Jordan Raum: My name is Jordan Raum and thank you all for coming to this sustainability conference at CSU Chico. Incredibly inspired and excited to see so many people come together under the banner of sustainability. So today's keynote speaker took what was planned as a three-month trip to Europe and came back many years later with a passion for food issues as well as a Belgian wife and three Belgian American sons. He is the founder and director of Kitchen Gardeners International, a Maine based nonprofit organization that is taking a hands-on approach and re-localizing the food supply in 120 countries. He first became involved in food issues as head of the Friends of Europe office in Brussels in the 1990s. He was part of the American NGO delegation to the last UN world Food Summit. Holds a Master's in International Relations from the Fletcher's School of Law and Diplomacy. And in 2007 he was chosen as food and community fellow. His work and ideas have been featured in Chicago Tribune, International Herald Tribune, New York Times, and the Washington Post. His successful proposal and petition campaign to replant a kitchen garden in the White House got 100,000 signatures, international media coverage, and was voted the grand prize winner of the On Day One Contest sponsored by the United Nations Foundation’s. His work on the White House Campaign also earned him the Heart of Green Award, the Garden Crusader award, recognition as one of the country's top five green game changers by the Huffington Post, and one of the 10 most inspiring people in sustainable food by Fastcompany magazine. So ladies and hang on okay stop gentlemen it's my great honor and privilege to introduce Roger Doiron.

Roger Doiron: Thank you very much Jordan. And thank you all for coming to this conference. I want to thank all the organizers especially the student leadership that went into making this event happen. I think that's just awesome. And I want to thank you for not only your participation but also your attention because I remember being
at a conference a number of years ago and somebody giving the speech at 3 o'clock in the afternoon saying the 3 PM slot is where otherwise good presentations go to die. So I thank you for staying as alert as possible but I won't blame you if your eyelids get a little bit heavy.

