

INFORMATION

Yukon Agriculture Branch Quarterly Bulletin

Fall, 2014

Volume 27 Issue 3

2014 AGRICULTURE DEMONSTRATION DAY

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO MADE THE DAY A
SUCCESS.

We had a record number of visitors this year, with well over 100 folks joining us for lunch and approximately 40 for the farm tour following lunch.

The agriculture research and demonstration trials are the focus of the day with local food being served to showcase Yukon's growing agriculture industry. The day features as much local food as possible, which helps explain why so many are putting the demonstration day on their calendars. Agriculture Branch purchased a majority of the food from local suppliers, thanks to:



- Circle D Ranch for the beef patties and Kale chips
- Elemental Farm for the beautiful mixed greens used in the salad
- Rivendell Farm for their tomatoes.
- Yukon Grain Farm for the potatoes
- Bird House Catering for preparing the potato salad and baking fresh burger buns.

The focus of the research tour this year was on weed management and the strategies northern farmers can take to manage weeds in their fields and gardens.

This year's research tour included the outcomes of work conducted over the years with city compost and other soil enrichments, grains and pulses, fertilizer application rates and timing and the forage variety demonstration. Also presented was new research in the orchard to evaluate production of hardy fruit stocks such as haskaps, dwarf cherries, currants and apples. Other new projects presented included the organic forage production evaluation to further our understanding of alternative forage for livestock and expected yields under organic management practices. A potato variety trial is being conducted in partnership with a few of our local producers. The potato trial is evaluating maturity and yields of unique characteristic potatoes for the culinary enthusiast market.

Thanks also to Bev Buckway with the Yukon Agricultural Association, MLA Brad Cathers, and Lorraine Spreadbury with Farm Credit Canada for participating in the day. For more information with regards to the site and the research activities please contact Matthew or Bradley at the Agriculture Branch at agriculture@gov.yk.ca or 867-667-5838.

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MESSAGE FROM THE AGRICULTURE BRANCH

It sure felt like the weather this summer was cold but when you look at the numbers, it really wasn't that bad. Hay farmers recorded some really good harvest results and most of the produce growers did just fine. The one thing I have noticed is that for the past two summers, two very different summers, our night temperatures are higher than the ten year average. Perhaps it's more frequent cloud cover but there seems to be a trend here.

With the cooler temperatures our thoughts turn to the annual North of 60° Agriculture Conference and Yukon Grown banquet. The theme of the conference this year is *Grass Roots Management for Cold Climates* featuring Peter Lundgard's holistic approach to land and livestock production in Alberta. Along the same theme we will be looking at Yukon hay qualities and how both horse and livestock owners can optimize the use of Yukon-grown hay. Continuing on topic, Treharne Drury will let us in on his investigation with the Yukon Research Centre into alternative feed options for Yukon livestock that may help to reduce our feed imports and lower overwintering costs. See the article further on in the newsletter for details.

The conference and banquet are being held at the Westmark Whitehorse on November 1st & 2nd. As always the banquet will feature fine Yukon farmed foods prepared by the creative chefs at the Westmark Whitehorse. 4-H will be auctioning for the Spirit Riders Club and the Farmer of the Year will be awarded for 2014. Last year we had a record number of eight nominations for the title with the Grove family taking the honour for excellent product and service provided to horse and livestock owners. If you know of someone deserving of a nomination this year, let us know why (in writing please) before 4:00 p.m. on October 29th and we will make sure the selection committee gets it.

Other projects the branch will be working on this fall include the development of a local food strategy, consultation on new planned areas for agriculture and trying to fill some of the gaps between primary producers and retailers along the supply chain.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the conference and banquet on November 1st & 2nd.

Tony Hill
Director, Agriculture Branch



Photo: John Lenart (right) of Klondike Valley Nursery and Market Garden discusses growing apples in the Yukon with Agrologist Matthew Ball. John along with his wife Sara are featured in the producer profile on page 6.

NORTH OF 60° AGRICULTURE BANQUET NOVEMBER 1ST, 2014

The North of 60° Agriculture Banquet is scheduled for the evening of Saturday, November 1st at the Westmark Whitehorse main ballroom. The banquet features a delicious Yukon grown meal, and the evening is highlighted by the presentation of the annual Yukon Farmer of the Year Award and a live auction.

