

**Show Transcript
Deconstructing Dinner
Kootenay Co-op Radio CJLY
Nelson, BC, Canada**

November 20, 2008

Title: Kootenay Harvest Revival III (The Local Grain Revolution VI)

**Producer/Host - Jon Steinman
Transcribed by James Braun**

Sponsorship announcement

Theme Music

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. I'm Jon Steinman.

As promised, we'll be wrapping up our recordings today from the Kootenay Harvest Revival – a 2-day event held in September 2008 that celebrated the successful completion of the first harvest of grain as part of the Creston community supported agriculture (CSA) project that we've been covering here on the show as part of our Local Grain Revolution series.

Deconstructing Dinner teamed up with the grain CSA and the All Seasons Café to host the event which was designed to share the rich history of food and agriculture in the region – similar to the history of most regions in North America. We thought that through sharing the history of what was once possible to produce in the region that the community could be inspired to envision what could be possible to revive. The grain CSA project is just one of those visions that has actually been put into action and so the event also sought to celebrate the project as an example of what a community can do to revive or create a thriving local food system.

And so on today's conclusion *of* the recordings and part III of the Kootenay Harvest Revival, we'll listen to a segment from my own involvement when I spoke to the roughly 270 people in attendance at the first evening of speakers and music held at Nelson's Capitol Theatre. We'll listen to a song written for the event by Earl Hamilton, we'll hear CSA co-founder Matt Lowe speaking at the All Seasons Café where residents of the community shared in a feast of locally produced food which of course included the first local grain from the project. We'll also hear from CSA farmer Roy Lawrence and co-founder of Capers Markets Russell Precious.

Increase Music and Fade Out

JS: Now one of the important goals of hosting the Harvest Revival event was to raise awareness about the local grain project and not just locally, but outside of the region as well. Among the extensive media coverage that the project and event received, CBC Radio's *All Points West* expressed an interest in the story and they ran a ten minute live interview with both myself and grain farmer Keith Huscroft – who we heard on last week's show. For listeners outside of BC, *All Points West* is a province-wide show that airs live on weekdays everywhere in the province except for Vancouver and the Lower Mainland. So needless to say, the show reaches a lot of listeners.

***All Points West* theme music**

Jo-Ann Roberts: Good afternoon and welcome to *All Points West* for Thursday, I'm Jo-Ann Roberts. Coming up in this hour: bragging rights for Radio 3; Grant Lawrence drops in with some award-winning news about the podcast, and then plays his pick for this week. And finally, celebrating a return of the harvest; for the first time in decades, grain is being grown commercially in the Kootenays. We're going to hear about a festival that's happening this weekend in Nelson. Bringing in the sheaves, this is *All Points West*.

Increase Music and Fade Out

JR: Your question of the day today; we've been asking for your signs of fall. Whether it's the cooler weather, the falling leaves, an extra layer of clothing or the harvest. And that's what people in Nelson are celebrating this weekend. The Kootenay Harvest Festival is marking the first time in decades that grain has been grown in the area for commercial sale. Jon Steinman is one of the organizers, and the host of *Deconstructing Dinner* on Kootenay Co-op Radio. Keith Huscroft is a mixed organic farmer in Lister, just south of Creston, and he's one of the farmers who's harvesting the grain this fall. Good afternoon to you both.

JS: Hi Jo-Ann; thanks for the invite.

Keith Huscroft: Hi, good afternoon.

JR: Hi, Keith. Jon, let's start with you. Where did the idea to grow grain again commercially come from?

JS: Well this idea started just a little over a year ago last August, when a local food security group in Nelson started an eat local challenge for the month of August, challenging people in Nelson to eat locally. And one of those people was Matt Lowe; he's with the West Kootenay Eco Society here, and he challenged himself once a week to eat locally. And what he realized is he couldn't find local grain, and it was something that was really lacking from his diet, something that was a significant part of his diet, and so he did what most people probably wouldn't do, he called up some farmers in Creston and said "Hey, do you want to grow some grain?" And Keith Huscroft, who's on the line there, he was one of those farmers.

JR: Now Keith, I don't think it's just as easy as saying "Oh, I think I'll go grow some grain this year." What were some of the challenges you faced in getting a crop that could be harvested?

