I would like every chef/educator in the country to put to task where the food comes from… Where did it come from? How was it grown? How was it shipped? How was it stored?

Julian Bond, Executive Chef and Program Director
Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts[1]

Mike Evans (ME): Can you describe the organization where you work and your role there?

Julian Bond (JB): Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts (PICA - www.picachef.com**)** is one of Canada's most highly accredited private culinary institutes. We have been providing Culinary Arts and Baking and Pastry Arts Diploma granting programs since 1997. 90% of our curriculum is hands-on in the kitchen with one of the lowest student to teacher ratios in Canada (15:1 for Culinary and 12:1 for Baking and Pastry).

I have been Executive Chef & Vice President for the past eight years; my role is to stay current, respect the past and to teach the future. PICA employs fourteen internationally trained full-time instructors and an accredited Wine & Spirit Education Trust Foundation (WSET) instructor. Students are also able to hone their learned skill-sets in a unique, award winning industry-relevant on-site student-run Bistro 101 (bistro101.com) and Bakery 101 (picachef.com/bakeshop). As educators and hopefully professional mentors we endeavour to provide the needed industry

[1] Interviewed by Mike Evans, Sept 2014 in Vancouver BC. Please note, this interview has been edited for length and continuity, and should not be taken as a verbatim transcription.

tools with the end hope that we can impart the importance of supporting our local farmers, fishers, producers and suppliers.

We are always trying to implement and enrich our programs. For example, our school has implemented a comprehensive recycling and composting program that has dramatically reduced our impact to our local landfills.

We are very proud to actively participate and assist a number of local associations and initiatives such as Vancouver Aquarium's Ocean Wise Conservation Program (www.oceanwise.ca/about), the Chefs' Table Society of British Columbia (CTS) (chefstablesociety.com) and the Green Table Network (greentable.net/home/about). Also, as one of the founding Directors and later two-term President of the Chefs' Table Society of B.C., I helped form a B.C. Steering Committee for the 2010 Canadian Chefs' Congress (canadianchefscongress.com), a unique gathering on a Vancouver Island farm that brought together over 800 cooks, farmers, fishers and suppliers to discuss, debate and celebrate the preservation our ocean's bounty.

As a culinary institute, we are proud to have the opportunity to give back locally to our community and beyond and very much value what our graduates are able to accomplish in our industry. It is very rewarding.

ME: Since you did your own training as a chef what kinds of changes have emerged in terms of either education or the subject areas considered important for chefs to be aware of?

JB: When I was trained as a chef, we focused purely on a skill-set to make us a better cook. We did not care where the food came from and we did not concern ourselves with agricultural land impacts, we just wanted it done as fresh as we could and to the standard required of us.

The 'light bulb' moment for me was twenty years ago when I was purchasing farmed salmon. The fish purveyor presented a colour chart with ten different shades of pink, and asked me if I had a preference for the colour of my salmon's flesh.

ME: How do you see chefs and their practices in terms of relationships beyond the kitchen and front of house (i.e. the restaurant/cafe)?

JB: We hope the information and methods of sustainably running a culinary institute are passed on to our student body who will carry this knowledge through to their own industry endeavours whether front of house or back, locally and internationally. This includes the wine industry too.

Culinary schools all over the world have an opportunity to 'break the cycle'. What better place to start and educate then at the beginning of someone's career?

ME: Do issues regarding alternative, local, and/or sustainable food systems feature as an aspect of your course? If so, how?

JB: Yes, through the organizations and associations we are a part of and choose to support. We are a highly recognized, accredited private institute, where more than a promise is delivered! Our commitment to our faculty, students, customers, suppliers and surrounding communities sets the standard for integrity and excellence.

PICA definitely strives to be on-point regarding local/sustainable foods systems in our teaching facility. We feel this mandate truly supports our locally founded culinary institute and encourages our graduates to be proactive and not reactive when it comes to our lands and oceans. I hope through our classes and local activities our students learn that the food system is impacted by our decisions and as purveyors in the system they can actively invest in alternative and sustainable methods that they then can pass along to the general public in whatever career direction they choose.

The next function at the school will be a spin off from the slow-food movement. The fact that we hold events such as these at the school forces the students to get involved.

