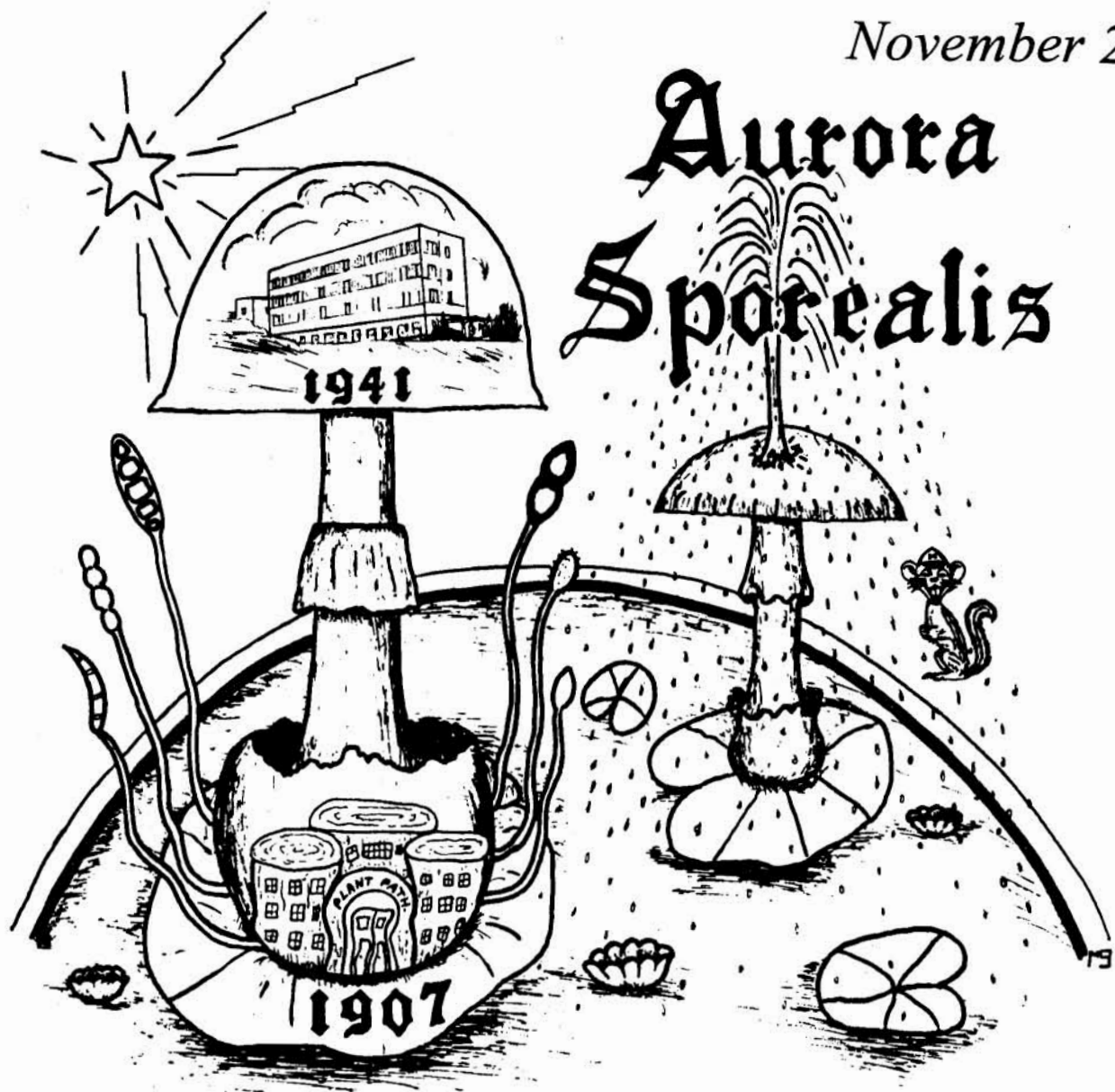


November 2001



1907-2001

Wherein are recorded the recollections, the ruminations and the raspitations of those who have drunk from the foaming fount of the Department of Plant Pathology of the University of Minnesota and who now spout forth in divers ways

Let the fount foam and never run dry

Let the spout squirt and never lose power

AURORA SPOREALIS

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The *Aurora Sporealis* is the alumni news magazine of the Department of Plant Pathology. First published in 1924, it is the oldest, consecutive departmental news magazine in the history of the University of Minnesota.

Editor

Nevin Dale Young, Public, Alumni & Institutional Relations
Committee Chair

Production Editor

Debra Baden Drange

Contributors

Dann Adair	Jennifer Juzwik
Gib Ahlstrand	Kurt J. Leonard
Ann Arendt	Ben Lockhart
Charlie Barnes	David H. MacDonald
Janna Beckerman	Robert Nyvall
Todd Burnes	Frank Pflieger
Senyu Chen	Deborah Samac
Debbie Baden Drange	Howard Schwartz
Patti Combs	Carol Windels
Sandra Gould	Nevin Young
James V. Groth	Richard J. Zeyen
Dean E. Herzfeld	

Photographer

Gilbert A. Ahlstrand
Ann Arendt
Debbie Baden Drange
Nathaniel Haefs

Business Manager

Laurie A. Brand

Circulation

Ann Arendt
Debra Baden Drange

Home Page

www.plpa.agri.umn.edu

Aurora Sporealis is mailed annually to former and current faculty, staff, graduate students and old timers who worked in the Department of Plant Pathology. Items for the next volume can be sent to:

Dr Frank L. Pflieger
Department of Plant Pathology
University of Minnesota
495 Borlaug Hall
1991 Upper Buford Circle