KH: Actually it is kind of that easy, just plant the seeds and wait and see what happens. **(Jo-Ann laughs)** For this year it was just the weather, we didn't have very much rain, so it was a little bit dry, but as a farmer all you can do is hope and pray that things go well anyway, and it did. So we got some really nice grain up this year; for next year we'll have a little bit more preparation, so it gives us a little bit more time to fertilize and do a little bit extra wheat prep, but as it worked out for this year's crop, it went real well.

JR: Why hasn't grain, Keith, been grown in the area in commercial quantities?

JS: This is *Deconstructing Dinner* and that was a segment of an interview on CBC Radio's *All Points West* that aired back in September leading up to the Kootenay Harvest Revival.

Now over the last two broadcasts we've been listening to speakers from the first of the two-day event that was held in Nelson, BC. Those speakers shared a history of food and agricultural production in the region, and following those speakers and rounding off the first of the two day event was yours truly.

I'll also pass along a reminder that if you didn't catch our previous shows on the Harvest Revival, there is, on our web site, a link to the slideshow presentation of photographs that accompanied the event, and again, our web site is deconstructingdinner.ca

JS(from clip): **(Applause)** The first thing I want to acknowledge is that this morning Matt Lowe, who had conceived this grain CSA and who is also one of the organizers of this event alongside myself tonight, he went down to the Greyhound station and picked up some grain that was shipped on the Greyhound from Creston this morning just so it could be part of this Sunday event at the All Seasons. And I would guess it's probably one of the first times that grain has actually been transported on a Greyhound. Just earlier I was up at the intermission speaking with some other people from the area here, and we were talking about maybe next year putting some of the grain onto some sailboats, which is probably another potential first, if we can pull that one off next year.

So, to close out the evening tonight I've taken on the role of highlighting how here in the Kootenays that we're already reviving what has been captured by many of tonight's presenters already, and how we can, all of us, become more involved in reviving what was once a thriving local and regional food system, as we've been learning here. In a lot of cases this local food system, one that has low impact on the environment and high impact on our health in a good way, it's never really disappeared, it's more just kind of gone to the recesses of our lives and been replaced by a lot of the more convenient foods that are now readily available to us in grocery stores and restaurants. And for myself, I haven't been in the Kootenays for very long; I don't have any stories of being a fourth-

generation anything, and it was really all these efforts by people already in the Kootenays to keep a local food system thriving and to really increase the presence of a local food system that inspired me when I first arrived here in late 2004. And within less than a month, and I remember it vividly, within less than a month of being here I said to myself “Okay, there are some amazing things happening in this region that need to be shared outside of this region.”

And so, fast-tracking to late 2005, I went and created a radio program, *Deconstructing Dinner*, that could hopefully be syndicated on other radio stations across the country and also available through the internet, so maybe even past our Canadian borders. And so almost three years later that is indeed happening, the show is now on twenty-nine stations across the country, it’s available on the internet, and I think there’s more American listeners now than Canadian, probably just due to their much larger population. And what I’d like to do right now is just share with you some of the most important things, just a few of them, that I’ve been sharing through the program, and how what we are doing here in the Kootenays, including this very event, is inspiring others around the world, but more particularly in North America. And the first, of course, is this grain CSA that forms the foundation for this event, that inspired this event. When Matt Lowe first conceived this grain CSA, it was immediately that I thought “I need to document how this evolves from the conception to wherever it goes,” hoping that this could inspire others around the world. And very quickly, within a few months, I also became a cheerleader for the grain CSA. At public events where I was speaking I couldn’t not mention the grain CSA. And partially because of that there was no need to advertise, there was no need to make any concerted effort to get CSA members, and within a few months after that, by springtime, there were one hundred and eighty members committed, including one business, to those two hundred member shares. Just imagine what could happen if there actually was advertising.

In March of this year I aired the first episode of an ongoing series titled “The Local Grain Revolution”, because I think that’s exactly what’s happening here. And since then this little CSA has had a ripple effect throughout North America. For example, in April of this year our member of Parliament Alex Atamanenko, who’s here this evening, he referred to the CSA in the House of Commons as an example of how some Canadians are creating alternative models to the industrial one that clearly is failing, and has failed, and quite literally is killing people. And in that same month a freelance reporter, this is again in April, for the Globe and Mail, came across the show posted on the internet and proceeded to write an article about the CSA for the May 21 issue of the Globe and Mail. So this distributed all across the country. Matt Lowe was on the cover in front of *Au Soleil Levant*, or in the Life section. Since then, articles have appeared throughout all of our local newspapers, stories have appeared on local radio, CBC Radio has aired a few segments and just yesterday Keith and myself were interviewed on *All Points West*. So that was airing throughout the province; we were talking mostly about the CSA and leading into this very event that we’re all here attending today.