Pick up your tickets in advance at the Agriculture Branch front desk. This is a great evening highlighting Yukon agriculture for a great price of \$25 per person!

Guests are welcome at 6 p.m. to catch up and trade stories. Dinner will be at 7 p.m.

Seats are limited, so don't wait to save your seat for this delicious Yukon grown meal.

For more information or to buy banquet tickets, please contact the Agriculture Branch.

We are at:
Room 320, Elijah Smith
Building at 300 Main Street in
Whitehorse.

Telephone: (867) 667-5838, or
1-800-661-0408 ext. 5838.

Our e-mail is:
agriculture@gov.yk.ca

YUKON AGRICULTURAL
ASSOCIATION
CONCEPTUAL PLANS
FOR THE YAA LEASE.

In 2012, the Yukon Agriculture Association (YAA) secured a 30-year lease from the Yukon government on a 65-hectare parcel of land located near km 204 on the North Klondike Highway. This lease area is being used by YAA to develop infrastructure that supports Yukon's agricultural industry.

This past July, YAA hired Urban Systems to develop a site plan that will guide the development of the agriculture parcel based on the priorities established by the board, and from the land use recommendations contained in Klassen Natural Resources Consulting firm's 2013 report "Planning for the Development of The Yukon Agriculture Association Agriculture Lease" (http://yukonag.ca/cms-assets/documents/132891-561449_land2013.pdf).

The top four priorities identified:

- Building a heated facility to house the mobile abattoir and ancillary facilities;
- Building harvest-fair grounds with a community building for exhibits and displays;
- Hiring a caretaker to manage the lease infrastructure; and
- Building cold storage facilities.

This planning process is being directed by a Technical Working Group that includes the YAA Executive Director, representatives from the YAA board and membership, and staff from the EMR Agriculture Branch. The Technical Working Group offered advice to the planners, and a cross section of stakeholders were also consulted for their input. In June, the Yukon Horse and Rider

Association (YHRA) contacted YAA and indicated interest in a permanent move to a portion of the site, so the association was also included in the planning.

On September 16th, a workshop was held at the Hootalinqua fire hall to review the draft conceptual sketches developed by Urban Systems and to seek input from the steering committee, YAA board and members, Yukon Young Farmers and representatives from the Horse and Rider Association.

The conceptual site plans outline the type, location, and extent of infrastructure development that will meet the present and anticipated needs of YAA over the next 20 years. The study was comprised of three major components: first, a documentation of existing conditions on the property including geotechnical issues, secondly a summary of issues identified through consultation with YAA members and other stakeholders, and thirdly, the development of a conceptual site plan.

