



NUTS & BOLTS

... Teachers delivering knowledge that works to North America's Farm and Ranch Families

Volume 8 No. 1

Fall 1994

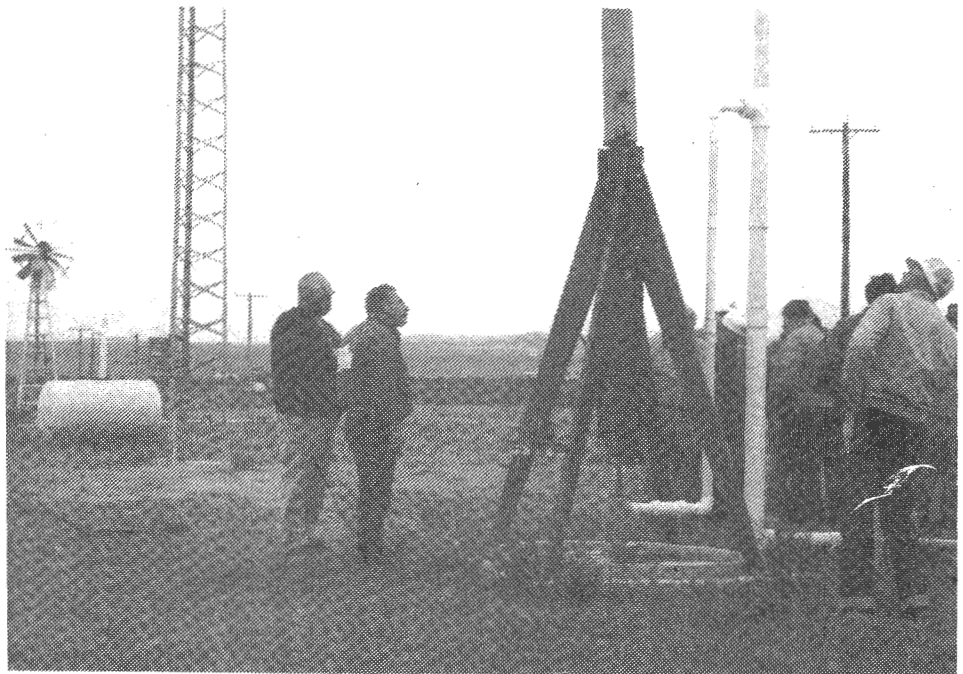
THE FBM INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY

We hear more each day about the electronic information superhighway. The folks in Canada have taken the initiative and have applied this technology to farm business management.

Wilson Loree, head of the Alberta Economic Services Division, Farm Management branch, was at the NFRBMEA conference in Lethbridge to tell our members what Canada has accomplished in terms of establishing a nationwide agricultural information bulletin board system.

The program has been developed and funded by the Canadian Farm Business Management Council. The FBMInet, as they refer to the system, is a network of ten computer bulletin board systems linked together from coast to coast in Canada. Farmers, FBM instructors, extension personnel and researchers can all use the system free of cost to share information about current events in ag and to share files.

In less than two years the FBMInet is logging thousands of calls per month and hundreds of new users. Investment in both equipment and personnel has been relatively small, both for the government and the users. What a great idea!



NFRBMEA members tour an experimental wind energy farm near Pincher Creek, Alberta. The weather was perfect for wind-produced energy. Note the fellow with his cap pulled down to his ears.

This idea is being shared right here in rural LeRoy, MN. Our local sysop (system operator) runs the "MIDDLE OF NOWHERE" BBS here. He has been in contact with the Canadian BBS. Although international cooperation seems a way off at this point, the idea is a good one.

The BBS message system needs some help in remote areas. If you'd like to try us here in LeRoy, our Fidonet address is 1:292/75@fidonet, or try either of our Internet addresses, wayne.pike@f75.n292.z1.fidonet.org or pikex003@gold.tc.vmn.edu. Once in a while something gets through to us.

NFRBMEA MISSION

The delegates at our annual conference in Lethbridge worked on and approved the following mission statement: *"The mission of the NFRBMEA is to increase the effectiveness of its members by promoting educational, economic, and practical information and procedures."*



Dreams, Not Data

by John Hest

(EDITOR'S NOTE: John Hest, retired FBM inst. Hawley, MN wrote this article describing his relationship with his students. John reminds us of our first responsibility.)

I attended a funeral today for my friend and former student, Norman. I had known Norman for over thirty-six years. He was one of the first enrollees in my farm business management program and he stayed with the program until we retired together.

During the service, I thought of the dozens of times over the years we sat at his kitchen table and discussed many topics, not all related to farm management. Norman was very well read and mostly self-educated. He knew lots of things about lots of subjects, but he trusted me to tell him what he needed to know about his farm business. And, as I sat there at his funeral, I remembered that he had trusted me with a whole lot more than that.