ME: How do these issues inform your role as a chef/educator? How do you teach young aspiring chefs to operationalize the values that are expressed in the various organizations and initiatives that you're involved in?

JB: Nothing infuriates me more than bullshit. I am tired of chefs and the marketing strategies of the food industry skewing the facts so that we are all under-informed or mislead.

I would like every chef/educator in the country to put to task where the food comes from that we are teaching about: Where did it come from? How was it grown? How was it shipped? How was it stored? And the more important question, how much do they actually grow each year? We should be encouraging our students to promote and educate themselves in sustainable endeavours.

ME: It sounds like there are two sorts of clear commitments: here's a series of green, sustainable, food chain related sorts of initiatives which we're interested in, and then here's some things that are really specific to the industry that are about supporting people in the industry. And they overlap a little bit, is that a fair enough assessment?

JB: Yes, that's fair enough, and I think they overlap because, let's say one of those initiatives would be the Growing Chefs! program for elementary schools[2]. You know we aren't talking about fish or anything else but just introducing a zucchini and an eggplant to an elementary student. So projects like Growing Chefs! where you make it fun and have someone who would never touch an eggplant normally in their life, something as simple as an eggplant, and make them enjoy it and see how wonderful it tastes, and presenting it to them in a format where they can eat it – wow, we can change so many things. Not by influencing them but just opening them up to suggestions. My kids have never eaten off the kids menu ever.

I did this experiment in one school, where I asked all the students, who does not like veal brains, and half the class puts their hand up. And then I say who's never eaten veal brains, and half the class, the same people put their hands up. So we taught them to open their minds, and they do, and then halfway through the curriculum we

[2] "Growing Chefs! Chefs for Children's Urban Agriculture" mission is to teach children, families, and the community about healthy food and healthy food systems. It has been a registered non-profit society since September 15, 2005 (see growingchefsbc.wordpress.com/2012/11/01/from-farms-to-forks-thank-you-poem-2012/).

actually feed them veal brains. They don't know this, so we have them come into class and there's this beautiful crostini prepared with veal brains on it, it's crispy, and shallots et cetera. And we feed them and we don't tell them what it is, and they get so excited and they say thank you may I have another because you know the chef just cooked them a lovely little treat and they think great! Then we bring out the whole veal for the shock value and then we talk about head-to-tail dining and how important it is to eat the whole animal and we have to, you know, it's not about the premium cuts. It's about the entire animal, if we're going to raise pigs and sheep and chicken properly, we have to eat it all. Because it's very expensive to do it that way and you can't just take the primary cuts. So that's why those are there, baby steps, baby footprints, that's why I just snuck 'em in there, but they need more context for sure.

ME: So it's all part of a single picture. That's why I'm asking about, for lack of a better term, green initiatives.

JB: I break the rules when it comes to teaching by taking sides. Some people think we should give 'em the facts and let students decide what they wish...The problem is that some of these changes we seriously have to make. So it's by the school following these practices, that these practices will stay in the students' heads and they will use them for life. Because that's what they were taught to use, they've seen it, they've touched it, and they just get stuck in that. You know, my knife is the same knife I used when I went through culinary school; when I went back to England the first thing I wanted to look out for was the same knife. I'm biased to influence in a certain direction according to my own personal beliefs, but I think that this is for the better of the planet. The first step when I took over the school here was to implement some of those changes—we call them green energy changes. For example, we had no idea how much our water consumption was; as a school with eight kitchens with the average of four sinks in each kitchen, it was terrifying that we had no aerators on them that reduce the amount of water flow. My first step was to say, my goodness, this is the first place we can start. So we put filters on that aerate the water and, and reduce the flows. We changed all the light bulbs to natural lights, but not just the light bulbs, we put diffusers on them to change the flow of electricity. We started composting. We went

from this large, huge, huge garbage can where that everything went into. I asked the garbage company "can you tell me what happens to it" and they said "we sort it, we break it out the cardboard, the recyclables" so I asked "can I see that?" "No. It's a protected site, you're not allowed to look." So I tried to get somebody to help me go inside and it was impossible. So I fired them and we broke the garbage down, ourselves. We've now gone to a very, very small bin, we now break out the plastics from the cardboard and from the compost. By doing this, it's ingrained into the student from day one that when they open a can of tomatoes they will recycle that can, it's in their head. I share with them my costs of operating the school, and the fact that we're going from this large container of garbage which costs almost six to seven hundred dollars a month to a smaller one that's now only two hundred dollars a month. That's the cost savings just by rethinking how you're using food from beginning, from the front door as it comes in, to the very end of its life when it's served to the customer or within used within a lab for teaching.

