broadcast and next week's, you'll hear the voices of Capers Markets co-founder Russell Precious, author and Sinixt Nation spokesperson Eileen Delehanty-Pearkes, spokesperson for the Doukhobor people JJ Verigin, author and farmer Luanne Armstrong, CSA farmers Keith Huscroft and Roy Lawrence, and CSA co-founder Matt Lowe.

The evening event was attended by about 270 people at Nelson's Capitol Theatre and filling the back of the stage was a slideshow presentation of photographs that is available on the Deconstructing Dinner website at deconstructingdinner.ca and that's listed under the episodes titled, The Kootenay Harvest Revival.

In this first clip from the evening event, you'll hear musician Bessie Wapp opening up the event. Bessie is followed by the MC for the evening, Russell Precious. Russell is the co-founder of Capers Markets, a successful chain of natural food stores in the Vancouver-area. Russell also sits on the boards of the West Kootenay EcoSociety and the Kootenay Country Store Co-operative.

Bessie Wapp: I'm going to sing a hundred-mile song.

Bessie Wapp signing - music lyrics: Small hands dig deep into pockets of earth plant your seeds, small hands dig deep into pockets of earth plant your seeds. It's a fragile thing, it's a gallant thing, it's a song sang in the mowing. It's a deep breath, it's an earth sigh, it's a slow way.

musical interlude

It's the thunder's distant rumble. It's the tremble of a new leaf. It's the sense of belonging to a vast yet tiny wonder. Small hands dig deep into pockets of earth plant your seeds. Small hands dig deep into pockets of earth plant your seeds. Can you hear? Small but clear – grow, grow.

musical interlude.

It's a fragile thing, it's a gallant thing, it's a song sang in the mowing. It's a deep breath, it's an earth sigh, it's a slow way. Small hands dig deep into pockets of earth plant your seeds. Small hands dig deep into pockets of earth plant your seed. Seedling, oh have no fear. You're not alone down here. (applause)

Bessie Wapp: Thank you.

Russell Precious: That was a song I had hoped would go on forever. Thank you Bessie. Bessie will be playing for us again later. And welcome everyone to the Kootenay Harvest Revival. I've already been asked if this is a revival meeting? To which I said, 'I had already checked the dictionary and the word revival has several meanings and of course the meaning that applies this evening is that we are uncovering or rediscovering something that has been lost.' Let me tell you how this event came to be in the first place. Many of you will recall several years ago, two springs ago in fact, when the hundred-mile diet just sort-of took off.

It's one of those books that just a sleeper just sort of overnight everybody embraces it. It's a book a message whose time has come and out of the hundred-mile diet, Community Food Matters here issued the Eat Local Challenge. That was for the month August last summer. My friend and colleague, Matt Lowe took up the Eat Local Challenge and quickly determined to his woe that the big challenge in this community was a lack of grain. There was no grain grown within a hundred miles of consumption here. So, not being one to miss a good meal Matt got together and visited various Creston farmers and started the first CSA (community supported agriculture) grain initiative in Canada. CSA as a format for supporting local agriculture had been used many times in the world of fruit and vegetables but never before for grains. So together with 180 participants and one local restaurant Au Soleil Levant, 200 shares were sold for

a \$100 dollars each which suggested that people would receive 100 pounds of grain at the end of the season.

The way the CSA works and the benefits is of course the farmers know in advance the amount to plant and the farmer is paid in advance. It takes some of the guesswork out of farming. Two weeks ago, Matt and myself and André Pever toured these farms. There I am standing in a field somewhere in the Creston Valley. It was just totally moving to be on the farm with the farmers, harvesting grain in the field, chewing on it, just talking about the different types of grain. Three farmers signed on to grow grains. This season there were two types of wheat: Khorasan which is better known as Kamut - which is the trade name and oats, spelt, and even some lentils. That was one strand that led to this evening. The other strand was this spring in April and May.

Kootenay Co-op presented a series of four food events, four films. At one of those events the new owners of the All-Seasons Cafe, Paul and Julia were very excited about what they heard and Jon Steinman who was officiating at the events, they approached him and said, "Listen, we would really like to do a food benefit. Food benefit for the local food agriculture." So Jon, Matt, Paul and Julia started exploring the possibility of doing a food benefit at the All-Seasons Cafe. By the time they had finished the event had grown from an evening event at the All-Seasons Cafe to a brunch and evening event at the All-Seasons Café. Then it was clear that there just wasn't enough time or space to tell the story of the history of food in the Kootenays in that evening while we were trying to eat so that morphed into the event, which is happening this evening.