I remembered in particular delivering an annual farm analysis report to Norman and his wife. It was at the end of one of those dry

seasons following a bin buster year. There were thousands of bushels of last year's grain to sell and small sales from the drought year crop. Even though the inventory was down considerably, Norman, like many farmers, thought it had been a good year because he had paid more than an average amount of income tax. I could tell when I walked in the door that Norman was confident that he was going to get good news about a terrific year. This should have been a clue as to what was going to happen next.

We opened up his report and reviewed his cash income and expense report which looked pretty good. Next, we discussed the huge drop in grain inventory and then it dawned on him that this would have a negative effect on his net profit for the year. He was not at all prepared for the drop in the family net worth. In fact, his face turned white. He excused himself and headed for the living room sofa. I asked his wife, Marion, who had been sharing the report with us, if Norman had a history of heart problems. Marion assured me that he had no heart trouble, but he always reacted this way to bad news.

After a time Norman returned to the table, but I could tell that he still hadn't recovered from the shock. I was so embarrassed that I hardly knew what to say, and I can't remember what I did.

However, I can say that I did learn from that incident. I learned that

it is a farm management instructor's job to do more than deliver numbers to farm families. Farm families trust their instructors to deliver the truth about their farm business, but even more, they trust the instructor to have the judgement to deliver the truth in a thoughtful and compassionate manner. People's feelings are a whole lot more important than bare numbers.

I learned that when I closed out a family's farm records for the year I should be able to foresee the end result and lay some ground work for the possible net profit and net worth loss disasters. I never again wanted to see the look on a farmer's face as I saw on Norman's face that day. I learned to never again take my position of trust with my students for granted.



"We remember dreams, not data, at the wild end."

-- Vizenour

A special thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue or sent in articles. Please keep them coming in, especially those states outside Minnesota. We want to hear from you, too. --**JP**

Farm and Ranch Review

A Quick Look at a Potential Resource

by Wayne Pike



PC Computing Magazine

Here is a magazine that is worth the subscription price simply in terms of tonnage of paper, if for no other reason. A likely first impression is, "I'll never have time to read 350 pages of computer magazine every month". Unless you live in a different time continuum than most of us, that first impression will be correct.

Let's take a look at the September issue that just came. There were 113 full pages of advertising in the first 174 pages of the magazine. Does that make it a bad magazine? No, but it makes *PC Computing* a cheap magazine. A 12-issue (one year) subscription costs only \$16.94. (Somewhat more in Canada). The pitches themselves are some of the brightest and cleverest you will see anywhere. Hint: Those of you with teen boys in the house may wish to tear out the x-rated CD ROM ads in the back of the magazine before the kids beat you to them.

The ads are a good tool for learning computer terminology and the getting a glimpse of the latest technology which we may not have in our offices for several years. The back of the magazine has many mail order vendors hawking their soft-and-hardwares and they even publish their prices. This is a great way to comparison shop even if you decide to buy locally.

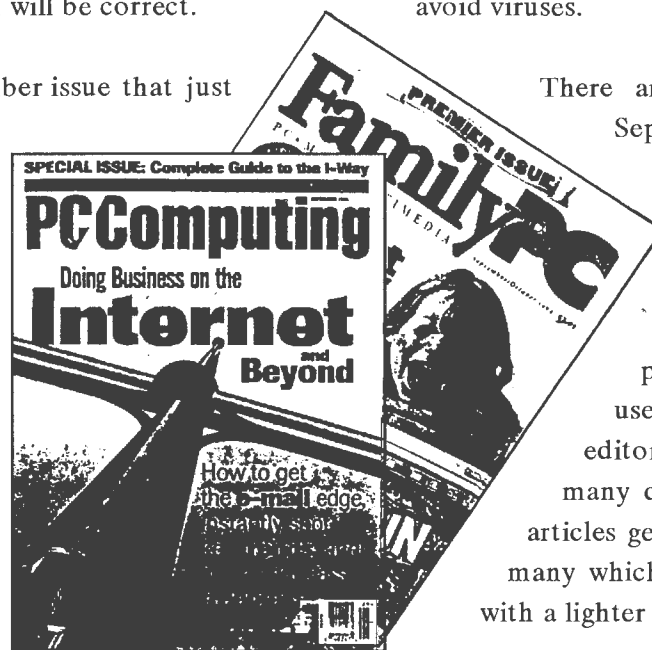
New readers and computer users may find it hard to tell where the ads leave off and where the "meat" begins.

The table of contents helps a lot to tell what is article and what is hype. The September issue contains a large feature on using the Internet, and two smaller features; one on a type of new computer and the other about those who write computer viruses and how you can avoid viruses.