By putting those philosophies, whatever they concern—waste, the product that comes in, the fish that comes in, the meat that comes in and how we operate—I share that information with the student, and hopefully my beliefs are passed on.

ME: Beyond cooking how do you see the role of chefs in the contemporary food system?

JB: As chefs we can and proudly are becoming the so called 'gate keepers'! Chefs are more powerful than we truly understand, and I am not talking about ego. We establish trends, what is hot or not. For example, Chilean seabass—over fishing and pirate fishing was endangering the toothfish industry so we removed it from our menus in Vancouver. This wasn't easy to do, but we actively educated our local chefs as to the negative implications. Which dramatically changed and ultimately stopped the purchasing of this endangered and poorly fished variety. Another example would be the BC spot prawn.

ME: Okay, so it occurred to me that people are really struggling with business models for incorporating some of the additional economic costs for taking these sorts of initiatives. Garbage is a great example is where when you actually break it down you may find that it is

in fact a cost savings. Other initiatives, especially local food chain related initiatives might cost you a little bit more, whether the additional costs are actually embedded all the way through the supply chain, which is a slightly different model, or looking to the consumer to pay a little bit more for a product which is sustainable or organic, or whatever actual set of values you want to attach to it. So, I'm really interested in how you think farm to kitchen relationships or farm to chef relationships are best configured in terms of producing a successful restaurant that will make for a successful chef both in a physical sense and in a reputational sense.

JB: You know last night's "Slow Fish Mystery Chefs" event[3] is a great example. We came up with a price point for last night, and one of the hardest decisions was coming up with a price point, because we wanted last night to be successful, we didn't want to out-price ourselves so that the general public wouldn't come. I mean, we know next year we'll sell out in a second now because people understand what the event was about, and then we can put more awareness into the event for people about the value, the cost of a fish. Actually it's, you know, when you went out to eat the beef tenderloin it was one of the most expensive things on the menu, but now it should be fish. The cost of fish is up there more expensive than beef tenderloin. It's a great example, the cost proportion is up there and that's the way it should be. So, by then passing it on to the industry in the commercial sense where we're buying fish and we're processing the fish, it also forces care...you know that abuse of power when you have a piece of fish and you have young cook and they're just butchering it and slapping it and they're making all these beautiful perfect portions, and the amount of waste that comes by, it's not respecting the fish. More importantly they're lazy and they don't realize it. By making that fish extremely expensive, you're now cutting that fish with a lot more care. With sources for fish it comes back to how we're trying to convince the young cook, the young chef, the industry, even the old boys who are stuck in their ways and still eating Chilean seabass, trying to get them to understand that that fish

[3] This was an event held at PICA and sponsored by the Chefs' Table Society of British Columbia (CTS). CTS is a chef-administered, province-wide collaborative dedicated to creating a foundation for the exchange of information between culinary professionals. It supports innovative and sustainable programs that inspire, educate and nurture our chefs, our producers and our local food industry, all the while promoting standards of excellence, with the aim of enhancing the reputation of regional cuisine across our country.

has a value, that fish has a cost, and if we abuse it, and use it like garbage fish, we're just wasting our oceans. So that's why the cost is passed onto us.

We have the ability to utilize that fish as much as possible, so for example when, when filleting a salmon, one of the biggest tricks in the world is to actually scrape the bones, and if you have ten salmon that you're filleting and you scrape the bones of ten salmon you can make ten salmon burgers just from the bone meat. We call that free money, we try to educate them that it's a lunch item that's on your menu that's now free that you can charge ten, twelve, fourteen dollars. So by educating the industry and the culinary industry on full utilization of a product that we're going to run out of eventually, that's why those initiatives passed to us. And then those chefs are going to pass it on too, the chef industry is a trade industry, so we're constantly teaching, we're constantly passing down craft, and that message changes, you know, as the world changes, and our needs change, and that's why it's so brilliant to have initiatives where we can trace back our fish and they get to know a little bit of history of the fisherman that did it.

