

Agricultural talk bears fruit

by Geoff Martin

"The future of agriculture in North America and the world is in deep peril," according to Wes Jackson, an American plant geneticist. He told a Killam audience last Monday that working more closely with the laws of nature could return productivity to farms.

Jackson is the founder of the Land Institute, a non-profit institute devoted to the search for sustainable alternatives in agriculture, energy and waste disposal, located in Salina, Kansas.

"The future must run on sunlight," Jackson opened, "because fossil fuels are limited, there are too many problems with the entire

nuclear fuel cycle, and fusion, which is the epitome of the centralist doctrine, suffers from chronic problems of containment and cooling of the process, as well as a sustained reaction."

Jackson proceeded in his lecture to point out the specific ways in which we in North America are destroying the long-term productivity of the soil, due to erosion, single crops (monocultures), contamination and overworking of the land.

Surprisingly, Jackson provides an extremely unconventional view of humanity as farmers, and of the ways in which we grow food. He maintains that "We split with nature when we had the (original)

agricultural revolution", and, at present, "The corn plant has destroyed more options for future generations than the automobile."

Though much of the lecture was fairly technical, still a lot of what was said was of interest to anyone.

On the basis of his experiments, with cross-breeding and genetic experimentation, Jackson has concluded that sustainable agriculture can only be developed if it is patterned after the ways of nature. "Nature accumulates ecological capital, runs entirely on sunlight,

has expertise in water management, and prevents epidemics."

Jackson has researched better farming methods. One proposal is to grow several types of plants together, as opposed to specializing one breed (monoculturalism), to reduce susceptibility to disease.

Computer students deprogrammed

VANCOUVER (CUP) — Pulling the plug on computer science students is becoming a trend in B.C.

Last week several computer science students at the University of Victoria were "deregistered" because the administration said they had been admitted without adequate requirements. Now several students in the same depart-

ment at the University of B.C. have been "deprogrammed" because of overcrowding.

Hugh Dempster, a computer science undergraduate advisor, said September 16, "program approval does not guarantee entrance into courses." This means that some students have just recently discovered various third and fourth

year courses they need for graduation are already full.

Some students have been placed on a waiting list while others will be "bounced out" of the program altogether, Dempster said.

He said his department does not have the resources to cope with the large number of students enrolled in the program this year.



DALHOUSIE ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

September 26 - October 2



SHARON ANDREWS -- FIELD HOCKEY -- scored three goals on Sunday in the AUAA league game bringing the final score to a 6-2 win over UPEI. Andrews also scored both goals last Wednesday in the Tigers 2-1 win over St. Mary's.

Andrews is a native of Halifax and is presently in her 3rd year of the Bachelor of Recreation Degree program.

NORMAN TINKHAM -- CROSS COUNTRY -- was successful on the week-end at the Dal Invitational meet at Point Pleasant Park. Tinkham placed second overall by only 20 secs. to Mike Taylor of Moncton who has been one of the top runners for the past 3 years.

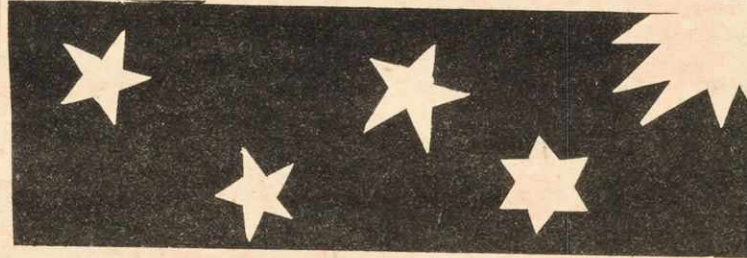
Tinkham, a second year B.A. student, placed 4th last year in the AUAA's and will be a top contender this year in the finals.

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