



RIDICULOUS

January-February 1991

NEWSLETTER OF THE KINGSTONE CENTRE
THE ROYAL AGRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

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NEWSLETTER.....	Bill Fodder Truck
NATIONAL COUNCIL REP.....	Leo
ALTERNATE.....	Aries
AGRONOMY DAY COORDINATORS.....	Gemini

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the **Kingstone Centre**, RASC are held on the Second **Friday** of each month at **8 p.m.**, in Room 101, **MacIntosh-Spy Hall, Queen's University**. Non-members are welcome. Executive meetings are one-half hour before regular meetings.

January 11	<u>MEMBERS' NIGHT</u> -- Please bring your slides, slips, potted plants, etc for this meeting.
February 8	Musca Domesticus -- The Venus Fly-Trap
March 8	I.M.A. Plant -- Juniper & Sunflowers
April 12	Podzol Brown -- Observing Horizons

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Where Will the Sun Rise?

by B. Fodder Truck

The idea for this article was born in an incident that happened many years ago. I happened to be in the Society's greenhouse in Toronto one day back in the sixties when Merry Fiddler, our executive secretary at the time, took a phone call. The caller, she told me later, had wanted to know where the sun would rise. Unfortunately, the call took her completely off guard and she was unable to help. After extensive research, I wrote an article for the Bary Centre newsletter, **Scoop**, in which I revealed that the sun always rises in the east; never in the west.

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NPK
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us a

It's not too soon
to start dropping
Rhododendrons on
your family.

There are still
a few implements
left from our
"clear the dregs"
sale!

call if you
want information on all
the latest
fertilizers.

Farmer John & his wife invite you to...
visit our Greenhouse!! There's mulch to see!

Store Hours

Wed-Fri 1pm - 2pm

Sat² 7am - 11pm

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Scumburg, Ont. OGS BOG

¹Write for correct answer price list.

²Closed Saturdays on weekends.

Agro-Jumble

Unscramble the letters (see clue), then use the circled letters (and the bonus letters) to solve the puzzle. Good luck!

CLUE: Parts of a flower or plant.
(Hints at right).

M T E S

--	--	--	--

Something done to a tide.

B T R E U

--	--	--	--	--

One for the money, the show.

N A T S E M

--	--	--	--	--	--

What the 1st man had (see humour).

A T P L E

--	--	--	--	--

A bike has these (well, sort of).

Bonus letters: H, G

WHAT AN AGRONOMER HAS ...

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Answers: Elsewhere this issue -- look only when you are done!!

Membership Certificate

The October 12 meeting saw the presentation of a membership certificate to Leo. Leo is an active and longtime member of the centre whose tenure was recently verified by the awards committee through the technique of carbon dating. Congratulations Leo!

Lunar Phases

Key: LQ = Last Qtr.
New = New Moon
FQ = 1st Qtr.
Full = Full Moon

For the Deep Sky
Observer:

January	February
-----	-----
&* LQ	%& LQ
17 New!!	15 New!!
#" FQ	!\$ FQ
!& Full	@% Full

For the Lunar
Observer:

January	February
-----	-----
8 LQ!!	7 LQ!!
@! New	\$* New
24 FQ!!	23 FQ!!
31 Full!!	

Important Notice

Are you receiving your copy of Ridiculous? Well, I suppose if you are reading this you have. But for the rest of you, are you receiving your copy? How about your address -- do we have it correct? If you answered NO to either of these questions please contact the Editor. You may write your editor at his address or phone him at his phone number.