There are regular features which, in September, included reviews of twenty-one new hardware and software products. There is a section devoted to helping users with their existing equipment and program problems. The editors use their space for letters, editorials, and short articles from many different writers. Some of the articles get quite technical, but there are many which are ground level and written with a lighter tone.

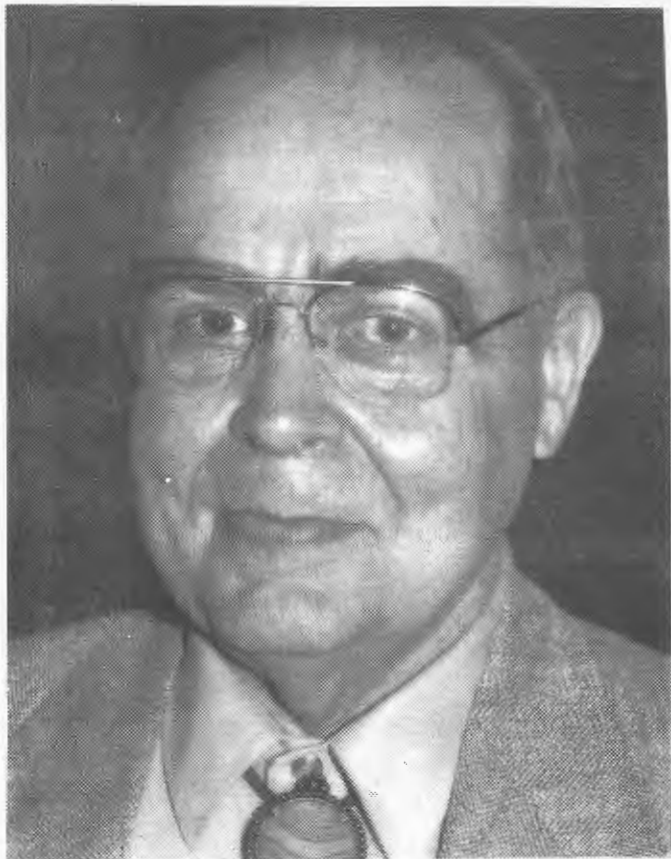
You might think that *PC Computing* is not for beginners, but then again you probably aren't looking for a magazine called "PC Ignorant". It may seem like a technical manual at times, but it is a magazine that, given a chance, a beginner can grow into.

PC Computing is published by the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company which also just began publishing a magazine called *Family PC*. This one is aimed at families with kids, but it is full of lots of basic, yet interesting, information. I read the premier issue from cover to cover and recommend it, particularly at the charter price of \$9.95 for a six-issue subscription. (\$10 more in Canada)



A MESSAGE FROM OLIVER KIENHOLZ, NFRBMEA PRESIDENT

Fellow members, those of us that had the opportunity to participate in our international conference in Lethbridge received some real positive insights into the areas of strong partnerships. We should all be planning for our next conference in June 1995 at Bismarck, North Dakota.



YOU ARE A WINNER!

You are already a winner if you are a member of NFRBMEA. You are even higher on our list of "All Time Greats" if you contribute your newsletters, articles, pictures, or ideas to the *Nuts & Bolts* editorial staff.

We would like to show our appreciation by awarding one *Nuts & Bolts* T-shirt each issue (3 times per year) to the lucky winner of a drawing taken from among people who have sent us their material. You are in the drawing whether we use your material in that issue or not. You will stay in the drawing pool until June of the next year or until you win a shirt. This issue's winner is Mark Berg of Red Lake Falls, MN and his shirt is on its way!

A WINNING TEAM

Adapted from Dr. Roger Fritz

The single greatest factor in winning is the willingness of individuals to make personal sacrifices for the group. This includes all individuals-- even the "stars". Here are some of the qualities you should seek in looking for members of your "team".

1. They go above and beyond expectation. These individuals don't stop when they've what others have done before them.

2. They bring solutions, not more problems. They never say, "You have a problem," but rather, "We have a problem, let me see if I can bring you a few recommendations that will help solve it."

3. They bounce back from mistakes. They do not blame others for their own errors. They have great resiliency and find new ways of doing things.

4. They don't make excuses. If things go wrong, they admit it and go on to fix the problem.

5. They don't depend on reminders to complete their work. They are able to set interim deadlines for long-range tasks so they don't panic when an assignment is due.

6. They shoot for a good record, not perfection. People who seek perfection tend to get frustrated and put themselves under so much pressure that they rarely accomplish what they are capable of doing.