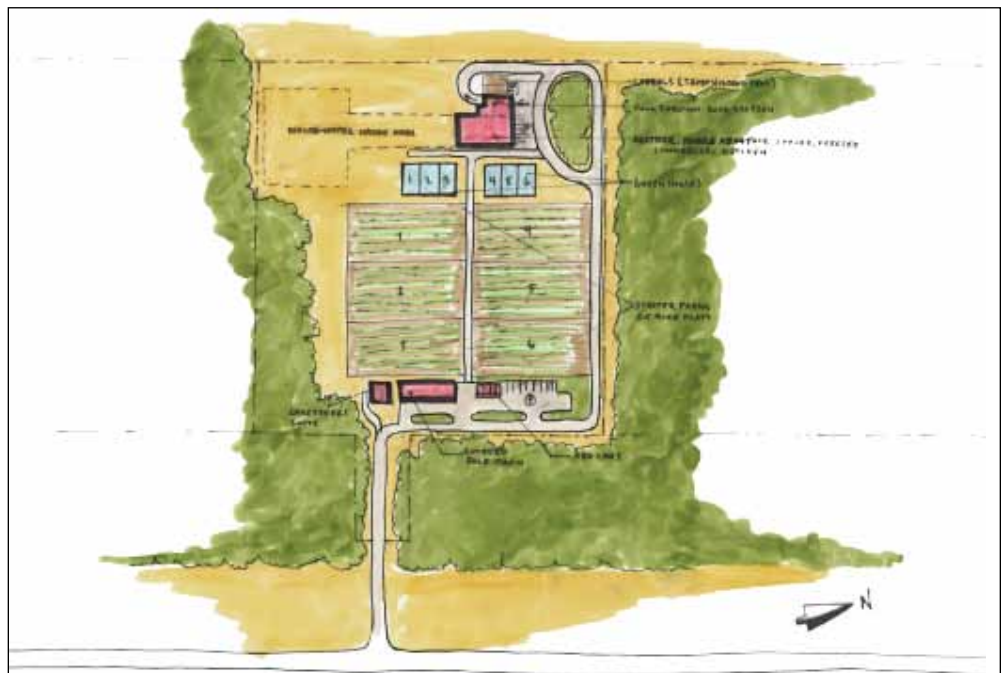
Next Steps

It has always been the plan to house structures and activities that do not otherwise have a home. A phased approach will be used for development. Partnerships and efficiencies are a focus, due to the limited resources and to provide additional revenue sources. Any groups that have additional input, ideas and use for the property may contact the YAA board to determine suitability of a partnership.

With the Conceptual Site Plan in place, the optimal location for the heated facility for the mobile abattoir and ancillary facilities, location of internal roads and parking areas, location of power lines, water wells, and other public infrastructure and areas suitable for other uses such as community and sports groups will be identified. The next step is to take the report and final plan to the YAA board for approval.

For more information contact the YAA at 867-668-6864 or email, admin@yukonag.ca

This is one of several conceptual sketches provided to the YAA by Urban Designs to aid in the planning process. For more information contact the YAA.



TUM TUM'S BLACK GILT MEATS

PROVIDING MOBILE RED MEAT SLAUGHTER SERVICES.

Tum Tum's Black Gilt Meats operated by Graham, Simone and Tom Rudge has taken over operation of the Yukon Mobile Abattoir. They are building on the abattoir contract to develop a family run business providing Yukon producers with inspected red meat slaughter services.

For Graham, Simone and Tom this is not just about the contract to operate the abattoir, it is about establishing a service to the agriculture industry. Simone and Tom have been advocates for local food through their involvement in the Fireweed Community Market, Growers of Organic Food Yukon and many other groups. Developing Tum Tum's Black Gilt Meats allows them to further participate in Yukon's "eat local" capacity. In Simone's words when asked why the Rudge family decided to take on this new business:

"We've been involved in many conversations about ways to build the industry in the Yukon. We feel it is a series of small steps that will result in change. This seemed like the right time to step up and contribute to the efforts that have been made so far."

The three family members work together with Simone as bookkeeper, bookings manager and truck driver. Tom does all the odd jobs to keep things moving and is in charge of fixing machinery and keeping the truck running. Graham is the meat expert, but is currently in consultant mode since he is away at school until spring. The three together provide professional slaughter services.

Graham, Simone and Tom also complement each other when it comes to the wealth of knowledge and experience they bring to the business. Graham graduated top of his class from the Meat Processors Program offered at Alberta's Olds College. Olds College is home to the National Meat Training Centre, and offers training in the whole process stream from slaughter to retail. The processing course includes a combination of science and hands on practical techniques.

Simone has also participated in meat cutting and sausage making at Yukon College and a slaughter essentials course at Olds College. Tom has a degree in Agriculture and has spent time working with hunters in an outfitting operation before farming. All three have taken Food Safe as well as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) food safety training, and have been slaughtering animals on farm for their customers since about 2004. They are part of the Poultry Processors' Group and have helped process several thousand chickens over the past few years.

Tum Tum's provides the industry with inspected red meat service from May through to November, weather permitting. This inspected service does not require you keep the meat in the inspection chain, but provides producers with slaughter service in the presence of a meat inspector at reasonable cost.



Photo: Graham cutting a pig during his training at Olds College.

Some of the benefits of having Tum Tum's do your slaughter include:

- A clean location and experienced hands to do the skinning and eviscerating.
- An inspector to provide feedback on the health of the animals presented for slaughter.
- An experienced operator to quarter the animal.
- Slaughter efficiencies enable producers to slaughter multiple animals in a day
- Segregated waste streams for proper environmental disposal.
- The ability to keep meat in the inspection chain, which allows producers to sell at the retail level in the Yukon market place. (Please note: you are not required when using the mobile abattoir to keep the meat product in the inspection chain, and can choose to continue to sell farm gate.)