I do a Granville Island tour and we stop by a gentleman who owns a small fish store and he owns three commercial boats, and the one question I ask the general public is do they know how much it costs to operate those three commercial boats before he's even caught a fish? They get blown away - we're talking millions of dollars before one fish is even brought onto the boat. He has to pay the crew and the oil and he has to pay for the boat, and the quota issues are a separate matter, but it just blows people away and I try to enforce how much fish costs and why it costs so much. So it has to start with the people who use the most fish and, whether it's chain restaurants, corporate restaurants, schools, whatever it is, we use so much food, we drive that food. It goes back to that comment where I talk about being gatekeepers, we set the trends.

For example, we're doing that now with the chum fish, nobody wants chum, it's the dog fish, it's the pits. We're spoiled for choice because we live on the West Coast. We have five fantastic species, let's take away four of those species and then the only salmon we have here is chum, then chum is all of a sudden one of the most expensive fish, one of the most expensive salmon in the world. We would treat it completely

different. People say oh you have to smoke it and barbeque it 'cause it's terrible, it's good for canning. But let's take away all other species because we've killed them all, and we only have chum, it'll be exotic, it'll be unique, it'll be an extravagant purchase. It's all about mindset and the industry is the way to change that. That's why they pass on those costs to us, as purchasers, and we will hopefully pass them on but also be more aware of how valuable that fish is and utilize it as much as possible.

ME: That's a sort of a macro answer to the question: how you educate the public about the value of fish, how you educate the chefs too. I'd like to ask you a question about how, when one of these chefs goes out and starts their own small restaurant and they start to organize their suppliers, how do they tap into different local supply chains, regional supply chains, green supply chains, sustainable supply chains and then convince their customers to go with them?

JB: It's a hard question to answer. I want to use the restaurant across the way that just opened as a great example. He went on to buy a menu—he is of the old school where he has got a vision of where he wants the menu to be, a vision of the menu he wants to build, and he's gonna build that menu no matter where his product comes from in the world, to make this food the way he wants it to be. Totally the wrong way of thinking, rather than thinking what we have available to us here. And, probably because he doesn't know these suppliers, he doesn't know these resources, but he came into it with the ambition of opening a fish store on the west coast. We sent Ocean Wise to visit and he wasn't interested. He wasn't interested in the organization, he wasn't interested in the information. He will be chastised by the city chefs so fast. We will try to gently persuade him he won't be in business very long. Hopefully he asks for help.

We formed the Chefs' Table Society six months ago for that very, very specific reason. To try and help people, to give them education, give them resources. For example, where's a local chicken producer? We just got one that's opened up in Delta that's doing a French chicken and it's a beautiful bird, but the French would never allow the bird to come out of France, because that makes it French specific. But they've managed to get some of the chicks over here, they've managed to breed those chicks, it's really because they're transporting it less. So as the Chefs' Table Society we pass on that

information, but the chef has to be able to want to do that, chefs are romantic, you know, they'll build a menu first and then try and figure out where everything comes from. Last but not least they call up CISCO and GFS which are nothing more than distribution companies, and they sell everything.

We're, yeah, we're romantic people and the problem is you have old school chefs and you have new school chefs.

ME: What's the difference between an old school chef and a new school chef?

JB: An old school chef will have *foie gra*s on his menu from France with Egyptian couscous and flowers that he wants 24/7 and if he can't find it then the problem is that "you guys can't grow it properly so figure how to grow it 365 times a year for me", and "I don't wanna pay a fortune for it." Then "oh my gosh, I gotta get strawberries for this in November!" You know what I mean?

ME: Yes, a sense of place but a sense of other place.

JB: Absolutely, absolutely. Whereas as a new school we appreciate that local strawberries do have a short season and we shouldn't be forcing them to grow eight months, and produce food eight months a year.