So we're going to be talking about Eat the View and edible landscapes. I like to start with this slide here. This theater and it just happens to work out that there's this continuation of the red curtains there. And I like to start with this because there's actually been a lot of drama associated with food gardening over the past 5 to 10 years. And just some fascinating stories, some of them are comedies, some of them are tragedies, there are heroes, and there villains and they're set in all kinds of different places from Alaska to Zimbabwe. And I'm going to tell you some of those stories this afternoon.
But before I do I want to sort of set the stage a little bit to help you understand the setting that I call home. I've made quite a journey to join you here today. I come from the East Coast from a little town called Scarborough, Maine which is located roughly about five hours away from both Montréal and New York City.
And that little dot there, that's my house. I live in a suburban area where families have their own homes and they have access to yards. I would say the average yard size in my neighborhood is something like a third of an acre or so. And my family and I...
we have a big garden in our backyard, a kitchen garden. We think of this as our production garden. It's about 1500 ft.² and we're able to produce roughly half of the vegetables that we consume for the year in that backyard space.
We also have a front yard garden. This is sort of our PR garden. And so this is often how my neighbors will see me when they passed by. They will see me out you know harvesting potatoes like I am here. So they think of me as a home gardener but they also know that I'm a garden advocate. I work for an organization as Jordan mentioned called Kitchen Gardeners International. So we are a network of about 35,000 people from 120 countries who grow some of our own food and help others to do the same. So this is how my neighbors see me as a gardener and as a gardening advocate.
But this is how I like to see myself. As sort of a garden evangelist you might say. Preaching the good news about gardens to those who will listen to me. But I'm not that good of an evangelist. I think to be a good evangelist you need to have sort of divine inspiration and I'm not sure if I'm that divine. I actually think of myself in fact as being more of a garden propagandist. Because a propagandist uses creative persuasion techniques to get people to sort of come around to their view. And I'm actually fascinated by propaganda.
You've all seen some version of this propaganda campaign. This is actually the original version of this, it's from 1939, produced in the UK right before World War II. And it was all about just getting the British people to stay calm because this big crisis was looming, World War II. And I like to study these types of things to see how they pertain to modern-day life and how they sort of get tweaked a little bit to become perhaps a little bit more relevant.
This might be that the 2016 version of that and there really are some things that we do need to be concerned about. So there different reasons that we probably could get up in arms about things.
For example climate change is coming we know that.
Isis seems to be coming. We're worried about the zika virus now. But personally one of my biggest concerns about the future is...
the arrival of this guy here. And I first included this slide in a presentation I gave a few months ago in Italy and it was just a punchline at that time. And I'm sorry to say that it's not nearly as funny as it used to be just because it's become much more real. And just to give you a sense of how real this particular threat is I looked up on the economist, you know the economist magazine...
on their website the other day and you can't read the fine print here. But they have a forecasting service where they sort of point out to businesses and to diplomats and world powers some of the biggest threats facing the international community. And there you have a Donald Trump presidency tied for fourth with the threat of jihadi terrorism. So this is no joke folks.
So as a result of these types of threats, you know people are saying well where can we find some calm and comfort in our lives? Obviously a cold beer never hurts.
But other people are looking to the skies for help as well.
And indeed there are some very, very serious issues that we're grappling with right now. And as somebody from the food world one of the biggest issues that concerns me is the growing population on this planet which is actually sort of ticking right there. That's the counter from this morning. The global population right now is about 7.4 billion people and it's on its way to 10 billion people by the year 2050 and headed towards over 11 billion people by the end of the century. Now this is a great concern of course, we're talking about an increase in the population of over 50% during the next 85 years or so. And what is daunting about that statistic is that although the population is going to be increasing by over 50%.
We are not going to be increasing...
our natural resource base by 50% during that period of time. And so I think it's of the utmost importance that we understand...
that and that we find better ways of living within the limits of this planet that we call home. In one of the ways that I think can be helpful to think about the limits of our planet and the limits need to said, the limits are actually quite generous if we figure out how to do it correctly. But one sort of fun way to do it is to think of the limits in terms of agricultural production and to do so by not thinking of it as planet Earth...
But planet Apple. And so if we are to think of planet Earth as an Apple...
We would need to basically take three quarters out of the equation because they’re covered with water. So I’m talking about agricultural production here right now.
So if we do that we're down to a quarter of our Apple that's edible, or could be made edible, right? But they are too.
We can't look at that full quarter. We need to take about half of that out of the equation because it's unsuitable for farming. We're talking about areas that are covered by mountains, or icecaps, deserts things like that.
So we're down to an eighth now. And with that eighth however we're not talking about agricultural lands on their own there.
Part of it consists of agricultural lands, croplands you might call them. But the vast majority of that eighth consists of developed lands, lands like the ones that we’re on right now, lands that are covered by buildings, by roads, and very poor soils. So if for arguments sake we sort of take those developed lands...
out of the equation as well we're now down to 1/32 of the planet which is available for agricultural production. But as we all know all of those who, those of us who were watching Deborah's great film during the lunch break it's really not this full segment in terms of the volume that we're talking about. If we go back to our Apple analogy...
what we really have available is just that thin, thin skin on the surface of the Apple which is the fertile topsoil which is what we can use to feed that growing population.
And of course if we add a little bit of global warming to the mix and extreme weather...
it doesn't exactly leave us feeling inspired about the future, does it? So obviously we need to take a different approach...
to that one eighth. I think the approach that we've been taking since World War II...
has been really this one here of sort dividing up what I call croplands and poplands. The croplands you understand of course. The poplands are where the populations grow, where the people are. And what we've seen in particular over the course of the past let's say 60 years or so has been an increasing distancing of...
those two things. The croplands and the poplands have become further and further apart. Where the average distance that food travels now from field to fork or plot to plate is about 1500 miles.
And in just a very concrete sense that would be like for people like me in Maine having all of our food coming from a place like Texas. Clearly that's not healthy for people, that's not healthy for the planet, the food doesn't taste that good that way either.
So we need to take a new approach. And I think the approach that we need to take is this one here. One of edible landscapes trying to bring crops and people back together, getting them connected once again. So with my talk I think I've probably depressed you as much as I hope to do at this point.