Of course there is a cost to this mobile service, but considering the benefits and ease of processing provided, the cost is reasonable.

Cost per animal:

Beef	\$100
Elk	\$90
Pigs	\$40
Sheep or Goats	\$30

Other costs:

travel at \$2/km measured one-way from the Whitehorse city limits

* standby fees: the livestock owner may be charged up to \$75/hour for unnecessary delays for which they are responsible.

SPECIAL OFFERS:

New Entrant Special: To make the paperwork worth it, per-animal fees will be waived for the first use. (Mileage and standby fees, if applicable, still apply.)

Full House Special: maximize efficiency by booking six beef or elk, 10 sheep or goats, or 8 pigs in one day and the per-animal fee for one of those animals is free.

Early Bird Special: Next year, beat the rush and receive a 50% discount on per animal fees before September 15th.

For more information about Tum Tum's Black Gilt Meats go to www.tumtumsmeats.yukonfood.com or contact them at tumtum@yukonfood.com or 393-4628. Also if you are thinking about using the services for the first time and are not sure, please contact them.

FYI: Last fall Al Pope wrote an article for the Yukon News about his experience using the abattoir. Al's article is a producer's perspective on the services provided by the mobile abattoir. You can find the Yukon News the article "Consider the mobile abattoir" online at www.emr.ca/infarm19

NORTH OF 60° AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

GRASS ROOTS LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT FOR COLD CLIMATES

NOVEMBER 1ST AND 2ND 2014

This year's conference is focused on the fundamentals of animal husbandry and feeding in our cold climate, with an introduction to holistic management, findings from research into animal feed options for the Yukon, horse nutrition with Yukon-grown hay and a bounty of other topics from diverse speakers.

The conference is scheduled for November 1st and 2nd at the Westmark, Whitehorse from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturday and 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Sunday.

What we have in store for this year is:

- Want to learn more about "grass roots" approaches to land and animal management? Join us for Peter Lundgard's introduction to Holistic Management. Peter and his family run Nature's Way Farm in Grimshaw, in Alberta's Peace River district. Nature's Way Farm is a grass-based, certified organic farm, producing beef, sheep and lamb, alfalfa seed and leafcutter bees for pollination. Peter will be sharing his experience as a producer and introducing his decision-making model. He'll discuss how he approaches holistic management for the benefits of the soil and how it works with his animals.
- Wendy Johnston B.Sc., Equine Science Diploma Instructor with Olds College will be talking horse nutrition and Yukon hay. This will be a good presentation for our horse owners, but will also be geared towards hay producers targeting the horse market. Wendy will provide information on what horse owners are looking for when purchasing Yukon hay, and how they can best utilize the quality hay produced in the Yukon. She will be working with results of Yukon hay analysis to make recommendations on how to optimize the use of local hay for the health of your horse.
- Findings from research into alternative feed options for the Yukon livestock industry, with Yukon Research Centre researcher Treharne Drury.
- Considerations of preferred livestock species for Yukon meat production and wildlife and disease concerns with Field Veterinarian, Jane Harms, from Yukon's Animal Health Unit.
- Land Leasing Options and Solutions with Ted Nibourg, Business Management Specialist, Alberta Agriculture and Rural development.

On Sunday, the conference will be hosting a round-table discussion on increasing meat production in the Yukon, discussing how we can increase farm gate sales and also move our industry into retail streams. The room will be divided into various tables, so participants can discuss topics including:

- Direct marketing
- Accessing the retail market
- Timing and volume of production

Everyone will have the chance to move around the tables and provide input into each topic. The information collected by the table will be used in the development of future agriculture programs, strategies and policies.

A more detailed schedule for the conference is on our website: www.agriculture.gov.yk.ca.

YUKON PRODUCER PROFILE

HIGHLIGHTING PRODUCERS AND THEIR AGRI-BUSINESSES

This column introduces readers to farm operations in Yukon. This segment features John and Sara Lenart's Klondike Valley Nursery and Market Garden operations.