ME: As I'm sure you know there's some very nice ciders coming onto the market now, but then there's some more established ones, which they smooth out with grain alcohol because they're too lazy to actually brew it properly. Last night we went for a quick drink in the hotel bar, and I ordered a cider. What they had on the menu were those established ciders. This is a five-star hotel, and there are fine local BC ciders, but not there.

JB: And they make them in pony kegs so you can have them on draft and absolutely everything.

ME: I talked to the waiter briefly, under the withering gaze of my wife I might add. We had a long conversation about it afterwards and she was arguing it was a price point issue and I was

arguing it was a supply chain issue. I suspect the corporate suppliers are interested in long-term, large scale contracts that are dependable even if they are not necessarily cost effective.

JB: Those are huge contracts. There's a new winery open, it's called Vancouver Urban Winery, and they're just getting off the ground and they're heavily investing into the pony kegs. Pony kegs, you know, for the draft element, and they will go to a winery or a cider house… So all these wineries you never get to visit because they don't produce enough for the liquor store because the liquor store you have to have x amount of cases to be part of distribution. Vancouver Urban Winery will come and deliver the pony kegs to you, bring them up, bring them back to Vancouver, and distribute them to the city. So that's the next venture. They make a little bit wine here, and their plan is to go out and capture that stuff, you know, go out to Vancouver Island, get some fantastic ciders, put them in these pony kegs. And it's small pony kegs because people are worried about, you know, not going through the product. And they're starting up and that will hopefully fix a lot of problems.

ME: Right. Do you think the big hotels will buy in?

JB: If you go back in the history of Vancouver, over where the Olympic village is, it used to be the brewing district. It's going back to the brewing district. By end of next year there will be almost eight brewers there, local brewers, which is fantastic. Right in the middle of it is a building and they have fifty-four drafts – fifty-four, that's insane! And probably a good portion of those would be ciders, not the majority of them say, but they probably would have say six draft local ciders, good scrumpy or whatever it is. Peer pressure is on the hotels, the hotels are changing.

Have you met Chef Ned Bell? Ned cycled across Canada, we came up with an idea for an actual seafood day in March, it was amazing. Anyway we came up with the national seafood day to raise more seafood awareness. Whether it takes off or not, I don't know. But Ned wanted to get behind the national seafood day and the Four Seasons Hotel actually got behind it and supported them. They supported their chef to leave his kitchen for over two months, bringing sous chefs from other properties to run the restaurant so Ned can go across Canada and talk about national seafood day,

you know, it's a lot of money, but the fact that Four Seasons Hotel, a corporation, got behind that and allowed their chef to leave shows just how much the hotels are changing. One young cook can influence that hotel enough to sponsor him, to keep him full salary, not fire him – when he come back to his job it's still there and they have their name over the van and pay for the van. It's amazing and we were more shocked than anything else. Ned, he's insane because the hotel, all they need is for another chef to come in there and have great food costs, and not have a guest complain. I mean the food might not be better but it's about perception of guest value, perception of guests having a fantastic experience, so if nobody's complaining and the food cost is better, Ned's job is in jeopardy because it's all about half a percentage, a quarter percentage sometimes in these hotel chains and that's what it boils down to a lot of times. But they did it, they supported him, and that shows a lot of change.

So hotels, will they ever change? Will they ever come around? Will they ever get on board? They go through phases. So to answer your question yes, but they will go like this: a great example would be pastries. In-house pastries. This is how hotels think. They will hire a pastry chef, they will hire a pastry team, and they will make in-house pastries, and they'll be fantastic and the best desserts on the planet. They do their buffets, their conferences, their meetings, all made in-house. Then they'll do the number crunching of labour and cost of ingredients and it's cheaper to outsource. So they will outsource. They'll fire all the pastry team, they'll close down the pastry kitchen, they'll have maybe two pastry chefs now, and they will buy all the pastries and just have two pastry chefs to cut it, plate it, decorate it, and away they go. And they'll do the number crunching and they'll realize the product is not as good, and the product is not as original, and they get some failing. So another five years from then, they will come in and hire a brand new pastry team, they will spend a ton of money building a brand new pastry shop, bring brand new ovens in there, and they're now going back to in-house pastry. That's what hotels think, you know, it's the latest the greatest and the coolest until the numbers don't make sense. Then they'll cut back and then they'll do the latest and greatest until the numbers make sense, and that's the cycle. It's a vicious cycle.