And just in the past few weeks I’ve received emails from listeners who, after hearing that show in March—I received some of these emails right after the show—they went right

into their backyards in the spring and planted grain in their backyards. And I've heard many emails right across North America of people who have done this; and now just last week I did receive another one from a resident of New York City, who heard the show and decided "wow, I need to get some local grain, too." He went out, found a farm in the Hudson Valley growing grain, and linked up his vegetable CSA with that farm. And now those CSA members of that vegetable CSA are receiving grain every week from this farm.

And I can go on as to the impacts of this CSA that was conceived just a little over a year ago, these impacts that they're having around North America, but my point in spending as much time as I am on this, is that the inspiration that this project is having around the continent is not so much because of Matt Lowe, not because of the radio show, or it's not even really because of the three farmers and all of those have played a role. But the real part that's inspiring people is everyone who's been involved in the CSA, all the members, all the people who have supported it; and, similar to what I said back in April at the Kootenay Co-op Film Series, all of us here tonight in coming to this event, by being part of this event which is being recorded for the show, are showing the rest of the world that it is possible. Whatever we want this region to look like, we can do it. If what we want is a thriving local food system that provides locally grown and highly nutritious food for everyone regardless of income, then we can do that. And I think we are doing that. And just as this CSA is doing that, hopefully other projects can continue to pop up because of this around North America, as well as other projects here.

And so that brings me to another exciting initiative happening in the region, and another one that I'll soon be sharing on the show in the coming months, and which will also hopefully inspire, maybe, others to do the same. And I'll preface it by mentioning how the grain CSA is not going to be providing certified organic grains, but will nevertheless be growing their grains organically. There's a number of reasons why it's not going to be certified, one of which is that they now don't have to go through any sort of bureaucratic process of certification. And there we were in July, as part of the grain CSA tour that you've seen some pictures of, standing in front of the grain, speaking with the very farmers, one of whom you've met tonight, and that was probably the best certification I think any of us could have received. And so as we speak right now there's a new Canadian Organic standard, and a new logo, that's being introduced; in the upcoming months you'll start to see it on products in your grocery stores. And I'm not going to be here and now up on this stage to challenge whether or not this standard is adequate, but it does seem rather absurd for us here in the Kootenays, or in any specific region, to adhere to a homogenous standard. And we also can't forget that the very regulations that govern our food system are right now in the process of being harmonized with those of the United States, whose standards are much less rigid than ours. So farmers in the region have responded to this and created the Kootenay Local Agriculture Society and the label Kootenay Mountain Grown, a label that will indicate that organic methods of agriculture have been used. But instead of those standards being set by some entity outside of the region, these standards will be set locally and monitored by what essentially is a farmer-to-farmer certification. **(Applause)** And there is information on Kootenay Mountain Grown at the back of the theatre.

And so this brings me to another important point, and that is the role of businesses in this community to get behind these kinds of projects such as the CSA and Kootenay Mountain Grown. Because let's face it, not all of us can go out to the farm every week and pick up a box of food; most of us do rely on grocery stores and restaurants to get our food. So local businesses do have to get involved in order for a local food system to be taken to a next level, which, as I'm sure we all agree, needs to happen.

JS: And this is *Deconstructing Dinner*. I'm Jon Steinman, and you're listening to a talk given by myself, given at the September 2008 Kootenay Harvest Revival held in Nelson, BC. Now my talk did progress into the subject of the GE or genetically engineered free Kootenays campaign, but given how much coverage that campaign has received here on the show in recent months, we can instead fast-forward to the last five minutes of the talk.

JS(from clip): And then I'll end on talking about, quickly, Soil Matters Farm, a CSA that I became a member of last year. It's a vegetable CSA out in Tarrys. Through my history of becoming part of this CSA and also documenting its inception last year, I've recognized a number of things. And it's been this experience of mine that, among others, have really driven home that allowing a local food system to thrive is not just about putting our money towards purchasing local food. And of course that's a start, and that's where we all must start, and it is of incredible importance to do that. But our local farmers have for a very long time been competing with Mexicans, for example, who get paid less than ten dollars a day, or with Chinese garlic and apple growers who get paid even less. And so simply paying a little more for our food is not going to make up for the decades during which our food system has evolved to where we're at today. In other words the true cost of food would probably bankrupt all of us. So I'm not suggesting that we go out and start paying twenty dollars for a plum. What I am suggesting is that, similar to what Lu-Anne was suggesting, is that we need to redefine how we spend our time. We need to recognize that while maybe we're out mountain biking in the mountains or kite-boarding out on Kootenay Lake, that the people who are growing our food are working their asses off, as Keith has also suggested, so that at a few points during that day we can stop with our leisure and eat a sandwich or enjoy a glass of juice. Meanwhile the farmers are unable to take any vacation during that time, and are essentially—quite literally—subsidizing our ability to eat well and our ability to maintain the lifestyles that we live today.