So we're going to celebrate local agriculture and local culture. We are going to celebrate it in story telling, we are going to celebrate it in song, we are going to celebrate it in a remarkable selection of images.

It's a funny thing you know; there is a crisis in the world in terms of food production. We haven't felt it a whole lot here yet - maybe slightly in rising food prices but when there's a crisis in agriculture there's inevitably in crisis in culture. So, this is the turning point. There's been a steady shift in the last two years from a focus in organics to a focus in local. Cultural anthropologists of course have always been aware that food is core determinate of any given culture. Yet, in the West, industrial agriculture took the culture out of agriculture just as the assembly line had taken the art out of craftsmanship.

The shift to local agriculture for many years has been somewhat quaint and whimsical but in these times it is now changing into something that is much more demanding. I think that if we've seen this week the gyrations in the global economy and seems to mark the changes that are now upon us. There's a very long and rich agricultural tradition here in the Kootenays and we have a great selection of people tonight who are going to tell that story.

Jon Steinman: Russell Precious speaking on September 19th, 2008 at the Kootenay Harvest Revival in Nelson, British Columbia. This is Deconstructing Dinner. If you are just tuning in, there is a slideshow of photographs available on our website at deconstructingdinner.ca; those photographs accompanied the speakers at the event.

But the first speaker of the evening brought her *own* slideshow of images, and while it's not imperative to view them while listening to her talk, it's no doubt recommended, and so if you do have Internet access - you can access the PowerPoint presentation of

Eileen Delehanty-Pearkes by linking to it from the November 6th, 2008 broadcast posted on our site, again the site is deconstructingdinner.ca.

Eileen Delehanty-Pearkes is an author and historian who, among her many essays and articles, Eileen authored the book, "The Geography of Memory – Recovering Stories of a Landscape's First People." Here again is MC Russell Precious, introducing Eileen.

Russell Precious: So, to begin. I loved it in history when we were taught in 1492 that Christopher Columbus discovered America they didn't tell us that there were likely 50 million people, 50 million Native people living in the Americas when Christopher Columbus came. I can't imagine how exciting it was to be discovered by Christopher Columbus. In the Kootenays, in this region where white settlers have only been here for only 150 years, the Native peoples have been here for nearly 13,000 years. Eileen Delehanty-Pearkes is here with us this evening. I had a lovely meeting with Eileen this week and I was so moved by her deep connection to place and its impact on culture, to place and its impact on how we think and how we feel. Please welcome Eileen Delehanty-Pearkes.

Eileen Delehanty-Pearkes: Thank you Russell. By way of beginning it falls to me a great honour and privilege to speak for the Sinixt people tonight in welcoming you to their territory. I am not a Sinixt person but I've been given their blessing to extend to you that welcome. It is my honour and privilege to work with these people - to work with their story, which has such integrity.

The Sinixt people were declared extinct by the federal government in 1956 despite the fact that they continued to exist both in Canada and the United States. It's the work for all of us locally to pay attention to and to honour their presence even when it is quite latent. I would like us to take a moment right now before we begin to celebrate local culture to honour in silence the memory of the ancestors of the Sinixt people and the contemporary Sinixt people who can't be with us tonight.

Moment of silence

Thank you. I was asked about six months ago to put together some remarks for a food sustainability mini-conference that was held here with some aboriginal people and so I did what I do which is to work with the cultural material of these people and put something together that's accessible to a larger group. It was great fun to receive a call and ask for something to be presented to you tonight. I'm happy to present something, From Caribou to Camas, which is a survey, a seasonal survey of the Sinixt peoples diet and hunting and gathering practices. I want to emphasize that the Sinixt people were not agriculture people. I know that this is a primarily an evening to celebrate agriculture. The Sinixt were pre-agricultural people who hunted and gathered just as the landscape presented itself to them.

Next slide.

Early spring any of you who have taken a walk at Pulpit Rock at the right time of year have seen the glacier lilies blooming in the rocky hillsides higher up. The Glacier Lily, the corm of the Glacier Lily was important early fresh food of the Sinixt people that was harvested right after the snow had pulled back. They dug up the corms and they ate them fresh or cooked or dried and then cooked later on.