St. Paul, MN 55108-6030 USA
alumnis-plpa@puccini.crl.umn.edu

If you would like you receive your *Aurora Sporealis* in an electronic version in the future, please e-mail Debbie Baden Drange at debbd@umn.edu to be placed on the listserve.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Cover Story: <i>Aurora Sporealis</i>	1
Message from the Head	2
Message from Norman E. Borlaug	5
Call for Nominations: E.C. Stakman Award	6
Alumni Speak	8
Old Timer News	9
New Faculty	11
Departmental News	12

Front Page

History of *Aurora Sporealis*

By Thor Kommedahl

The first issue of Aurora Sporealis was printed (mimeographed) on August 1, 1924, and the message that appeared on that first page was continued until May 1978. A graduate student Ta Ching Loh (PhD, 1933) designed a cover that you see reproduced for this issue and which appeared first on the January-February 1933 issue. *Aurora Sporealis* was published 6 times a year in those days. The Seminar Committee that handled *Aurora Sporealis* then consisted of Helen Hart, H. A. Rodenhiser, and A. W. Henry (chair). During these times the department was housed in the old Agricultural Botany Building, referred to affectionately as *The Tottering Tower* (it was subject to vibrations because the building was set on shifting sand and clay soil--there was even a crack in the southwest corner of the building that widened over time). In the January-February 1943 issue, the cover was redrawn to show both the old and the new building (now known as Stakman Hall) but the artist was not named. Because of the new building, scientific names were coined for the buildings: *Phytobrickhaus tremuloides* for the Tottering Tower and *Phytobrickhaus concretus* var. *erectus* for the new building (*Aurora Sporealis* 17[4]:July-August,

1941); it was later referred to simply as *P. erectus*. In 1950 (January-March issue), graduate student Malcolm Shurtleff (PhD 1953) redrew the cover to make it neater and he added the "gopher". This drawing continued to be

used until May 1978. After that, each issue had a different cover design to reflect a theme or emphasis of that particular issue.

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD

Dear Friends of the Department:

Greetings from Minnesota!! The state legislative session for FY 2002 recently completed its business, and in my opinion, this session could be considered one of the most difficult in the history of the state. Strong differences in opinion among and between members of the Senate and the House and the Governor on what to do with the state surplus with regard to spending and/or property tax relief sparked a debate and standoff that sent the process into not only a special session, but nearly a government shut down before a compromise was reached just prior to the midnight deadline on July 15. Well, throughout all of this, how did the legislative decisions impact the University's funding requests? The university received about 45% of its request, which will result in major budgetary challenges over the next fiscal year and beyond. President Yudof presented a plan to cover this shortfall in the following manner: a) 33% will come from legislative allocations, b) 33% from increases in undergraduate and graduate tuition and c) 33% through internal reallocation that includes a tax that is to be paid by colleges and departments therein. Thus, we are currently in the midst of significant budgetary challenges; immediate and into the future. The department certainly felt the sting as the reallocation decision trickled down from central to the college and from the college to the department. The good news is that there was salary increase for faculty, staff and students.

General state support for university programs over the last 20 years reveals a pattern of steady decline. This is not unique to the University of Minnesota, but rather, unfortunately, is the reality facing the majority of major public universities throughout the U.S. Certainly, this trend will require universities to rethink on how they conduct their business. From a departmental standpoint, it will require us to make some difficult choices, but it's also an opportunity for us to redirect programs and funding and to rethink our priorities. State support is critical to department functions, and shortfalls impact our teaching, research and extension programs and for that matter, all functions and programs of the university. However, in times of adversity, we remain committed to excellence *within our priorities of research, teaching and extension.*

Now, let me move on to a more pleasant topic. The

college has been engaged in a prioritization process to define ways to best use the College's resources to serve the needs of the citizens of Minnesota, and to develop guidelines for effective assignment and allocation of the College's human, financial and physical resources. The planning for this process emerged as a grassroots effort among department heads and faculty members. Comments and advice from students, staff members of the College, and citizens across the state have been incorporated into the priority themes to help develop a vision for the future. Five broad priorities include: **1) Promoting Safe and Healthy Foods, 2) Improving Environmental Quality, 3) Serving Urban Communities, 4) Revitalizing Minnesota's Rural Communities 5) Enhancing Agricultural Production Systems**, describe the future direction of the College. More importantly, these five priorities are connected by an over-arching commitment to education—**Emphasizing Exemplary Education** that has been identified by faculty members, students, staff members and citizens as the premier goal for the College. We are now in the process of requesting faculty groups to develop and submit 1 to 3 creative initiatives linked to each of the 5 priorities. Out of this process, at least one initiative from each priority will be selected for funding. The College will provide "seed money" to initiate the projects. Slowly, the College effort will begin to reflect the direction and vision of the 5 priorities with **Emphasizing Exemplary Education** as the corner stone. As you can see, each department within the college will provide significant contributions to each of the priority themes. Also, the broad priorities will facilitate and foster collaborative efforts with other colleges including the medical school. I will keep you informed as we move along the road of change with the priorities as our guide into the future.

Departmental News: Several new faculty have joined the department this past year. First, **Dr. Janna Beckerman**, Extension Educator/Assistant Professor, assumed her new responsibilities in the Yard & Garden Line January 22, 2001. Filling this position brings a full compliment to the Yard & Garden Line group and includes a plant pathologist, horticulturist, and entomologist. Janna's primary focus is to provide education and support for Extension Educators, Master Gardeners and the public concerned about urban plant care. Additionally, Janna will maintain and expand a web-driven disease diagnostic and