October 12 Meeting

The October meeting saw John Greenay visit the centre from Greenland to speak on **Agronomy in Eastern Europe** and a **Solar Eclipse in Finland**. The latter had some fascinating effects on plants situated in the path of totality, but John left us in the dark about this (some sort of cover-up he said). Unfortunately, John chose to have the observing reports done first, and as these were not concluded until **2 a.m.**, he was forced to postpone his talk until next year. So, for those of you who were unable to attend, here is the report for the October meeting:

Due to extremely bad weather, Leo was able to observe on only 16 days since the previous month's meeting. The sun was observed on 16 days with 2496 sun spot numbers calculated and appropriately averaged together. The sun, Leo said, had been only moderately active in the previous few weeks. 318 **auroral observations** were recorded, including one coronal display. During a break in the clouds one night, Leo observed half of the **NGC catalogue** just to keep his proficiency up while he waited for truly clear skies. The **planets** were well observed with all of the Jovian satellite phenomena listed in the Observer's Handbook being observed.

Due to the inclement weather, no one else in the Kingstone Centre had been able to do any observing. The meeting was adjourned at 2:01 a.m.

Stonehenge Update

While astronomers continue to make much fuss (and money) over the original purpose of Stonehenge, it is intuitively obvious to the casual observer that is, quite simply, the remains of what must once have been a very impressive rock garden. Built between 3500 BC and 1500 BC, Stonehenge is probably the best known Stone Age megalith. Unfortunately, there is no record of how long it was used, what varieties of flora were planted there, or what the state of the soil chemistry was at that time. These questions are the focus of current **paleo-agronomical** research efforts.

Several proposals for the re-planting of Stonehenge should be forthcoming at next year's IAU (International Agronomical Union) Symposium in London.

Electronic New Notes

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More Electronic News Notes (ASCII Version)

Interest in Agronomy continues to grow (!) on local computer bulletin boards. The Vine-Net group has recently added, due to popular demand, an Agronomy Echo. The Echo echo provides a forum for computer users to compost mulch information about their observations, ask questions about plants, equipment, and greenhouse design, and to chat about items of agronomical interest. Participation is from at least three continents. Also available are updates from NASA (the **National Agronomics and Soil Administration**). These services are available to anyone with a computer and a modem for a small yearly green fee.

[I just can't say enough good things about this bulletin board system (BBS). Once again I personally urge you to use this BBS as much as possible. -Ed.]

Newsletter Info

The mailing address for the Centre (and Ridiculous) is:

Royal Agronomical Society of Canada
Kingstone Centre
P.O. Box 1234
Kingstone, Ontario. T42 24T

This newsletter does not necessarily voice the opinion of this Centre. The editor is responsible for everything stated herein.

Letter to the Editor

Recently, Ridiculous brought the Vine-Net BBS to my attention and, as an avid agronomer, I began using it fairly frequently. However, it turns out that through this activity my computer was infected with a new virus, dubbed "Blight 386". The first time I became aware that something was wrong was when large dark blotches started appearing all over my computer. Soon it had stopped working and my mouse was dead.

But this was only the beginning. Within 8 hours every plant in my house (including my prize-winning geraniums) was exhibiting the same symptoms, and 6 hours after that they were all dead. NASA officials conducted an investigation and concluded that it was a new 33-MHz strain of Blight-386 (thus accounting for the rapidity of the destruction) contracted from the Vine-Net BBS.

In writing this letter, I wish to warn your readers against any further use of Vine-Net BBS; also I wish to notify you, Mr. Editor, that I will sue you (and Vine-Net) for every penny you've got -- and all of your plants too. My lawyer will be in touch.

Sincerely,

Annihilated in Amherstview.

Newsletter Info: Addendum

Through an unfortunate typographical error the last sentence of **newsletter info** has had its meaning twisted. The last sentence should read:

"The editor is NOT responsible for everything stated herein."

This addendum is retroactive to the beginning of time.

THANK YOU

A hearty THANK YOU to everyone who helped out with the mall displays and public observing for **Agronomy Day/Week**. Both the town mall and centre displays were well put-together. The **Toupee-Standard** in Kingstone and **CBBQ Radio** in Bellsfell both gave these events good publicity.

HUMOUR

One man spend three hours hitting another man in the head with a bunch of flowers while a third man looked on. After the pistol-whipping was complete, the spectator rushed up to the first man and asked:

"My, how were you able to keep up that vigorous activity for so long?"