So what I'm going to suggest and what I believe needs to happen is that we need to become more involved just as Lu-Anne was suggesting. Not just with our wallets but with our time and with our energy into working with our farmers, working with food producers, encouraging politicians to support the creation of a local food infrastructure, and I think everyone's attendance here tonight is one promising sign that we can indeed do that. We can choose to allocate our time to these important and, I'll say exciting, issues as well; I mean, these are serious issues but incredibly exciting issues. And I say exciting because the direction in which we're heading here in the Kootenays is something

to celebrate, as we're doing today, as we'll be doing Sunday. Because we're not just reviving a local food system tonight; we're creating culture, a culture that is specific to this region and that isn't defined just by the arts, by music, by theatre, all of which we wanted to incorporate into this evening tonight, but it's also defined by how our wheat here in the Kootenays, for example, tastes different than it does on Vancouver Island. Or maybe that our beers taste different because the hops that are grown in the Kootenays lend a whole different flavour to that beer than any other hops that are out there. And the possibilities of all these culinary and gastronomic differences, those are endless. One of the CSA farmers, Roy Lawrence, as just a quick example there, grew an acre of lentils this year, that Russell mentioned earlier as something he's never done before. He hasn't heard of any other farmer in Creston that have done this; maybe they have, he hasn't heard of it and he's a third generation farmer. And he wanted to see if they'd grow well, and sure enough they did. We can ask our farmers to grow us lentils. We can ask them to grow us chickpeas or flax; we can support the creation of an oil processing facility and start using flax oil on our salads.

And then there's the economics. And this is something I know that we stressed in our presentation to the city just a few months ago; that, as an example of this small grain CSA with only a hundred and eighty members, one business, that represents close to twenty thousand dollars that will now remain in this region and get recirculated throughout the region. You can only begin to imagine how much more money can remain in this region if we can continue to expand our local food supply just as we did. **(Applause)**

Right at the back of the theatre there's some sign-up sheets for any of you who aren't yet CSA members. There are two sign-up sheets at the back for next year, to pledge your support to become a member of the CSA. And if that's not something that fits into your lifestyle, of course the other thing you can do is encourage businesses to get involved, encourage the businesses that you support, the restaurants, the bakeries, the grocery stores to also get involved in this CSA.

And so, I couldn't go out without suggesting that if any of you feel so inspired, just as one would at a good old Southern revival, if you do want to stand up and shout that you believe, or **(laughter)** if you want to shout out that you can see the grain, **(laughter)** you can go ahead. **(shouts and applause)**

Unidentified male: Hallelujah!

JS: This is *Deconstructing Dinner* and that concluded the talk I gave back in September at the Kootenay Harvest Revival. To end the evening, and to also incorporate the spirit of a good old southern revival, the audience was encouraged to join in a song created by Nelson musician Earl Hamilton. Earl was asked to write a song to commemorate the monumental harvest of local grain that the Kootenay Harvest Revival was celebrating, but the song has yet to officially debut here on *Deconstructing Dinner*. Earl Hamilton is joined by musicians Norman Richard, Jeannie Sittig and Marcella Edwards. And so here is the official radio debut of Earl Hamilton's "Close to Home".

“Close to Home”

JS: Earl Hamilton’s “Close to Home”, recorded live at Kootenay Co-op Radio. Earl was joined by Norman Richard, Jeannie Sittig and Marcella Edwards.

And this is *Deconstructing Dinner*, a syndicated weekly one hour radio show and podcast produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio in Nelson, British Columbia. This is part III of our recordings from the Kootenay Harvest Revival held in Nelson back in September and hosted by *Deconstructing Dinner*, the Creston Grain CSA and the All Seasons Café. The recordings are part of our ongoing Local Grain Revolution series.