Next slide

The False Solomon's Seal came next. You see it coming up these little fingers of green all unfurling. It's very common even in woodland areas right here in Nelson. The False Solomon's Seal was an important rhizome plant. They would dig up underneath the soil and they would eat both the new shoots that come out above the ground and the little shallow roots that carry on all around the plant. They did not eat the berries, which a lot of you might recognize and see but they did eat the new shoots. I've steamed them and eaten them; they're delicious and taste like Kootenay asparagus.

Next slide.

The bear was a very important food for the Sinixt people. They were rare among interior Salish tribes in that they did consume bear. It was not a common thing for the interior Salish tribes to eat bear. The Sinixt relished bear meat and they were known to drag bears out of hibernation in order to consume the meat. For the Sinixt, the bear was an animal and still is an animal of great power.

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The Mountain Goat was also a very important animal food for the Sinixt people. They would hunt this Mountain Goat in the spring and they would often use a series of long poles to chase the Mountain Goat out to the edge of a cliff and then just sort of nudge it off down the cliff. That was how they hunted the Mountain Goat – a very important cultural animal

Next slide please.

A very important cultural animal for the Sinixt people. My book 'The Geography Memory' details a story about self-esteem and the building of self-esteem, which was taught to young children through the story of the Mountain Goat and the origin of the Huckleberry plant. The women harvested the hair of the Mountain Goat and they wove the hair, they spun it and wove it into very warm cloth that they used almost like wool. It was also an important emblem for the Sinixt people; the tribal people had a Mountain Goat - a skull that was on top of the pole that was often a very significant centrepiece for their feasting and dancing.

Next slide please.

This is the Camas. Has anybody seen Camas growing where they live locally? I've been collecting anecdotal observations about this plant. It really annoys me that the "Plants of the Southern Interior" does not list this plant in its guidebook. This was an important sustaining food for the Sinixt people. The Camas really likes a sort of semi-wetland environment. It likes wet ditches and things like that. We have destroyed a lot of those wet areas through the reservoir planning that we've done with our valleys but it's great to know that it's still growing in the Slocan Valley, a very important food.

Next slide.

This is what the Camas looks like once its been dug up. The root has been dug up and peeled and dried. It takes hours and hours and hours of preparation that still boggles my mind that these women continually to this day have the patience to undertake the work of the wild plant food preservation.

Next slide.

This is the Bitterroot. Has anyone seen the Bitterroot growing anywhere, in Castlegar area maybe? I would pay a lot of money to get someone to say they have seen it growing. The Bitterroot is again a very important plant food. I suspect it did grow at one time in isolated patches especially right around between Castlegar and Trail and on south toward the border. I'm not positive of that though. I do know that it was a very important trade food item. Anybody who has tasted Bitterroot knows that it is good to its name - very bitter, but also treasured by the aboriginal people as a plant food.

Next slide.

The Cow Parsnip. This is a really accessible thing for any of us to just go out and cut off the stalk and chew into it like celery. It grows widely all through the Cottonwood Valley here south of Nelson. I'm sure it's in lots of patches in the Slocan Valley as well. It's a very accessible thing to approach and experiment with eating especially since you are not digging up a root you're just taking a stalk off of it. It's easy to experiment with the Cow Parsnip.

Next slide.

The Indian Potato also known locally as the Spring Beauty is another underground root or a corm food. The Sinixt call all these plants that come underground, they call ALL of them roots whether they are a corm or rhizomes. Whatever the technical term is for them they call them roots.

Next slide.

Now it's getting on towards summer and the fishing opportunities are starting to really pick up. This is a gorgeous shot of a Bull Trout actually with a rainbow prey in its mouth. You can see that there. The Bull Trout of course is really in many ways the totem fish for the Sinixt people. Their name Sinixt is derived from the name for the Bull Trout, which is ixt. Because of climate change combined with reservoir construction the Bull Trout is really threatened in this area now. It likes cool mountain streams and there seem to be less and less of those.

Next slide.