7. They think ahead. This helps eliminate unpleasant surprises.

8. They don't dwell on their successes. These people quickly move on from past accomplishments as well as past mistakes.

9. They don't assume too much. When in doubt, they ask.

10. They negotiate agreements and then get going! In other words, they don't wait for orders to be sure they are doing everything exactly "right".

Are you finding people who are strong in these 10 areas? If so, your chances of success are great!

Dr. Fritz's book, What Managers Need to Know, contains many other practical tips. From Organization Development Consultants, 1240 Iroquois Drive, Suite 406, Naperville, IL 60563; (708)420-7673. \$19.95 postage included. He has been a University President and executive with John Deere. The Fritz's own a 350 acre farm in West Central Illinois.

FARM MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Lance Brower, FBM instructor, Fergus Falls, MN, sent out this notice to his students. I think you will appreciate it, too.

To: FBM Students

Re: Farm Management Improvement Plan

1. Send a copy of this letter to six other farm management students who are tired of their instructor.

2. Bundle up your instructor and send him/her to the name at the top of the list.

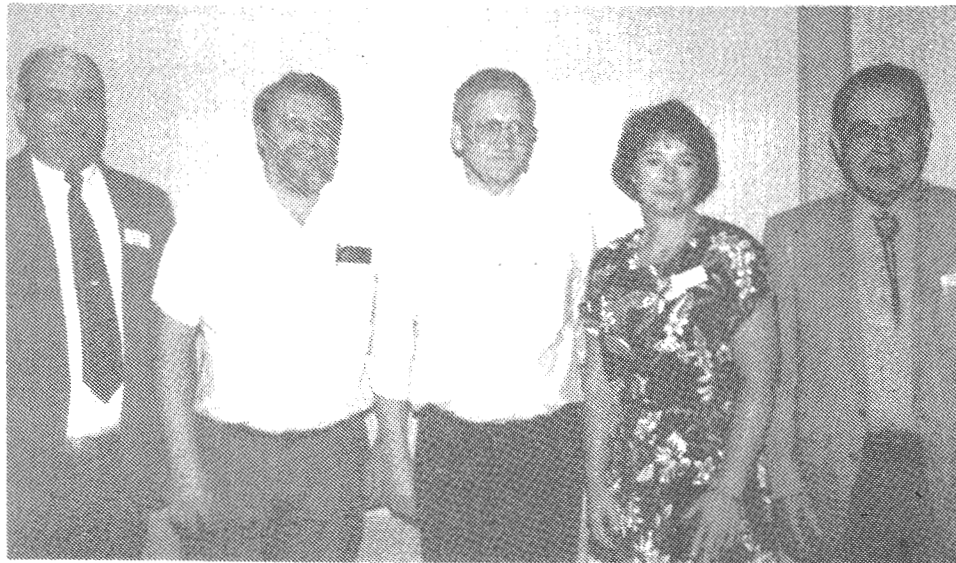
3. Add your name to the bottom of the list.

4. In one week you should receive 16,436 instructors. Select the one you find tolerable.

DO NOT IGNORE THIS LETTER! One student broke the chain and got his own instructor back along with the rejects from three other areas.



INTRODUCING OUR 1994-95 OFFICERS...



Left to Right: Tom Risdal, past president; Dennis Jackson, secretary; John Whitehead, treasurer; Laurie Morris, president elect; Oliver Kienholz; president. This team will lead our membership, which currently stands at 210.

TO: Wayne Pike
Editor, *NUTS & BOLTS*
Rt. 1, Box 217A
LeRoy, MN 55951-9801



Here's my check to NFRBMEA for:

_____ \$10.00- ACTIVE _____ \$5.00-ASSOCIATE
Membership in National Farm and Ranch Business
Management Education Association for 1994- 95

NAME _____

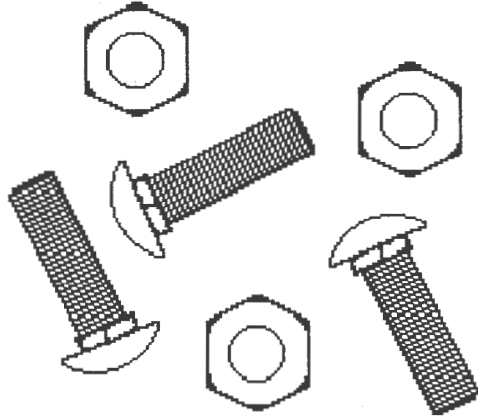
ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE NUMBER (____) - ____ - _____

LeRoy-Ostrander Public Schools
Highway 56
LeRoy, MN 55951
ATTN: Wayne Pike

BULK RATE
US POSTAGE PAID
LE ROY, MN 55951
PERMIT NO. 2
NON-PROFIT ORG.
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NUTS & BOLTS

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