And I'm now going to try to lift your spirits again. By taking on...
a bit of a whirlwind tour, it's a journey through both space and time. And because time is of the essence we're going to need to actually take a carrot rocket which is just by the way the fastest rocket of all. And we are going start our tour in Cuba. Cuba has been in the news quite a bit recently because of Pres. Obama's trip there. For those of you don't know the sort background about Cuba.
Modern Cuban history is really a history of walls. Perhaps the most important wall that went up was one that we put up in the 1960s. It was the trade embargo. We were concerned, rightfully concerned about the Soviet Union's influence in our own backyard and we put a trade embargo in place to on the one hand sort of punish Cuba for siding with the Soviet Union. But also to sort of limit the Soviet Union's ability to project influence in our backyard. And what it ended up doing of course was it sent Cuba sort of even farther into the embrace of the Soviet Union economically because Cuba then became pretty much entirely dependent on the Soviet Union for its trade. Including trade of food. You could sort of picture the trade consisting of things like tropical fruits, and rum, sugar, tobacco being traded with Soviet bloc countries for other types of things, staples things that they couldn't produce on their own. Now of course that system was all well...
until another wall came down which was the Berlin Wall of course at the end of the 1980s. And the fall of the Berlin Wall signaled not only the end of the Soviet empire but it also signaled the collapse of the Cuban economy. Because now Cuba was cut off from trade because of the US embargo but it was also cut off from its former trading partners which no longer were really able to trade with Cuba. So Cuba went into a critical period...
in its history. And the Cuban government referred to this period in its history as the special period. What it was in fact was the hungry period. Cuba actually started to starve. The average caloric intake of the average Cuban decreased by 1/4 to 1/3 during this period.
It was at that point that Fidel Castro and I have no particular admiration for him for other things that he did including his human rights record. Up until that point his favorite agricultural product was the one that he's smoking there. But then he started becoming involved and interested in other ones...
just because he realized he needed to take some sort of bold measure in order to make sure that he could feed his country. So what he do was he embarked upon...
perhaps the most ambitious urban agricultural program the world has ever seen. Where he planted just acres and acres of organic gardens in all the cities including Havana, called organoponicos. And those organoponicos are thriving now and as a result of those investments...
Havana is getting quite close to being independent or self-reliant in terms of its food production, at least fruits and vegetables. And there are very, very few cities, no cities that really have managed to achieve what Havana has achieved in that sense. And one of the reasons that they've been able to do that is because they...
really got the incentives right in terms of encouraging people to grow food. And I think that's something that we need to think about too, to make sure that you know we are paying a fair wage to the people, the essential people in the food system out there the farmers, the farmworkers. So you know there is a reason why this farmer here is smiling because he is being paid you know a fair wage. One of the things that's interesting now of course about Cuban history is that we're seeing the crumbling of that wall that went up in the 1960s with the normalization now of relations with Cuba. Cuba is actually well-placed to sort of benefit economically because it's actually going to be seen as a model for people that are interested in studying urban agriculture. And I was happy to give them a little...
bit of my tourism dollars a couple of years ago just to see what they're doing up close. And it truly is quite impressive and inspiring. So we're going to hop back...
in our rocket now and we're going to go across the Atlantic...
to Northern England...
to a sort of sleepy little town...
in the north of England...
called Todmorden. Now Todmorden's heyday you might say would've been in the 19th century at the time of the Industrial Revolution. Todmorden was a very prosperous place.
It had just booming textile mills. Jobs were available to all and the people of Todmorden were quite proud of their city and all the different things that they were producing. But like so many mill towns Todmorden went into decline when the textile industry started to move to Asia. And so the town started actually to sort of die a little bit. Jobs were lost, the town sort of lost its mojo, and people started turning to crime, and to addiction and things like that. And perhaps most importantly the town really lost its sense of identity. Its identity as a place where things were made and produced. And so...
there were a couple of women who said you know we need to work on this, we need to come up with something that's going to breathe some new life into our town. And so you're looking at Mary Clear and Pam Warhurst. And what they said is what we could do or what we should do is we should try to get our town producing something again, something that we can feel good about. And they said you know in terms of essential things what's more essential than food? So they embarked upon a bit of an adventure which they called the Incredible Edible.
And these two women are just amazing. Their motto sort of is "It's easier to ask for forgiveness than permission". And so they just went about planting public gardens wherever they could and it just started with a few spaces here and there.
And then they moved on to the schools and the schools were happy to get involved as well. And then once the schools got involved of course...
not long thereafter the police department got involved because they had a little bit of space in front of their headquarters. And of course as soon as the police department got involved...
the fire department had to get involved too, right. They didn't want to get shown up. And that's where things got a little bit out of hand.
Because they started running out of public spaces that they could plant. This is not a huge metropolis. And so someone said well the soil in the graveyard looks pretty fertile maybe we could plant their too. It turns out some of the things coming out of there are doing better than some of the other public gardens. So before long Todmorden had over 40 public gardens planted.
So many in fact that they needed a map to be able to sort of keep track of them all. And Todmorden started to become this destination. They had not only managed to put the gardens on the map but they had sort of put Todmorden back on the map as a place that was like thoroughly modern, and thoroughly worth a visit, worth you know perhaps living in. And it just became this destination that started to attract a whole range of people from the most noble and...
well field people to the lowliest of garden...
serfs you might say. But it's, once again it's a well worth the trip to see just you know what a group of committed people can do.
So let’s continue our travels now. We’re going to head back...
across the Atlantic. So keep in mind...
that sort of vision or that image of...
Prince Charles with that prize-winning squash or zucchini. Now we of course don't have...
royalty and we don't have castles. So this is probably the closest thing that we have to that, the White House. And I had this opportunity back in 2008, I've just received a two-year fellowship that gave me quite a bit of flexibility about what I did with my time. A great gig if you can get it and so I thought that it would be interesting, this is 2008, we're in the midst of a presidential campaign. I thought it would be interesting to see if there was some way to get the presidential candidates talking about food, and gardening, and sustainability. So I launched this campaign called Eat the View.
And the idea was to try to build popular support for replanting a kitchen garden at the White House. So we did a number of different things in the course of this campaign. But I'm going to show you one of the things that we did to sort of launch our campaign. It's a short video that I produced and I posted to YouTube in, would've been July of 2008. Where I sort of make my case for replanting a garden at the White House.