The Ponderosa Pine, a really important sustaining food for the Aboriginal people. They would in June, harvest the cambium layer. Just underneath the outer bark is a layer of kind of more living and luscious bark - the inner bark, the cambium. That would be harvested from a tree that was not fully mature like this one but sort of more like 10-20 years old, 30 years old maybe. They would harvest the cambium off of it in strips. I don't know how many of you used to tie up licorice into knots and then bite the knot off. Anybody ever do that? I was delighted to learn that the Sinixt use to do this with the

cambium. They would pull off strips, tie them into knots then bite off the knot just the way we used to eat licorice. So there you have it - Sinixt licorice.

Next slide.

Oh ya, the sustaining salmon. If you look at maps of the permanent village sites for the Sinixt people they follow the path of the salmon as it came up the Columbia River, turned up the Slocan Valley, proceeded up the Arrow Lakes Valley, all the way to the big bend back around as far as Windermere. The salmon were really, really important. The Grand Coulee Dam, constructed in 1941 or completed then, completely eliminated the salmon it extirpated the salmon from our region. It's hard to even describe to you the impact that had culturally on the people and that's had on the biosphere that we call this area. Very, very significant animal food and it's gone now for good.

Next slide.

So coyote. They didn't eat coyote; they wouldn't have dared because coyote is kind of a fierce and unreliable creature in many ways and very important deity for the Sinixt people. The Kootenay Mountain Culture magazine will be running a story in the winter issue coming out very soon that features part of the tale told by Marilyn James interpreted with cultural information around it by me. I won't spend a lot of time on coyote right now but I encourage you to seek out that article because there is some good things in there. Coyote did largely control the path of the salmon - he brought the salmon up the Columbia River himself. The salmon came very briefly in three separate runs: the Chinook arrived in June - they were the big ones 50 to 100 pounds; after the Chinook there was Sockeye - which was also quite a large run but a smaller fish; and finally in October came the Coho. You had those three different sets of salmon and they were very, very important.

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The preservation of salmon was essential to survival. There were many taboos associated with preservation, with fishing. Nobody wanted to mess around with whether or not the salmon were going to come home in great numbers. So, there was a lot of attention paid to the sanctity to food preservation in particular with salmon. Salmon were dried in very large quantity, in sort of mat covered A-frame structures that were featured at any major fishery. There would have been one at the mouth of the Slocan River and also one down at Kettle Falls.

Next slide.

So this is the Tiger Lily. I don't want to mistake it with the Glacial Lily - I sometimes do. The Tiger Lily is a wonderful plant that blooms in June, really more like July. I understand that it's quite threatened - the populations of this plant are down. So, I just want to just suggest to you that you not touch any Tiger Lilies that you see - leave them alone. I have been told recently by someone that Tiger Lilies really like to come back after fire and the Sinixt did burn to cultivate Tiger Lily and Huckleberry. Maybe it's because of fire suppression that we have so many fewer of them. I have been told, I have not tried the root but I have been told that it is exceptionally bitter. So I'm not sure if we are missing much.

Next slide.

This is the Thimbleberry. No, sorry the Wild Strawberry. They look so much alike. This is the Wild Strawberry - tiny, tiny growing in the woods there. You have seen them.

Next slide.

The Soopolallie are a really important berry to the Sinixt and other Interior Salish tribes to this day. Take a good look at it and learn to recognize it. When you come across a bush give yourself a treat. It is a bittersweet berry. Some people's palettes reject it. I have learned to love them and nothing makes me happier than to find a bush ready to pick.

Then we have the Thimbleberry. Which is a super important plant food. The Thimbleberry was really appreciated deeply by the Sinixt because I think they ripen one at a time. You all have seen that. You can't go to a patch and get them all at once. The Sinixt found that quite endearing as a plant and they treasure the Thimbleberry - something that we ignore.

Of course, the queen of all fruits, or the king or the chief, however you want to say it. The chief of all the fruiting plants was the Huckleberry and we all know why.

Summer is pretty much over and the berries are picked and it's time to turn back to the streams again and we see there the Kokanee, actually Kekeni is an Interior Salish Sinixt word which means red fish or Kokanee. It's derived directly from that word that they developed over time. It's ironic to me in a way, when you think about it these local sustaining foods of theirs how many people have been to the streams to catch any Kokanee this month. It's just not really done anymore and we certainly don't pick up the spawners. In any event we fish out of the deeper lake but they were at the streamside and they were picking up the spawning Kokanee.