Now of course one of the most important parts of the event was the actual eating of the local grain that the event was held to celebrate. And that’s where the All Seasons Café comes in who hosted a brunch and dinner where chefs Adam Druit and Leah Wilson alongside baker Raymond Gariepy of the bakery Au Soleil Levant prepared a smorgasboard of baked goods for people to indulge in. In one case, the chefs prepared a biscotti using some of the Khorsan Wheat that had only been harvested weeks earlier from the Creston Valley and milled the day before it was turned into biscottis. When CSA co-founder Matt Lowe and myself took a our first bite of the biscottis, which was the first both of us had indulged in the local grain, I looked at Matt and said, how often have people been able to refer to biscottis as being fresh from the farm. And indeed they were exceptional.

Now both the brunch and dinner were accompanied by some short presentations, and so here is a brief clip of CSA co-founder Matt Lowe, welcoming guests at the evening dinner.

Matt Lowe: Well, that worked. I’d like to thank all of you for coming to share what is quite a momentous occasion for us. This is, primarily it’s a celebration of the first commercial grain harvest in the Kootenays in a long time. And the breads you’re going to be eating tonight are from those grains, so they’ve just been freshly milled and brought over from Creston. So thank you for coming to share in this.

Unidentified male: Good going, man.

ML: My name is Matt Lowe, I’m with the West Kootenay EcoSociety. Myself and Jon Steinman of *Deconstructing Dinner*, who many of you know, some of you only by his voice but now you’ll see his face, there’s Jon right there. We organized the Kootenay Harvest Revival, and it’s a two part event; you’re experiencing the second part. The first part was at the Capitol Theatre; I don’t think all of you could make it on Friday night but it was a very magical evening. We had a large crowd, about two hundred and fifty people there. Some of the responses we heard afterwards were “it was fascinating,” “it was humorous,” “it was inspirational,” “it was educational.” People really enjoyed it, so it was really gratifying for us, Jon and I, to have put this event on and to get that sort of response.

We're going to have a few presentations tonight to share a bit of information with you guys about this local food movement, and we're going to have some music. So for Jon and I it was really important to weave culture and food together throughout this whole event; and that's what we're going to do here again tonight, because they're inseparable and because each one makes the other one so much more rich.

I'd just like to say thank you so much to Paul and Julia Archibald (**applause**) Paul and Julia approached Jon and I at a food event in the spring, and being fairly new people to Nelson and the new owners of All Seasons, they said they really wanted to get involved in the community, they really wanted to support community initiatives, environmental work...

JS: Now Matt did go on to explain the history of the CSA and how it has evolved, and because our Local Grain Revolution series has been documenting this history, we can skip over that segment and fast-forward to the remainder of Matt's talk, when he shared with guests why the CSA was successful and his comments are important to any community wishing to create or revive a thriving local food system.

ML: So that's, in a nutshell, that's the story of this grain project. I think it can be replicated in many, many places; it's really not complicated, it really is just a matter of people who want something in their community just going ahead and doing it. And that was another lesson for me: is that if you can do things from the grass roots, if you can bypass the politics, the politicians, the corporations and you can do it from the grass roots then I think you can have a great deal of success. I think that's the times we're in; these are what the times are calling for, is for each of us to take back our power and to not wait for whoever else to do it.

Something that's come into my life, there's a Hopi elder prophecy, the natives from southwest America, they issued a prophecy a couple years ago, and I think it really captures what I just said. It captures the local food movement, it captures our times. So this is the first half of that prophecy: "You've been telling people that this is the eleventh hour. Now you must go back and tell the people that this is the hour, and there are things to be considered. Where are you living? What are you doing? What are your relationships? Are you in right relation? Where is your water? Know your garden. It is time to speak your truth. Create your community. Be good to each other. And do not look outside yourself for your leader."

So just in wrapping up I do want to acknowledge some very significant people that many of them who aren't here tonight. This project would never have happened without a whole bunch of people who believed in the same thing; I feel blessed to have been one of many vehicles to be part of this change that was absolutely necessary and critical at this time. So first of all I'd like to acknowledge Roy and Sherry Lawrence, who are third generation farmers in Creston, and who are willing to join with us wackos here in the Nelson area and create a new type of food system. They had been farming conventionally, they have a beautiful farm in Creston, and they're looking forward to