"Easy", replied the first man, "I had the stamena for it!"

=====

Ramblings From the Editor

Installment XXXVIII:

...so after that Gus asked me what I was doing entering the mushroom eating contest and I said: "Just trying to have some fun Gus!"

Anyway, November and December are not the greatest months of the year for gardening. It is a pity because the days, while not balmy, are still not that cold. But because of the unpredictable and fickle weather it is not often sunny. Even worse is the tendency for frost to set in just as night starts to fall. It is a rare December night indeed when the soil is frost-free all night.

Which reminds me of a joke. You see, this frost business reminds me of freeze dried stuff which brings coffee to mind which makes me remember this joke: A guy walks into a restaurant and gets a cup of coffee. Upon tasting it, the customer spits it out and tells the waiter that the coffee tastes like mud. To this, the waiter replies that it was fresh ground that morning.

How quickly now falls the night. The sun sets and the stars appear. Still highly overheard is my neighbour's old Vega, but gone is the teapot off the picnic table in the south garden. In fact, you can hear my neighbour's Vega on any night, if you wait long enough. Because my Hercules keystones would soon be heaving, and I had a new Black & Decker to christen, I turned my heat gun towards them. The 1.2 foot real field was wide enough to heat an entire patio stone, and inspired hope for a good night, because of the nearness of the frost line. with a quick stop at my neighbour's perennials, to get an idea of how powerful my heat gun was, I turned it up full. Quite by accident I set his entire fall planting on fire, and because I was a bit turned around for a minute, I couldn't figure out what all the flaming objects were. I though I was on the wrong side of Islam for the veil. Soon after, following the scorched earth around in a big disjointed arc, I knew exactly where I was -- in my neighbour's back yard.

The more I looked around at my patio stones, the more pleased I was with my new purchase. As far as the placement of the stones went, the proof of the putting was truly in the heating! The combination of true field and raw heating power made this garden implement a joule to behold. At 200 bucks this expense could seem like an extravagance, but the implements are 50% of any greenhouse or garden. It does not make sense to scrimp here. I often wonder how many budding agronomers are put off by the lousy results they get from their 6" roto-rooter sold along with 13 other useless implements along with their first garden kit. If the manufacturers only included one good T-scoop instead...

I digress. I worked along just above the frost line, through the winter wheat and perennials, looking to complete the area fairly devoid of vegetation. I stopped on a stone, a sporadic actually from the Paleozoic, and paused -- not a whole lot of fossils on this rock. As usual I hoped to chance upon a small trilobite that is not on any of the fossil charts. I did not find any. I can dream though. It took thousands of hours for our Honorary Prezident to find his first fossil, and my searching still numbers in the low hundreds. After a time, I found a fern fossilized on another rock. Quite near was a preserved snail track. These objects can be spoiled or obliterated by any sledgehammer. I was not afforded a long view before it was spoiled. My neighbour came over with a sledgehammer and exacted revenge for the inflammation of his winter garden. Thus ended another winter gardening session. That neighbour that came over is just one of many things that can get an agronomer down. Take, for instance, the problems associated with gardening in January and February: At this time, the danger from frost is at its peak, and photosynthetic and erosional activity are at their nadir. In fact, just the other day as I was experimenting with the

[Watch out for Installment XXXIX in the next issue. -Ed]

Limerick Corner

There was once a Kingstonian
Who wanted a Dobsonian
For its simple design
And wood made of pine
Kept low the cost of owning one!

=====

There once was a celestial Kingstonian
Who bought a large-aperture Dobsonian
For he thought the large mirror
Would make the view clearer
Even if the clouds came rolling in!

=====

There was a man named Chomniak
Who was definitely an insomniac
Out late many nights
To see all the sights
Not until dawn would he be back!

=====

More Humour

Answer: Hubble Telescope Opticians and the planet Mars.

Question: Name some things that are extremely red right now!

Answers to Agro-Jumble: Stem, Tuber, Stamen, Petal.

What an Agronomer has: A Green Thumb