KLONDIKE VALLEY NURSERY AND MARKET GARDEN

There is something interesting, fun or just different about taking a paddle or boat ride across the Klondike River to an agriculture property. To get to Klondike Valley Nursery and Market Garden you must cross the Klondike at Rock creek about 20 kilometres upstream of Dawson City. Tucked up a small creek on the other side is the home of Sara and John Lenart, operators of Klondike Valley Nursery and Market Garden. The river trip to get there is only the start of a very unique experience. This property is full of agricultural gems including apples, grapes and pine nuts, to name a few.

Sara and John started breaking ground at this site just over 25 years ago, and have about four acres cleared on their 44 acre property. They operate a nursery and market garden, with their nursery taking centre stage. When you tour the farm you can sense from John's passionate description that his fruit trees, specifically apples, are the focus of the property. John has been growing apples, pears, cherries, plums, grapes and an assortment of berries at this site. John treats his fruit plants like pets. He wants to see how they behave and develop in this northern home. John, started growing apples and some of the other fruits in the nursery originally to see what could be done in the North, but as time has passed, he and Sara have found that their agriculture efforts



Photo: Sara and John Lenart, Klondike Valley Nursery and Market Garden

are more a response to local food awareness issues and food security concerns.

It is remarkable that John is growing some of these fruits this far north. John's passion for experimenting has allowed him to develop fruit trees that most would think are not hardy enough for Yukon's latitudes. He has trialed over 150 selections of different varieties and various root stocks, and worked with many different breeders and experts to develop the stock he has today. In a good year they have produced about 600 lbs. of apples. But a loss of some of his best trees knocked production to down to about 150 lbs. last year. This year they should have around 275 lbs., and production is still low because they are working with young apple trees.

Klondike Nursery sells some of its fruit stock along with ornamental trees at Dawson's community farmers' market, and from the Lenart's satellite site on Bonanza Road. The ornamental trees are an equal part of their business and helps diversify their operation. In past years, Sara and John also had a healthy market garden

business. Time restraints in the nursery required them to scale back this side of the operation this past summer, though they still supply some direct customers with market garden veggies.

The Lenarts have also diversified their farm income from the core nursery and market garden operations. A dog kennel adds to their income, and Red Canoe Dog Motels is a good second business for these animal lovers. Both Sara and John also have off farm income in Dawson. As John puts it: "the off farm income is vital and subsidizes my growing addiction".

Thanks to John's "growing" addiction, Yukon customers can get their hands on northern hardy fruit and ornamental trees, along with some expert advice on where to plant and how to take care of the trees. It should be noted that Klondike Nursery does not release stock until it proves it can survive Dawson winters. For ornamental trees, the trees need to survive 3 to 5 years and one of the winters needs to have severe cold, -45 or colder to be deemed likely to succeed, and winter kill of tips is

minimal in most years. For the fruit trees, John grows till survival and fruiting characteristics are roughly known. When selling the products from his nursery, he takes the opportunity to educate customers about which site the particular tree or shrub is best suited and what conditions they will need to provide for these Yukon exotic fruits. For example, some varieties may only thrive under shelters, some are for outdoor use in southern Yukon only, or in sheltered spots.

Even with the hardiest stock, you cannot just stick the trees in the ground and expect them to thrive. On top of selecting the hardiest varieties, John has also developed additional strategies to nurture a number of fruiting varieties. By experimenting with growing under shelter and in pots John has also developed some management strategies for overwintering survival and fruit production. He has experimented moving the trees to different types of shelters to aid in survival and production. The Yukon Agriculture Branch is working with John to capture his management strategies and learning, which will be used to update the Branch's berry production information, which is available to the public.

If you are interested in some of the Lenart's fruiting stock, ornamental trees or even some of their market garden vegetables, contact John or Sara at klondikeapples@gmail.com, visit their website www.klondikevalley.com, or "like" them on Facebook. The Facebook option also provides additional information on what they have available and when they are selling some of their jams and berries at the Market.

Thank you, John and Sara, for sharing your operation with the readers of InFARMation.

YUKON FARMER OF THE YEAR RECOGNIZING OUR PRODUCERS

Let's start thinking about those farmers and farm families that are putting their best foot forward towards making Yukon's agriculture community more... ***(this part is up to you)***.

There are many things our producers do for the community, including:

- Help feed it
- Help lead it
- Make it more sustainable, innovative or resilient
- Increase awareness and/or availability of local food
- Provide service to the agriculture industry
- Advocate or demonstrate good farm management practices
- Or whatever you think is important.