I mean the problem with food is that it's so vast. This industry is just, the amount of products we use, the amount of resources we use, I mean, yes, production facilities use a lot more, no question. But that's, you know, why I joined teaching and, and that's why I came to culinary school, and we do four intakes a year with fifty-four students and that's all we take. Once we have that fifty-four of students that, because we're a private school, unlike the community school, we can pick and choose our students, because we're only taking fifty-four and we're only taking students that are passionate to be here, students who want to go out in the industry, and students who want to do well. I just feel so empowered. It's such a huge responsibility that we have, to get that information out there but without bullshitting the world. Do you know what I mean? Because there's a lot of misinformation, there's a lot of bad information out there, a lot of information that's skewed. There's so many marketing boards, you know the beef marketing board, this fish marketing board, whatever they are, and all they care about is getting their product out there and they'll twist it and they'll turn it.

I have this most gorgeous jacket and I love it—this waterproof jacket I was given by a farmed salmon company. I don't know if you know them, they're the devil in disguise. They came to the school and they presented me a salmon as a gift and this lovely jacket. So this salmon was in a cardboard box, no Styrofoam—we have a big problem with Styrofoam here and we're trying to educate people. I will not accept Styrofoam into the school. The fish have to be delivered in a blue tote, we will take the fish out of it, put it in a bus pan, and you can take the blue tote back. I've started that with everybody else and it's brilliant, I don't know if they take it out of the Styrofoam and put it in a blue tote out in the van and then bring it to me, but that's one of my things I'm trying to stop.

So this fish that came was beautiful, ice was only packed on the inside, not on the outside in this cardboard box, and they were talking about how it's raised, and it's a farm fish, and how they only keep x amount of fish per square footage of water. They gave me all this spiel right, and I was sold. I cut open this fish and it was magic! It was a beautiful fish and it was gorgeous and it was sexy, and they did that with basically half the city. They dropped off this fish. So I'm intrigued, I'm like who's this company?

So we found out who the parent company was and it's this huge fish farm company where yes, they're doing one net of these beautiful, beautiful salmon and then ninety percent of it is still, I mean, I would never buy farm fish in a million years unless it's done properly. It's ninety percent regular farm bullshit that they're doing, no different feed, no different packaging, you find it all over the world, and yet they're selling this fish. It didn't take off in Vancouver, but if you go to like Las Vegas it's salmon from Canada and they think it's the world's bee's knees. They think it's the best thing on the planet but they don't realize that whole operation, how it works, how it operates, and what they do there.

ME: So they have ten percent of their operation in sound practices, ninety percent are non-sound practices, but they're selling a hundred percent of that fish to the market.

JB: Exactly, it's pure marketing. No, let's not use them, let's use Lois Lake, land locked Steelhead, brilliant. They're still raising regular farmed Atlantic, but to make money so they can do their Steelhead. I asked them why and they said well, until we can actually make sure we can sell this product we still have to make money. I accepted that because to change it is baby steps, it's little bit at a time and the fact is that they're making that commitment. You do want to do the other and hopefully a little bit changes. You know, we tell people about organic food, but next time you go to the store, just buy one. Even if just one element of your vegetables is organic, or local, but that's a different topic all by itself, organic local.

We don't expect people to fill their cars but, yeah. Baby steps, you know, buy organic celery, become strong! Or visit the farmers' markets, or we tell people to leave the city and go out to Langley. As a group now our next goal is to try and protect the agriculture land preserve. It's not fertile land, we understand that. Could you ever grow on it? Probably not. But let's at least try. It's protected so why unprotect it and start developing on it, maybe it will become fertile, who knows. I mean we don't have a strong case for this one but we're just trying to say that if something is protected on a land reserve and you want to take it away, when you start that philosophy then it just progresses into something else and we lose more and more farmland for development and everything else. So just by even protecting one piece of land that's

non fertile, we can't grow there anyway, but it's more about the principle and educating people about what happens if you start taking more and more farmland to develop high rises. You know it's not an ego thing, but we always get invited to the news in the morning, you see it right, the chef is always cooking, and the chef is always doing this because it's great TV, so you stick a subtle message in there or use a right ingredient in there. It's so powerful because people are interested, they're watching, they're enticed and they're like, "oh I didn't know that."