[This Land is Your Land Song and Video no narration] 23:09-26:00

Hang on for part two here.
At the peak of the Victory Garden movement, American families grew 40 percent of the nation's fruits and vegetables, helping to conserve food, fuel and money at a time of crisis.
The difference between the two is that I can't dig this one...

[Continuation of song and video]
The White House is our house and the "First Lawn" is our lawn.

[Continuation of song and video]
[Continuation of song and video]
[Continuation of song and video]
[Continuation of song and video]
[Continuation of song and video]
[Continuation of song and video]
A little video shot over the course of just a couple of hours with a very cheap digital camera. Went about as viral as I think a gardening video can aspire to go which isn't super viral. But it got a lot of attention online, it got some media coverage as well, and it sent a lot of people to eattheinterview.org where there was a petition that people could sign. And we're able to collect near several thousand signatures quite quickly just through our own website. And then we discovered that there was this other website, there was this other little website that we might want to look into where there's a lot happening at the time. You might've heard of it it's called Facebook.com. So we put our petition up there and I think it took us about six months to attract our first 10,000 signatures through our website. When we put it up on Facebook we got our next 10,000 signatures in about six days. The power of social media.
And so our campaign really took off at that point. We are attracting a lot of national media attention and that national media attention would drive more people to our petition. And so that, we just had this sort of counter where we are you know going from 10,000 signatures up to 20,000, 30,000 and that would then make it into an even bigger news story to the point where we started to attract international media coverage as well.

Just a little bit of an anecdote, so I found myself in January of 2009 having attracted to a ton of media attention for campaign and the idea of replanting a garden at the White House. And you know president Obama had been sworn in at that point and I had one of those moments that you occasionally have in life where you say okay what next. Because I wasn't like you know roaming in the court or as a power and Washington, DC didn't have any particular connections. And so I was at sort of a crossroads with the campaign at that point where I said to myself you know I have generated a ton of energy and attention about this but at the same time I'm not sure if the people in charge actually got the message. And I was just trying to figure out some way to make sure that was the case and you know lacking a better idea I said you know what I'm going to do I'm going to pick up my phone and I'm going to call the White House switchboard. And I asked to be put through to Michelle Obama’s director of policy at the time and I think it’s because the administration was so young and so new they didn't necessarily have walls in place to keep people like me out. So they just put me directly through to this woman named Jocelyn Fry who is a little bit surprised that I wasn't somehow stopped at the gate. But I said you know I just want to introduce myself and let you know that this is really a very very popular idea, it's really coming from the American people. And I want to make sure that the First Lady
is aware of just you know how much good energy is behind it and she said you know don't worry we know very well that there's a lot of popular support for this idea and we'll be back in touch.

