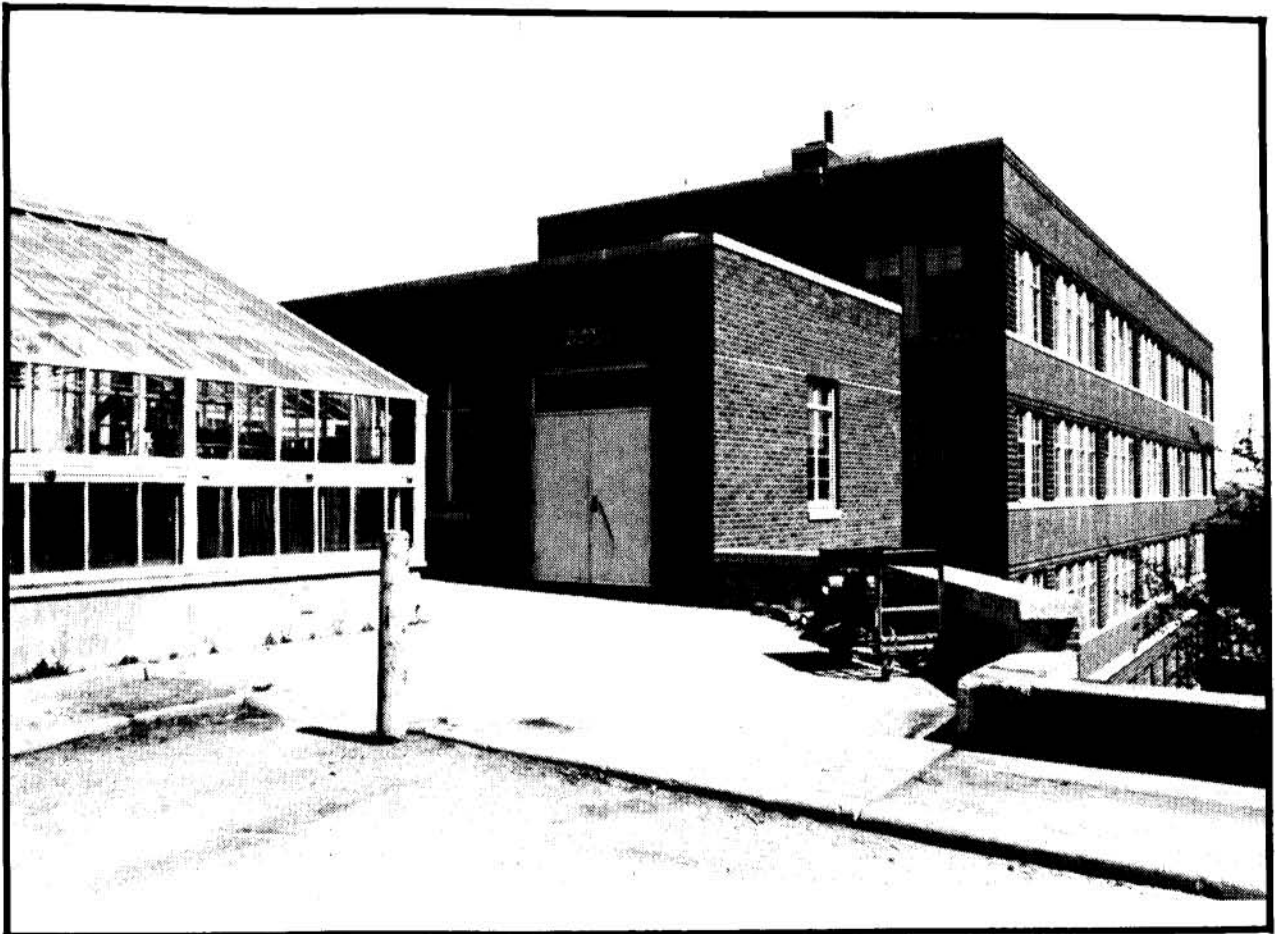


AURORA SPOREALIS

November 1991



Department of Plant Pathology
University of Minnesota St. Paul, Minnesota

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD

Dear Friends:

It is a pleasure to bring you greetings from the Department of Plant Pathology. It has been an eventful year filled with challenges but also accomplishments. It seems that the terms reallocation and retrenchment are becoming a regular part of our vocabulary in land grant universities across the country. All the departments at the University of Minnesota have been asked to go through a process whereby we decide how we would give up 10% of our resources over a 5-year period and then justify the return of 20%. While this process has been frustrating, it has also been an opportunity for us to reassess our direction and priorities as a department. Of immediate concern are the approaching retirements of Dr. Roy Wilcoxson in December of this year and Dr. David French in June of 1992. Both of these individuals have made tremendous contributions to the State through their research and teaching programs. At this point, we have no assurance that we will be able to refill their positions as all positions are currently frozen.

On a brighter note, as a result of completing the fundraising for the Lieberman/Okinow Chair in Disease Resistance Breeding in Cereal Crops, we have awarded the first round of research grants to faculty in the department and at Tel-Aviv University to do research on small grains pathology. It is a pleasure to see the income from this Endowment be used after a long fundraising campaign.

The Department received another pleasant surprise in that it was given a significant gift of money from Dr. Harold Flor and his wife, Iva, to establish an Endowment to support graduate research assistantships in the department. Unfortunately, both Dr. and Mrs. Flor passed away in the past year. Their generous gift will serve as a continuing reminder of their friendship and support of the department.

Last year, we announced the arrival of Dr. Linda Kinkel as our newest faculty member working in the area of epidemiology and biological control. We are extremely pleased with the contributions of Dr. Kinkel and other new faculty that have come to the department in the past few years. As of this writing, we are in the final stages of a search for a new USDA-ARS faculty member working in the area of disease resistance in alfalfa. This position will be focused on identification of disease resistance genes at the molecular level and will add significantly to our emphasis in disease resistance within the department.

The number of graduate students in the department has remained stable for the past several years in the range of 30-35. We believe the quality of this group of students is very high and we are very proud of them. There is some question, however, about their athletic ability in that the faculty defeated the students in this year's Annual Stakman Softball Game. I suspect that this will not be a long term trend, however. This event continues to be a fun event for all of us each spring.

We have had a change in editorial staff for the *Aurora Sporealis* this year. Our Public, Alumni, and Institutional Relations Committee has taken on the task of gathering articles for and assembling the *Aurora* this year. Dr. Neil Anderson has provided leadership as Editor. We believe that this approach will ensure long-term stability and quality of the *Aurora*. As always, we hope you enjoy this issue and urge you to come and visit us or drop us a note as to your current status.

Best wishes to each of you for the coming year.

Sincerely,



Philip O. Larsen
Professor and Head

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Aurora Sporealis is an annual publication mailed to former and current faculty, staff and graduate students, and to *Old Timers* who worked in the Department of Plant Pathology, at some time or other. Any contributions can be sent to the Department Head at the address below.

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STAKMAN HALL IS 50

On October 15, 1941 the Department of Plant Pathology completed its move into a new building, now known as the Stakman Hall of Plant Pathology. The new building, under construction since early 1940, was financed by a legislative appropriation for a "Field Crops Building" to house the Divisions of Plant Pathology and Agronomy.

There was a fairly widespread feeling among the personnel of the two Divisions (as they were called then), headed by E. C. Stakman (Plant Pathology) and H. K. Hayes (Agronomy) that they might be uncomfortable sharing the same building. Accordingly it was planned to make a building of two wings, one for each Division.

The political maneuvering that made this plan acceptable to university authorities and legislators is unknown to the present generation, but it did result in a building of two wings, separated by enough space to accommodate Christensen Laboratory, built some years later and connected by a brick wall. By the wall the two were made "one flesh", satisfying the moral and legal principles of the legislature and university administration. But, to the casual observer, it looked like two buildings. In them Hayes and Stakman were absolute rulers in their own domains and continued their amiable cooperation in the production of disease-resistant cereals.