much more of this; they would like to grow all naturally. So thank you. **(applause)** Two of the other farmers that couldn't be here tonight--I won't say farmers, farm families—Drew and Jo Anne **** [32:05] and their kids. They all farm. They all work their butts off. They were here for brunch, lovely people; they are getting more into horse farming, so they're using them in a minor way right now but they intend to use them more and more, including in these grain crops. They've been feeding themselves for years, so they're very self-sufficient. They're just very excited to be involved in this project. Keith and Carol Huscroft are fourth generation farmers. Keith presented at the Capitol theatre the other night; he had some wild stories. He's a bit of a wild man, for sure, but he also farms with horses and machines and he hopes to do more horse farming and he looks forward to doing more of this farming, but on a small scale. They all want to keep it small and sustainable. Brenda Bruns, who I've already mentioned, she's with Wildsight Creston, a fantastic conservation group in the East Kootenays. She's also with the Creston Community Food Action Coalition, and she's just involved in a whole lot of initiatives over there; without Brenda, I don't know that I would have found the farmers in the first place. Donna Carlisle, she's involved in tons of community stuff over in Creston. There really are some amazing people over in Creston, I've come to know. She devotes tons of her time to things like this, and she's jumped right on board and been involved in all of our meetings and making this manifest. There's so many links, so many pieces of this project. David Everest, as soon as he heard that we were going to be bringing whole grains over to Nelson, local whole grains, he dug out his mill that he used to mill his own grains to make his own breads in Queen's Bay. And he's just built a shed in his back yard right in Nelson and he's going to be milling for us, once a week, so we can all have fresh grains. Jenny Truscott is a miller in Creston, so she's doing David's job over in Creston, and she just courageously opened a natural food store in Creston. I say courageously because I think it's a bit of a tougher market over there, but I think times are changing. Gail Southall, she's with the Creston Valley Food Action Coalition. She's a fairly new addition, but she's doing amazing work with us just getting the word out about the grain CSA. Abra Brynne, many of you know of her from Nelson. She calls herself a food shed animator; I call her a tireless advocate and worker for local food. She's truly amazing.

So these are some of the people that I wanted to acknowledge tonight. There definitely are others. Russell Precious, over there in the corner, does so many things for the local food movement; he gets involved in many ways. And Andre Piver, who's here tonight; he organized the Future of Food conference in Nelson which really inspired a lot more local food initiatives last year.

JS: Matt Lowe speaking at the All Seasons Café as part of the Kootenay Harvest Revival in September 2008.

This is *Deconstructing Dinner*.

Also at the event were farmers Roy and Sherry Lawrence, who traveled to Nelson from their home in Creston to be a part of the event. We heard recordings of Roy Lawrence during part II of the Local Grain Revolution series when he introduced members of the

CSA to his farm and to the grains that the members had each invested \$100 in. As many farmers (especially grain farmers) operate with quite a disconnection from the people eating their food, Roy Lawrence was rather intimidated when he saw the caravan of people approaching his farm back in July. Roy was invited to speak at the All Seasons Café, and he shared his thoughts on what the CSA and the interest by eaters to support his farm, means to him.

Roy Lawrence: What's been really nice for me with this, growing for the CSA, is I like the idea, more and more, of shopping local. As you people buy grain locally, it enhances our economy. For example, one of our big problems is transportation, because we have to export. We ship wheat to a flour mill in Grand Forks, and I believe it was \$790 for the transportation. This year it was over \$800, and the person that did it said he would have to charge double to actually make it pay. So that's just an example of how transportation is just out of this world. And so I love the idea of shopping local. The other thing the CSA has done is put a bridge between the consumer and the producer, which for me has been really wonderful. Because in the farming industry I haven't found anybody to this point that really cares about farmers. They want the produce at the cheapest rate, and if you survive that's fine if you don't, well, who cares? But this is wonderful to have people that actually care for me, which makes me care for you guys. I really enjoy the idea of seeing your face and saying "well, you know, some of our produce is going to go to your homes." So that's another thing that I really appreciate about it is like Matt said, when the farm tour started coming over the hill at our place—I'm not a real people person, okay?**(laughter)** So when I started to see one car, two cars, **(laughter)** three cars, fifteen cars—there's a little road out the back of our place, eh, I thought maybe I should take off. **(laughter)** But in the end it was really wonderful to see people that showed interest in what we go through. We've had some challenges and we've had some fun times. It's fun to have a group of people that are together growing, instead of being just an individual out there kinda experimenting on your own. So I'm very thankful for all of you people showing up here, so thank you.**(applause)**

JS: Roy Lawrence speaking in Nelson, BC at the All Seasons Café.