So I ended up having a couple of conversations with a couple of members of Michelle Obama's team. And what they were I think really interested in knowing from me was you know what I was hearing from the ground and whether there any sort of pitfalls, political pitfalls, or landmines that they might face. Because we're talking about basically messing with what might be arguably the most well-known landscape in the world. And so they just wanted to sort of think it through a little bit before they moved forward I think. But move forward they did.
And First Lady Michelle Obama deserves all the credit for that because she was the one who had the courage to get out there and start messing with that symbol of the United States which is the South lawn. And here she is doing just that with a group of fifth-graders. This is March 2009 when they started to plant the garden.
I had the good fortune to visit the garden a couple of years back. Had a bit of a private tour with the then Assistant Chef who was actually responsible for the garden project who showed me around a little bit. I did want to share a little bit more information about the White House garden. I’m not on the White House staff or payroll whatsoever but I think it’s just really important for people to know just how awesome this garden is. It truly is a family garden in the sense that the Obama family is eating from it on a very regular basis. I can tell you not exactly off the record, but on the record that Pres. Obama likes broccoli but he’s not a big fan of beets.
But what's cool about it is that it's not just a family garden, it's also a school garden. Because every time something important needs to be done in the garden, the First Lady brings children into the garden to help with the planting and with harvesting which I think sends a very very important message. And the First Lady has also used the garden as a platform to talk about other important issues. You see the kids there wearing their Let's Move T-shirts. She started this program, Let’s Move, to get children more physically active which is of course a great great thing.
It's also a best in class I think culinary garden. Where the best techniques in the world are being used in terms of succession planting and season extension to make sure that it's really an ongoing harvest. The kitchen staff that you see there in that photo, that's from a picture that was taken the day of a state dinner for the British Prime Minister. So I promise you the Prime Minister ate some very fresh kale that day.
What I didn't know up until recently is that the White House has a staff of over 1000 people. And I learned that they really do feel a sense of community around this garden. It's not sort of their garden in the sense that they don't own a plot or maintain a plot for themselves and their family. But there really is a sense of sort of community ownership of the White House garden. And if I had one criticism to level of the White House garden is that it's a tiny bit to perfect. You have to imagine that a garden that's being tended by 1000 gardeners, you know a weed does not stand a chance in this garden. But anyway that's what it is and they are actually using organic methods in the garden.
But I think what makes me the happiest and proudest is that it's also a social justice garden. Hundreds of pounds of produce from the White House garden are being donated every year to local soup kitchens. And finally I think it's sort of cool...
that the White House garden has become one of the top spots for visiting VIPs and heads of state who want to sort of check it out. And I think if that's the case it's because they're finding a tiny bit of peace and tranquility there that they are perhaps sorely lacking in their lives.
So we've gone from seeing the, what is arguably...
the most famous backyard garden in the world.
And now I'd like to introduce you to what I think might be the most famous front yard garden in the world. But before I do that I want to introduce you to the gardeners...
who have become friends of mine. You're looking at Josee Landry and Michel Beauchamp, Josee is here and Michel here. And this is an older photo of them. They received some very, very sobering news a few years back from their doctors. They were told that they were on sort of a crash course in terms of their health and that they needed to really take a different path in order to take their health back in their own hands. They were overweight, they were running the risk of getting diabetes, and they took this very, very seriously. And they said to themselves well one of the things that we could do to live a healthier lifestyle is to become more active and to try to eat better. And it was just like a no-brainer for them that they would try to plant a garden.
The problem was that their backyard is very, very shady and so really their only option for planting a kitchen garden was in their front yard. And because they had a very big problem they felt like they needed...
to have a very big solution as well. So they proceeded to you know remove all of their grass and put in place...
a plan of design for just an absolutely spectacular and gorgeous raised bed garden.
Which they started to plant and little by little it...
grew...
and grew. And it was when it was at its peak of beauty and productivity...
that it was declared against the law. Yes we're talking the 21st century here. With all of those challenges that I set out at the beginning of my talk. Well all it takes whether it's in the United States or Canada or certain parts of the world is to have one neighbor who's upset. And there was one of their neighbors who said your front lawn does not correspond to what I think a front lawn should look like in our neighborhood. And they looked into the code and the code said that they couldn't plant their whole front yard with edibles and as a result they were being threatened with legal proceedings if they didn’t remove their vegetable garden.
So Josee and Michel got in touch with me. And they knew that we had run the White House garden campaign. They said is there any way that you can help us with some sort of campaign or petition or something like that. And it just so happens that my wife is a native French speaker and I get by a little bit in French as well and I said yeah we're going to help you. And better than that we're going to do it in English and French so we put together a bilingual petition. We posted it on Facebook and other places. And what we did a little differently with this one was, I'm a little bit of a geek or nerd in the sense that I found a way to basically send people after they sign the petition to another page where they had the opportunity to send an email directly to the town counselors. The town counselors just got absolutely inundated with emails and they were emails that you know didn't make them necessarily feel good about the wrap that their town was having, sort of the branding.