The Mountain Caribou, I can't say enough about the importance of the Mountain Caribou for the Sinixt people. The Mountain Caribou sustained itself on sedge and tree lichen. Both of these things, the tree lichen threatened by logging practices, the sedge threatened by reservoir systems. This caribou was once like the Plains Buffalo here and is now nearly extirpated from the region.

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I just want to run through a couple of principles and protocols of food gathering. Any of you who want to undertake some wild plant food gathering it's really important to consider some of these things. First of all it's really, really important to recognize the plant or the animal that you are engaged in using as food by making an offering to that plant or animal of any kind, it can be a simple verbal or non-verbal thought offering. It was really important in Sinixt traditional culture to have a rotation of harvest years and management of areas by families. They practiced sustainability before we knew what that was and they survived here for several thousand years as a result of that. So if you are out gathering, think about sustainability. It's very different from agriculture, which is about harvesting everything.

Again, partial harvest gratitude is also very important. Without gratitude the Sinixt believed there could be no abundance and they were very clear on that in the old traditional times as they still are. There was always respect for life so that after a family death there was no gathering and women during her moon time would not gather and touch plant foods. Care and cleanliness was also really important and waste was frowned upon as you can imagine. Sustaining their lives here in this rugged landscape they needed every berry they could get. Finally, generosity: a very important principle to them. I see this to this day when I work with Native people they are exceptionally generous - the most generous people I have ever met even though most of them are living at or near or below the poverty line. They are very generous with everything that they have and I always feel it's a great privilege to be in contact with that and they believe that the Earth was generous to them. Thank you. (applause)

Jon Steinman: Eileen Delehanty-Pearkes speaking in September 2008 at the Kootenay Harvest Revival in Nelson, British Columbia. This is Deconstructing Dinner.

On today's and next week's broadcast we'll be listening in on recordings from the Kootenay Harvest Revival held in Nelson to celebrate the harvest of grain from Canada's first Community Supported Agriculture Project *for* Grain. We've been covering the evolution of that project since it's conception in late summer 2007 as part of our Local Grain Revolution series. Because of the show's involvement with the CSA, Deconstructing Dinner teamed up with CSA co-founder Matt Lowe and a local restaurant to host a celebratory harvest event that would also act as a catalyst for what was billed, as a "local food revolution."

It was decided that through the revisiting of the region's food production history, that residents, businesses and local organizations could be inspired to become part of a movement to reclaim that heritage of food production, which throughout most North American regions, is not so different from the one that the Kootenay Harvest Revival was unearthing.

Moving on from the history of the regions *native* inhabitants, one of the first groups of *white* settlers into the Kootenay region of BC were the Doukhobors – a spiritual Christian sect of Russian origin, who, beginning in the 18th century, rejected secular government, the Russian Orthodox priests, icons, all church ritual, the Bible as the supreme source of divine revelation and the divinity of Jesus. Their Pacifist beliefs and desire to avoid government interference in their life lead to an exodus of the majority of the group from the Russian Empire to Canada at the close of the 19th Century. Most of them settled in Saskatchewan before moving to British Columbia and it's estimated that about 15,000 Doukhobors continue to live in Western Canada and 5,000 in the United States.

With Doukhobors maintaining a rich history of living off the land, JJ Verigin was invited to share the Doukhobor story. JJ is the great-grandson of Peter Verigin – who was the Doukhobors' spiritual leader when they arrived in Canada in the early 20th Century. There are some remarkable photos of Doukhobor culture displayed during JJ's talk, and those are posted on the Deconstructing Dinner website at deconstructingdinner.ca and posted under the November 6th 2008 broadcast. Here again is MC Russell Precious.

Russell Precious: So this evening it is my total pleasure to welcome JJ Verigin who presently resides in Grand Forks and is the executive director of the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ. It was fun for me to discover that the word Doukhobor translates

as spiritual wrestlers and I suspect that when many of us came here to the Kootenays in the 70's as war-resisters or back-to-the-landers we could certainly relate because I think we felt that we were spirit wrestlers ourselves. Please give JJ Verigin a very warm welcome to be here with us this evening. Thank you.