During the annual fall North of 60 Agriculture Banquet, the community gathers to celebrate the growing season, catch up with friends and recognize the work done during the season. The banquet also provides an opportunity to identify a farmer of the year. Although only one farmer/farm family is recognized, all the nominees are identified and their stories are shared. This is our way of celebrating the steps being taken to make Yukon's agriculture industry stronger.

Share your story of the Yukon farmer or farm family that you would like to see as Farmer of the Year. Write it down in an e-mail, letter, or fax. As part of your nomination, please include a brief explanation of why the candidate(s) is worthy of the award.

If you have any reservations about your nomination, work with your Ag association or group, or even a neighbor to submit the nomination. Try to provide all the reasons you feel our producers should be recognized.

Nominations must be submitted in writing (letters, facsimiles and e-mails will be accepted) and signed by the nominator(s). The deadline for nominations is Wednesday, October 29, 2014, at 4:00 p.m.

Submit your nomination to:

Agriculture Branch
Suite 320, Elijah Smith Building, Whitehorse
Fax: (867) 393-6222
Email: agriculture@gov.yk.ca

This year's Yukon North of 60° Agriculture Banquet is November 1, 2014, at the Westmark Hotel main ball room in Whitehorse.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAVING SEEDS? SHARE YOUR SEEDS!

The EMR Library is starting a seed library! We won't be lending seeds until the spring, but if you have any seeds to spare, you can bring them to us and they will be shared free of charge with local growers in your community.

We are accepting all seeds except for invasive species and potatoes. (Nothing against potatoes, we just don't have room for them!)

How to donate:

- Seeds should be clean and labeled with the seed type and year grown. Include as much information as you can about the variety and growing history of the seeds – we will pass it on!
- Drop off your seeds at the EMR Library (3rd floor of the Elijah Smith Building) any time Monday to Friday between 8:30 and 4:30.

Need tips on saving seeds? Contact us at emrlibrary@gov.yk.ca and we will help you get started.

FROM THE GROUND UP VEGETABLE SALES

Health and Social Services, Health Promotion Unit had another successful year working with Yukon schools to sell boxes of fresh locally-grown vegetables with From the Ground Up Healthy School Fundraiser.

Students sold 3,456 boxes, or 50,000 pounds of healthy, locally-grown vegetables. Total sales of the 50,000 pounds of veggies were about \$90,000, with the schools getting 50% and the participating farmers 50%.

This year an option to donate a box was added, with 437 boxes being donated.

The boxes were delivered to participating schools between September 22 and October 6.

Six thousand dollars to purchase boxes was also contributed to the project from Growing Forward 2, a Canada-Yukon Agricultural initiative.

Visit www.yukonfromthegroundup.ca for more information or contact Brenda Dion at 667-3507.

AGRICULTURAL EXCELLENCE CONFERENCE
WINNIPEG, NOVEMBER 19-21, 2014

A one-of-a-kind event that brings diverse industry experts and stakeholders together from across disciplines, regions and commodity sectors to share and explore beneficial farm management practices and insights with leading farm business thinkers across Canada.

The Excellence Conference focuses on addressing farm business management principles and practices using a systematic approach to business management.

Speaker Highlights

- *Canada's Agricultural Economic Outlook*, J.P. Gervais, Chief Economist at Farm Credit Canada
- *Global Market Outlook and Opportunity*, Earl Geddes, CEO Canadian International Grains Institute
- *Planting Clarity, Weeding out Procrastination, Harvesting Transition Harmony*, Elaine Froese, Farm Family Coach
- *Future of Farming & Planning for Success*, Cedric Macleod, Macleod Agronomics
- *Success At Any Size*, Kevin Hursh, Hursh Consulting and Communications Inc.
- *Managing Risk in Agriculture Panel Discussion*, Moderated by Hugh Maynard, Qu'anglo Communications & Consulting

For more details and to register:

Call 1-888-232-3262

Email info@fmc-gac.com

Visit www.FMC-GAC.com

InFARMation is:

A Yukon government newsletter published by the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, Agriculture Branch. If you would like to add or remove your name from the newsletter mailing list, comment on an article or contribute a story, please feel free to contact us.

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