And at the same time the town was getting a lot of negative media attention to the point where people were saying you know "Welcome to Drummondville the town that hates vegetable gardens". You know as a town you don't want to have that branding you know, being anti-vegetable gardening and anti-health. It needs be said that Michel and Josee are just these amazing people, good goodhearted people, but also excellent communicators. And Michelle happens to be an amazing photographer so they took some great great pictures that traveled literally around the world. And that's actually what this headline says here it says, "Ce potager urbain a fait le tour du monde", which means this is the garden that traveled around the world because it received so much international media attention. And so with all this media attention, with the emails that were being sent to the town counselors, the town Council felt very much under pressure to deal with this issue.
So they set up like a special session to consider Michel and Josee’s garden again. Here's Michel sort of making his case for the garden and I'm very happy to say that...
not only has the garden been saved but it's an even better story than that because Josee and Michel were asked by the Town Council to form a new committee to rewrite the laws in the town on not just about front yard vegetable gardens but other ways that Drummondville can be more sustainable and be truly a leader. So I think that's a really nice turn or twist to their story. And as for you know how...
things look before and after I'll let you be the judge you know which version of Michel and Josee's front yard do you like better? And which version of...
Michel and Josee you like better as well? But this story is the story that sort of keeps on, the gift that keeps on giving because it doesn't really end there. Josee and Michel attracted so much attention in Québec that other people started to say you know we need to continue their campaign because there are other places that could be turned into edible landscapes into inspiring landscapes. Other front lawns that we might consider, I'd like to show you what the front lawn of the parliament building in Québec looks like now.
Isn't that amazing? So think about the thousands and thousands of people who visit Québec city every year and walk by this and see what food looks like when it's growing. And one thing that's really cool you can't see it because of you know the detail here, but one of these little signs here has a sign that says, "La norriture a partager", which means food to share. And it's the exact same logo that we saw a few minutes ago back in Northern England, Todmorden where it said food to share. So it's just about how good ideas spread. So what they did was they set up some of those beds as being publicly harvestable beds for anybody who'd like to have that good food. So just a great great inspiring story.
Now I chose to focus on four stories in particular. But I really could've picked thousands of stories because there are amazing stories that are happening all across the planet from...
the story of a garden project in Kenya where women farmers who spend most of their time and their energy growing tobacco and coffee and tea for Western markets are learning how to grow food for their own families.
To a prison garden in Rhode Island where inmates are growing sort of a sense of dignity and maybe some skills that they can use when they leave prison.
To a truck farm you could call it, a veritable movable feast. A garden planted in the back of a truck that is then driven into food deserts and urban areas in the United States to inspire young kids and let people see what good food looks like when it's growing.
To a project in Pakistan where refugees who have displaced by war are given seeds and are given access to some garden space so that they can grow a better future for themselves.
To a project in your own backyard here. A community garden just in nearby Paradise. All of these are projects that my organization has had the good fortune to...
support in some way over the past four years. We've had a grants program that's been active during that period of time that's allowed us to reach a lot of people and to grow a lot of healthy food for those people. And we're very excited about sort of the next iteration...
of that program. It's called the Seed Money Program, seed money.org. And we are offering what are called crowd grants to schools, and to homeless shelters, to food banks, community gardens so that they can either start up their own garden project or sustain an existing one. It's been a bit of an experiment for us. We just had our first pilot of this program in November and December.
But we are able to help over 500 garden projects, raised close to $155,000 in just 30 days. We're really excited about the results of this and we're going to be offering another round of grants later in 2016. And I'd encourage you if you're connected to some sort of a food garden project that could use a little bit of cash, we would be happy to work with you.
I'm thinking about, in all these various garden projects and I think the thing that sort of connects them, the thread that connects them is that they all involved some struggle of some sort. And as hard as it is we need to be engaged in that struggle. We need to be, we need to join the fight. The struggle is different depending on which garden project you're talking about. For some it's a struggle you know against their own past. For others it's a struggle against their own community which feels like, with the case of Josee and Michel that they have a different vision of what a front yard should be. And for others it's a struggle for funds, or access to land, or access to water in places like California and the West. But I think we can only meet the challenges, these enormous daunting challenges that I set out at the beginning of my talk. If we join that fight, if we choose to be part of the group that's going to make that happen. And so to put my propagandist...
hat back on. This is perhaps the most famous piece of American propaganda ever. Produced at the time of World War I. I'm not going to try to invite you or encourage you to join the U.S. Army. But to the extent that you're interested in some of things I've talked about today I'd be very happy...
if you join the edible landscaping army. Now recruiters apparently back in the day and probably now too, used to try to entice people to join the army by talking up all of the good things they would get as a result of joining. Unfortunately I can say with some personal experience that the pay is not great but we have some other great benefits. For example we have...
the best food of any army in the world.
The latest in edible weaponry.
And probably some of the coolest uniforms that you will ever see. Although it is not one-size-fits-all I must say.
So my parting words to you is that yes we are up against very, very big challenges but if we can all somehow find a way to keep calm and garden on we're going to be up to those challenges. And we're going to manage to create a life and lifestyle that's good for us good, for our neighbors, our families, but also good for the planet. But I've also learned in life that is never a bad thing to have...
a backup plan, a plan B. And so if everything does start to fall apart well...
we can always just grab a beer and call Batman.
Thank you very much.