ME: If you told me twenty years ago that I would be watching the cooking channel when I was watching TV I would have called you a liar.

JB: Oh and the Food Network, it just drives you crazy half the stuff they use and you know, everything's extra virgin olive oil and I'm like if you really truly knew the true story of Italian olive oil! It doesn't even exist, it's all Spanish olives now 'cause the Italians have no frickin' olive farms left. It just, it blows my mind.

ME: Can we talk about the BC spot prawn?

JB: People had no idea what a spot prawn was. We would go to a restaurant and I would say, okay what do you think of those beautiful tiger prawns? Does everybody like them? And we talked about wild tiger prawns as much as farm tiger prawns, and you know when it comes to tiger prawns sometimes, farming's not a bad word. We will have a bad vision of farm from wrong communication that's out there, but the correct farming procedures are fantastic. So we, you know, talk about tilapia prawn and how they survived together. We talk about the wild prawn and how prawns are actually trawled because they live x amount deep and you have to trawl the bottom of the ocean. And it was educational, yet here in Vancouver for six weeks of the year our own beautiful spot prawn, this unique creature, we capture it and it all leaves the country.

So, the Chefs' Table Society, as a group we came together and we raised sixty thousand dollars. I was President then. We went to one of the known spot prawn fisherman, and we said, "here's sixty thousand dollars, we're not going to give it to

you but we'll put it in a secure box—it was with a lawyer. It's yours. You can have it whole, if you sell your prawns here. And you don't export a single one. We will hold a festival to promote it, we will get media involved. We will bring people down to the wharf—you can only sell the prawns from you." It was amazing, he sold out. We still gave him that because it supplemented his income. Then, how many of the other spot prawn boats go hey, what the hell is going on? He all of a sudden became a celebrity, a fisherman a celebrity. The news crews are going out there and now we don't promote the spot prawn festival because it sells itself. People are asking, when's the spot prawn season, when can I go buy it from a day boat. It's brilliant we've gone back to a day boat. People think fish is fresh, no, fish is frozen. You know, there's no such thing as fresh tuna, it's all frozen and people don't understand that. It should say all fish is frozen. I mean, that's another story by itself. But the fact that we have the day boat industry booting back up again in Vancouver where the boats are coming back in with live prawns. I need to get people excited about that and people willing to pay twenty dollars for ten prawns rather than, you know, they can get their tiger prawn—but then they taste it. The most exciting thing in the world was giving someone a live prawn and telling them to eat it. Tearing off the head, kill the prawn, peeling it, and trying it for the very first time and how safe it is to eat and how beautiful it is to eat. Then explaining why it's safe to eat and, I'd say your apple is probably more infected than this prawn, right? More dangerous to eat than the prawn, that's another story. It was just so exciting for us. It's taken care of itself. And that's how it started and the public's now aware. We started off with getting a festival. Free food, we gave them for free in the first year.

We thought the spot prawn was fine, and we've done it for six years protecting the spot prawn. And we thought ok, let's move onto Dungeness crab because we really need to keep that as our next topic. The price is going up, you can't find a crab over two pounds, it's all exported. But this year something really unique happened. We managed to keep the spot prawn here on the west coast, and across Canada, we're shipping across Canada as the Canadian prawn as we don't have to import the tiger prawns. Buy local. It's caught sustainably with traps and we're teaching people how to drop traps instead of trawling. This year was really interesting though, the

international buyers were willing to pay double the price of what the fishermen were selling for here because we kept it here, it wasn't over there, so they had to source out other products because we won't export. We still exported a little bit, but we weren't exporting the volume of spot prawn from before, and they were missing the product, and people were requesting the product over there. This year we can't compete. As a fisherman I'm getting fourteen dollars a pound locally, twenty dollars a pound in Japan. How do we fix that?