The new building(s) were made to provide as much space as possible at the expense of luxuries and frills. Consequently the walls were not plastered, except those in the halls, rest rooms and janitors' closets, which were required by law to be plastered. Moreover there were practically no funds for built-in furniture or new furniture or equipment. So, from the old Tottering Tower came the book shelves for the library, office desks, laboratory tables and counters as well as autoclaves, etc. Some of the old laboratory desks were still in use in the lab shared by C. M. Christensen and Carl J. Eide in the late 1980s.

There was a head house behind each "wing" and a subsequent appropriation by the legislature provided for greenhouses, 25 x 75 feet, for each Division. There were no passenger elevators in either building, but there were small dumb waiters which in later years were replaced by small passenger elevators.

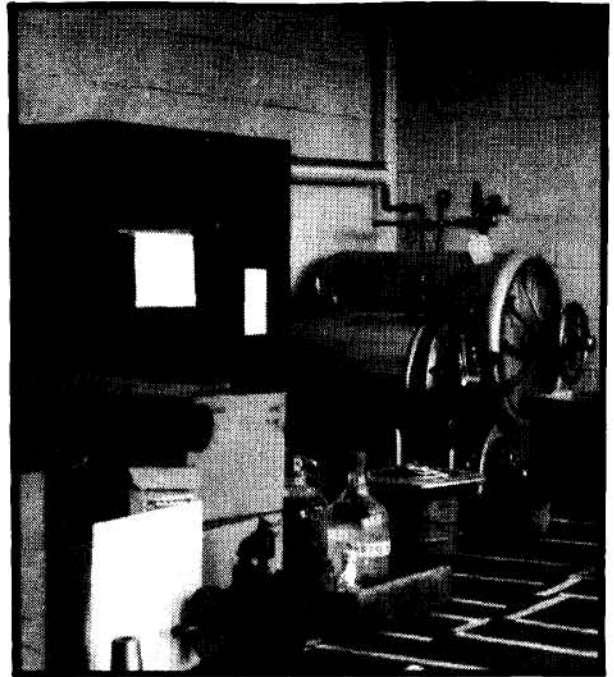
The new seminar room was large, with a "preparation room" next door that soon became a coffee room. Furniture in the seminar room consisted of the rickety old chairs and tables from the Tottering Tower. Later these were replaced in part with two solid walnut directors' tables, a walnut speakers table and a couple of dozen walnut arm chairs, all provided by a group of Old Timers in 1941.

During the 60s and 70s, a period of relative affluence, much of the old equipment was replaced, there was remodeling and modernizing of both teaching and research facilities. Space in the newly constructed Crops Research (Plant Science, Phase I) building relieved some of the pressure of a growing department. There were more faculty, more students, more hired help, but also research required more sophisticated machinery that took up a lot of space. In 1969, an entire floor of Plant Science II (Christensen Laboratories) helped relieve the space shortage even more.

When Borlaug Hall, with new teaching facilities, was occupied in 1985 the first floor of Stakman, which had been devoted to class labs and lecture rooms, became available. Mirocha's mass spectrometer, etc. occupied the large lecture room. The large class lab is now used by the Plant Disease Clinic, while the advanced labs and lecture rooms, after some remodeling, are now occupied by MacDonald's nematode research project and Clinic offices.

The prep lab, 307 Stakman, was among the last of the Stakman Hall antiquities to go. It was equipped almost entirely with cabinets, counters and autoclaves from the tottering Tower. It was a common source of supply of chemicals, glassware and other supplies for the entire Department. Post war affluence and greater lab space enabled project leaders to buy their own supply of chemicals, glassware, etc. and even hire their own slaves to wash the dishes. But the two autoclaves, one an original from the early 20's in the Tottering Tower, remained in use until August, 1985. The "big" autoclave was abandoned first because of leaking gaskets that no one had time to fix anymore. The small one, a later model, continued in use because it was more convenient for people with labs in Stakman and was easier to use than the high-tech sterilizers in Christensen Lab. Both were finally removed in August, 1985 and the room eventually became a research lab for Dr. Jones and Janell Stevens Johnk.

After the Migration, the Tottering Tower survived for another 30 years, occupied principally



by the Federal Rust Lab (CRL), which continued also to use the greenhouses behind the building. In August, 1971 Tottering Tower and greenhouses were razed to make room for additions to the agricultural library and classroom and office buildings.