[Audience Applause]

Thank you. So we're set up to take some questions if anybody has a question or a comment.

**Jordan Raum:** If you would like to ask a question I'm going to go ahead and set this up right in the middle so that we can just streamline it. You can walk on up and just go ahead and ask one at a time.

**Audience Member:** Can you think of one, or two, or three gardening books that you really love and use a lot and think are very valuable?

**Roger Doiron:** I'm very much a book learner myself. So a couple that are worth looking into there's The Vegetable Gardener's Bible, it's not a religious book whatsoever. But it's very visual, but the text are really well thought out as well. I wouldn't be a good Mainer if I didn't point out the books of Eliot Coleman and Barbara Damrosch. They're sort of the, what is it called, the Bradgelina of the food gardening world in that they're are two extremely skilled and excellent garden communicators. I'm not going to sort of rattle off their various titles but they've written probably three or four books between them over the years. So those are books that were really quite important for me. Another book which isn't necessarily a how-to book about gardening but it was a book that really sort of influenced me at a critical time was a book by Helen and Scott Nearing called The Good Life. Helen and
Scott Nearing are considered to be sort of the parents or the grandparents of the back to the land movement. And it just happened that I discovered their book The Good Life when I was living in Brussels on the fifth floor of an apartment building and feeling very disconnected from the land myself. And it's really sort of what one of the things that put me on a different track where I ended up ultimately leaving Europe and going back to my home state in Maine and wanting to get out into a garden.

**Audience Member:** How do you suggest gardening if you live in an apartment or just an area where a lot of people live in apartments?

**Roger Doiron:** Okay so yeah gardening in urban areas is definitely more challenging. But we are seeing some very creative responses to that. And to sort of add-on what I was saying just a minute ago about living in Brussels for 10 years. Even though I didn't really have access to the land at that point in my life I was coming up with some creative hacks you might say where I was planting things in window boxes. I was working for Friends of the Earth at the time and had found a way of actually getting up onto the roof of our building and planting some things there until the word got out that you know I was up there and there was no protective barrier. So that got closed down a little bit. So those are definitely things you can consider if you have like a balcony, if you have a sunny window sill. But I think the better solution is if there is a community garden in your area and there are more and more of them. That's just a great solution because then you have actually enough land to do something pretty interesting with. And beyond that it's not just about planting stuff with a community garden, you do have like a ready-made community of people that you can be in touch with. And I visited many community gardens over the years in the United States and
in Europe and there's just this really cool vibe at a community garden because people feel connected to each other. And if you happen not to be a book learner and you are puzzled by why your plants aren't thriving or something like that, you know you can just shout out to the person right next to you and say you know what's your secret, what was going on there? So that's why, you know one of the reasons that community gardens are so neat. But you know with that said I do know that are there aren't nearly enough community gardens to go around. I know at least in the case of Portland, Maine that there are some long waiting list for people who want to get access to community garden spaces. So you know talk about some really good work that needs to be done maybe for some of you graduating seniors who are thinking about what you're gonna do with yourselves. You know we need to have more energy and investment going into starting up more community gardens. That's something that I'm 100% convinced of, but a very good question.

**Audience Member:** So has there been any promises made that the President's garden will stay there and if not is there a contingency plan on contacting the next one?

**Roger Doiron:** That's a good question. And I have to say I was thinking about trying to be proactive in getting some sort of an extension of the Eat the View campaign, Eat the View Two, I don't know what the sequel would be. Because I thought it was important to make sure that we keep the discussion going. But I really don't know. I think the chances are very very good if we have a Democrat in the office that the garden would be continued. I think the chances are probably slim if we have a Republican and that's not some sort of a highly charged political statement I'm
making there. It just is sort of my take on the situation. But I’d love for one of the candidates to kinda come right out and say you know this is an amazing thing that America and Americans can feel proud of. By all means we're going to keep it going.

**Audience Member:** Hi. So I have a question related to helping those that are struggling with a garden because of their neighbors. Do you provide resources online or like? Because I have a garden, well my mom has a garden in an apartment but my neighbor had an issue with it because it's kind of going towards her windows. So do you have like any resources for people that have issues like that?