JJ Verigin: Thank you Russell and thank you very much Eileen for starting tonight's evening in the manner that it should be started-paying respect to the original people that walked this land. I say this because when we are talking about agriculture and talking about the relationship of human beings to the land that we walk we can't forget the human element as well. We have much to learn from our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

This dislocation happening in our society - whether we are talking about climate change, whether we are talking about peak oil, whether we are talking about food security. Just driving up here listening to the news, saddened to hear about what is happening to sales of milk in China and the fact that in order to increase their profit margin they seem to be putting the same kind of things that people make cabinet-counter tops out of into the milk that they sell to their children.

I've been asked to come and speak about the history of the Doukhobor people with respect to agriculture in the Kootenay/Boundary but primarily focusing on the Boundary area. I just want to go back when Russell was giving us a definition of revival and I think it is important for us, just as our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, to recognize that the spiritual connection between us as human beings and the planet that sustains us.

The Russian tradition, not only Doukhobor tradition is steeped in that understanding. I'm not sure if any of you folks know Papirosen - those cigarettes that Stalin used to smoke with about two inches of tobacco and about a three inch filter. On the cover of the box of these Papirosen, they've been sold for years and years in the Soviet Union and Russia, there are three, they look like knights and they represent different things. One is the defender of the people, another one represents the merchant trader class and one represents the tillers of the soil. Again, just to make that connection between culture and agriculture.

Our people came here to Canada with the assistance of Leo Tolstoy. I just want to read you a quote from him. "One of the primary and generally recognized requirements to happiness is man's communing with nature - such as living under an open sky where he can see the light of the sun and breathe fresh air, live close to the earth, plants and animals. Deprivation of this has always been looked upon as a great misfortune." Not too many people understand Tolstoy and those terms. When our people came to Saskatchewan they had to adapt to the new environment that they found themselves in - climate wise, people wise, land wise.

They were not strangers to this in fact because of their exile throughout the Russian Empire, because of their spiritual beliefs, because of their pacifism they adapted to the land wherever they went. When they were exiled throughout the Russian empire to the Crimea, which had a good climate they grew their gardens, they lived in villages. This was before they embarked on a communal enterprise here in Canada. Afterwards, when they were exiled to Georgia because they were exiled to a place 6,000 feet above sea level they couldn't grow wheat so they grew barley to use for flour. In Siberia they grew rye. So when they came over to Canada and they settled in the Prairies initially they also started to break the land. Then, because of the difficulties over the government with

respect to private land ownership because they did not believe in ownership of the land similar to other cultures, they were given an ultimatum of either taking out individual parcels and swearing oaths of allegiance or surrendering their property. Basically they left almost over 240,000 acres of land in the prairies that they were not compensated for and came to B.C. Here they bought land with borrowed money and again being from a different culture, being strangers to this land, unfortunately there were clashes with our First Nations people.

Again, that just brings me back to the present when we are looking at resurrecting or reviving agriculture it's not only the natural environment that we have to be careful of and sensitive to, but we can not forget the human environment so we don't create obstructions for ourselves so that what we do can be an example. And the world sorely need those kind of examples.

When our people came here to the Kootenay/Boundary they sent men work parties. That was in 1908 to 1911 when the migration happened. Initially these clearing parties, these initial parties came and cleared the land taking down trees. In Grand Forks they purchased over 4,000 acres of land. Up the North Fork, I'm not sure if you folks are familiar with it, someone was telling me that they produced over 10,000 cedar poles for sale and this is the way they finance their agricultural development.

Later on in the year, women and children started to arrive and I think by 1909 there was almost 1,000 people that made the trip from the Prairies to the Kootenay/Boundary and there were almost 24 villages established in the Grand Forks area. These villages basically were their own entities. I have to say one thing so that people have a clear understanding how our people were able to become engaged on such a massive scale in agriculture is because these villages contained maybe 50 people, they were primarily family-based units. They lived, worked communally and they were following the guidance of their leader at that time, Peter Lordly Verigin. Verigin had spent time in exile in Siberia where he also had opportunity to experiment with different types of agriculture and he used his lessons learned there when he came to Canada and applied them here.

When you have, unlike today's farmers that maybe don't have that much land, that have to develop it on their own, when you have 5,000 people attending on a survival bases to their needs you don't always have to have countless meetings to figure out what you're going to do. So, at that time they were able to plant crops that did their best in the environment that they were cultivated in. For example, the slopes in Spencer Hill with respect to orchards. 50,000 fruit trees planted throughout the area and also in the Kootenays.