Now a good old fashioned revival of a food system wouldn't be complete without poet and essayist Wendell Berry being somehow a part of the occasion. Wendell Berry has long theorized and philosophized on what farming and our food system should look like in light of an industrial food system that is clearly not working very well at all. More importantly, Berry has long expressed some of the fundamental tenets of how the production of food, the sharing of food and the eating of food is so intertwined with the human spirit.

So much of what this small grain project has now achieved in such a short period of time has confirmed through actions, that much of what Wendell Berry has long proposed is indeed true (not that his words really ever needed much confirmation though).

Also at the All Seasons Café to celebrate the local grain harvest was Russell Precious, who shared the words of Wendell Berry with those in attendance. Russell was the MC

during the evening series of speakers on day one of the Harvest Revival, and his voice wove his way in and out of parts one and two of our recordings from the event. Russell is the co-founder of the Capers' Markets chain in Vancouver and he is on the Board of Directors for the West Kootenay EcoSociety and the Kootenay Country Store Co-operative.

Here's Russell Precious.

Russell Precious: I'd like to start off just by acknowledging all of us, because this is a remarkable community. It is, and I have a vision that some day all ten thousand of us would meet at lakeside in one circle and introduce ourselves. **(laughter)** Because no matter how long you've been here you just keep discovering new people who are here. In fact there are new, amazing people being attracted here all the time. If John McCain wins the election, get ready for a torrent **(laughter)**

Unidentified male: What if Stephen Harper wins? **(laughter)**

RP: Get ready for a torrent! **(laughter)** I have a brother-in-law who's a senior news producer at the BBC in London. And if you're in the news business, the worse things are the happier you are, because it's fun to be in news when things are challenging. And my brother-in-law is having one hell of a time as the years progress, they're having more fun. One can get a bit discouraged about things, and when I get discouraged there's two things I remember. One of them is some lines written by the Persian poet Jalal ad-Din Rumi seven hundred years ago, he said: "The caravan of civilization has been ambushed, fools everywhere are in charge." **(laughter)** So I think, well, at least some things haven't changed. **(laughter)** The scale is different, but there have always been nutty people running the show. And the other thing, in the early nineties Hazel Henderson, the amazing British economist, was giving a speech in Vancouver that Vancity had organized. And at the very end of her speech she said the words "We don't know enough to be pessimistic." We don't know enough to be pessimistic. It's a big show out there, right?

So, I think I said the other night that the industrial food system had taken the "culture" out of agriculture, and the culture at large has taken a big hit. Culture has become synonymous in this culture with entertainment, but culture really has to do with how we inhabit place. Not just how we inhabit place, but our feeling for time. What is the dimension of the time we live in, the present moment? It's shrunk horribly; we don't have much sense of past, we have very little sense of future. So the culture is very collapsed, and there's a strong sense of growing new culture here. Now clearly one of the heroes of cultural revolution is Wendell Berry. Wendell Berry was a farmer, he went off and became an extraordinary literary figure. In 1958, under the auspices of Wallace Stegner, the great American poet at Stanford, he was in a class with--who was there?-- Ken Kesey was there, Edward Abbey and others. If you know of Wendell's work, he's prolific; in 1978 he published The Unsettling of America, where he challenged the existing food system, but from a place of deep culture, not just "we've got to grow organic and not poison ourselves". We were poisoning the culture, not just our bodies.

So I'm going to read two pieces of Wendell's. The first one is just a fragment of a commencement speech he gave in Portland, Maine, twenty years ago. So here's Wendell twenty years ago, quite a visionary. Wendell's often compared to people like William Blake in terms of his, you know, vision. So this is just some fragments from that commencement talk that he gave twenty years ago: "Nobody can do anything to heal a planet. The suggestion that anybody could do so is preposterous. The heroes of abstraction keep galloping in on their white horses to save the planet, and they keep falling off in front of the grandstand. What we need, obviously, is a more intelligent—which is to say a more accurate—description of the problem. The description of a problem as planetary arouses a motivation for which, of necessity, there is no employment. The adjective planetary describes a problem in such a way that it cannot be solved. In fact, though we now have serious problems nearly everywhere on the planet, we have no problem that could accurately be described as planetary. And short of the total annihilation of the human race, there is no planetary solution. The problems, if we describe them accurately, are all private and small. Our economies of community and household are wrong. The answers to the problems of the environment are to be found in economy; the answers to the problems of economy are to be found in culture, and in character. The question that must be addressed, therefore, is not how to care for the planet but how to care for the planet's millions of human and natural neighbourhoods, each of its millions of small pieces and parcels of land, each one of which is in some precious and exciting way different from all the others. Our understandable wish to preserve the planet must somehow be reduced to the scale of our competence, that is all of our most immediate households and neighbourhoods."