**Roger Doiron:** A little bit. I am in touch with some other people who have been in the situation who, for whom it was such an important part of their life during that period where there was this conflict that they feel very strongly about this issue and do want to help other people. So I can certainly put your family member in touch with those people. And there is also some sort of a legal group that is interested in representing people in this situation. But it is, you know its sticky stuff because in some cases you know in the case of Josee and Michel's garden it was an easy campaign for us to join and to fight for just because it is such a beautiful garden. And we have had some other gardens brought to our attention which aren’t nearly as aesthetic. And I think that unfortunately it is a harder case to win because some people will say well they are just not weeding it properly and if they would just come by with their mower it would look a lot better and that type of thing. So they can be difficult cases to fight and to win. But I’d be happy to be in touch with you by email or phone if you want to some follow-up about that.
Hello.

**Audience Member:** Hello.

**Roger Doiron:** Are you tempted to sing?

**Audience Member:** My husband and I are Californians, true and true. We're moving to northern Wisconsin. Where do we start and what do we do? I know that Maine is just straight across so, what are we going to do?

**Roger Doiron:** You're going to enjoy all the water. Well I mean Wisconsin is probably much more similar to Maine's climate than any place else you can be from, well certainly more than California. So I think there's a lot that you can do. You know we have things growing already in our basement. I started my seeds, and my onions, and leek seeds, and things like that in our basement at the end of January into early February. So it's definitely more challenging in a cold climate but I think the rewards are even sweeter because you've seen things grow literally you know. For me when I plant my basil seeds you know maybe in a few weeks I'm only going to eat the pesto probably sometime in November. But there these months of sort of anticipation that go with that. So it is definitely a different lifestyle. Here in California I was just marveling while I was walking this morning just looking up and saying I swore that was an orange up there. So it's you know a paradigm shift for you to go from a place where things just sort of grow on their own provided that the water is there to a place where you have to sort of coax them out of the ground a little bit. But I think you'll find that there are all kinds of things that you can grow as far as you know
where to start. I think one of the best things you can do is to either find a really good book that sort of speaks to you and is a good tool for you or find a really good neighbor who knows how to do this, who is doing this, and is generous with their gardening know-how.

**Audience Member:** Thank you.

**Roger Doiron:** Sure.

**Audience Member:** Hello there. Maybe a comment in regard to an earlier question. We tried having chickens in a downtown small lot and we wanted to have two chickens but we got three or four and then there's always eggs to share. And if you're thinking about that one neighbor that is going to complain, the whole concept of your slideshow was share you know what you make. And neighbors who were getting eggs don't tend to complain about chickens.

**Roger Doiron:** So it's sort of like a hush omelet or something

**Audience Member:** Yeah and don't get roosters.

**Roger Doiron:** Don't get roosters okay. Words to live by folks. Anybody else?

**Audience Member:** When did you start gardening and what was your first garden like?
Roger Doiron: Well I grew up in a family that had a backyard garden but I wasn’t this precocious young boy or teen who knew that his path was going to be going through the backyard garden whatsoever. But I certainly had some exposure to gardening at a young age. I’d work for a couple of summers as probably a 12-year-old and as a 13-year-old at a neighborhood farm picking beans and peas. So I no doubt had something sort of registered in the back of my mind about that. But I do think that the turning point came when I moved to Europe and was really, I was spending weekends out at my then girlfriend’s house who had become my wife. And she grew up in a family of farmers basically. Both of her parents were actually born on the farm, no doctors were present. And for them it was just something that people did, they ended up doing pretty well for themselves professionally and economically. And here in the United States at least we sort of continue to have this notion that gardening is for peasants, and it’s for immigrants, and people who can’t afford to buy their own food and things like that. Where is over in Europe I just, I found it very refreshing that they had a very different attitude. Which was instead of saying you know why should you go to the trouble of gardening they would say you know if you could have the freshest and the most delicious food available to you and you basically have like your own grocery division right out your backyard why wouldn’t you do that? And so that certainly registered with me and I learned a lot from my Belgian in-laws. And as a result when I did eventually return to the United States after living abroad for 10 years I was itching to get into the garden at that point.

Audience Member: This isn't a question it's just a plug for a local community garden. It's called From the Ground Up, so it's quarter acre in Chico. And if you look up from the ground up on Facebook you can find. And so if anyone is looking to work in a
community garden in town that's a good one. And there is a lot of families that are working on it. There's no private plot it's just everyone works and learns.

Roger Doiron: Great thanks for announcing that. Okay well thanks very much. I'm going to be hanging out if anybody wants to chat with me after. And I'll turn it over to some of the organizers.