In fact, to prepare the land for planting I was told that they had to bring soil from Pass Creek to Ootischenia including clover and other growth so that after it would be grown and plowed over the soil it would be ok for planting. So they did that. They planted different crops in where the soil, the terrain was most productive. In terms of processing it they also built their own mills, canning factories where they processed the food. Not only food but processed flax to make clothing - basically self-sufficient. Another interesting thing that they had, they had identified areas and lands where things could be grown better. Our people also had individuals who were particularly skillful at managing various crops. There was the Marcorta family that was specifically to making honey. Mazibans with respect to I think cherries, I believe. So they were able to do all of that because it was a matter of survival. They wasted very little. In fact, when they were

harvesting grain kids would walk behind the machines to pick up grains so that nothing would be left or lost. They became very successful, maybe to the chagrin of some of their own fellow believers.

Some of our Doukhobor people felt that horses could not be harnessed because they were also our brothers and sisters and it was not fair. Within the community there were difficulties that ultimately undermined the communal enterprise and of course outside of the community there were also difficulties and this is where we get into the human element again.

Even though our people were pacifists and during World War 1 they even sent car loads of their preserves to families of serving people, that were serving on the front. They also adopted a diet in order to also show the austerity, that solidarity with the surrounding public. Unfortunately this all happened in the background of 1917 - the Russian Revolution. When they were working communally, the powers that work could not distinguish communalism from communism and because of a lot of different forces all that ultimately and unfortunately came to an end in terms of this large communal exercise in agriculture - it wasn't restricted to agriculture.

People are saying 'What now?' I wish you could say to you honestly that our Doukhobor people were still people that have their fingers in the soil. In all honesty I can't. We have become like so many of us, disconnected from the soil and sometimes even disconnected from each other. That's the bad news. The good news is that we have people in our midst - and I'd like to acknowledge a couple of them here tonight Walter and Vera Kanigan, that have started community gardens, that are encouraging our young people to return to the land. The other good news is that we do have land our USCC organization suitable for agriculture that we are looking to work in partnership with others to bring it back to it's full potential.

Many Doukhobors of my generation are more used to receiving care packages from their parents when they are living in the city than growing things themselves. As I say, the good news is that is changing.

In closing, I want to just again express my appreciation for those of you that are returning back to the land. Life is not a one-way street. As much as we can learn from our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, our Doukhobor brothers and sisters, there is a lot that we can learn from you. I'd just like to close I guess with translating a song that Peter Lordly composed that reflects our attitude to creation. 'Lord you are the light of my life. I wish to honour you always. You have created me out of the land and gave me a soul of understanding. I look at the beauty of creation and it takes me to ecstasy. In nature I see immense power and it also honours you, our creator. And like the stars shine in the skies, it seems they are calling all of us to a life of peace brotherhood and sisterhood.' Our hope as Doukhobors is that we, all of us, fully develop that special relationship that we have to the earth that we walk on and to those that we share this pilgrimage with. Thank you very much. (applause)

Jon Steinman: JJ Verigin speaking in September 2008 in Nelson British Columbia. JJ is the Executive Director of the Union of Spiritual Communities of Christ and lives in Grand Forks, British Columbia. You can learn more about the Doukhobor people by exploring some of the links on our website at deconstructingdinner.ca and listed under the November 6th, 2008 broadcast.

On next week's broadcast you can expect more recordings from the Kootenay Harvest Revival, including author and farmer Luanne Armstrong and farmer Keith Huscroft, both highly recommended recordings to look forward to. And you can also expect some more music from the event, including Earl Hamilton's Close to Home – a piece he authored specifically *for* the Harvest Revival, and another piece by Bessie Wapp.

ending theme

Jon Steinman: That was this week's edition of Deconstructing Dinner, produced and recorded at Nelson, British Columbia's Kootenay Co-op Radio. I've been your host Jon Steinman. I thank my technical assistant John Ryan.

The theme music for Deconstructing Dinner is courtesy of Nelson-area resident Adham Shaikh.

This radio program is provided free of charge to campus/community radio stations across the country and relies on the financial support from you the listener. Support for the program can be donated through our website at deconstructingdinner.ca or by dialing 250-352-9600.