"What can accomplish this reduction? I will say again, without overweening hope, but with certainty none the less, that only love can do it. Love is never abstract. It does not adhere to the universe, or the planet, or the nation, or the institution, or the profession, but to the singular sparrows of the street, the lilies of the field. Love is not by its own desire heroic, it is heroic only when compelled to be. It exists by its willingness to be anonymous, humble and unrewarded. The older love becomes, the more clearly it understands its involvement in partiality, imperfection, suffering and in mortality. Even so, it longs for incarnation. It can live no longer by thinking. And so my advice to you is simply my hope for us all: we must achieve the character and acquire the skills to live much poorer than we do. We must achieve the character and acquire the skills to live much poorer than we do. Beware the justice of nature, understand that there can be no successful human economy apart from nature or in defiance of nature, understand that no amount of education can overcome the innate limits of human intelligence and responsibility. We are not smart enough, or conscious enough, or alert enough to work responsibly on a gigantic scale. Make a home. Be loyal to what you have. Put the interests of the community first. Love your neighbours, not the neighbours you pick but the ones you have. **(laughter)** Love the miraculous world that we did not make, that is a gift to us. And so far as you are able, make your lives independent of the industrial economy, which thrives by damage. Find work if you can that does not damage. Enjoy your work, work well."

Unidentified male: Yay, Wendell!

RP: Yay, Wendell, yeah. **(applause)**

JS: Russell Precious speaking in September 2008 at the All Seasons Café. Russell was speaking as part of the Kootenay Harvest Revival – an event held by *Deconstructing Dinner* and the Creston Grain CSA to help celebrate the monumental harvest of grain as part of the innovative local grain project that we've been covering here on the show since its conception.

If you've missed any of today's broadcast or previous episodes of this series, all shows are archived on our web site at deconstructingdinner.ca

Now as mentioned just before that last clip of Russell Precious was how this community supported grain project that we've been covering here on the show has in many ways confirmed the words of poet and essayist Wendell Berry. Russell chose a passage that contained quite a few thoughts that indeed connect with what this grain project has manifested. In particular was this passage that Russell read that reads "Our understandable wish to preserve the planet must somehow be reduced to the scale of our competence, that is all of our most immediate households and neighbourhoods."

Now indeed, the success of the CSA truly has been the result of those within a number of small communities coming together and everyone lending their hands to this project. As for the suggestion of "reducing to the scale of our competence", well the next chapter that we've only just touched on here on the show really emphasizes the truth of those words, that through their wish to preserve the planet on which we live, a number of local sailors came forward and offered to lend their competencies to the project. *Deconstructing Dinner* was on that voyage and you can expect to hear recordings from that trip in the coming weeks. But the same also goes for people like David Everest, whom we heard from on part III of the series. David is the Nelson resident who chose to resurrect his flour mill and put it into use for CSA members in his own backyard. Again, someone who has chosen to "preserve the planet by reducing himself to the scale of his competence." Sure enough David will now be providing a service to the immediate households and neighbourhoods surrounding his home just as Wendell Berry suggests.

Two of the other sentences that Russell read that also I know really stand out for me was this first one, "We must achieve the character and acquire the skills to live much poorer than we do." Certainly a challenging thought to how we as North Americans live and try to live every day.

And the other that stands out, "Understand there can be no successful human economy apart from nature or in defiance of nature." Such a simple and true statement yet clearly one that has not been adequately understood nor adopted by the most impactful people on the planet.

Some links to explore the works of Wendell Berry including some of the words shared by Russell will be linked to from the *Deconstructing Dinner* web site.

Our main page for the Local Grain Revolution series has recently been updated with many clippings of the local and national media coverage that this grain project is receiving, and so be sure to check out that page, which will continue to be updated as the project evolves, and I'm certainly excited to begin posting an album of photographs from the wind-powered transportation of the grain that will be the feature of our next episode of this Local Grain Revolution series.

“Close to Home”

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.

The theme music for Deconstructing Dinner is courtesy of Nelson-area resident Adam 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 web site at deconstructingdinner.ca or by dialling 250-352-9600.