



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers**  
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### **1. Carleton Geographer Patricia Ballamingie Develops Urban Agriculture Plan**

<http://www.ottawacitizen.com/Entertainment/ideas+little+town/1734922/story.html>

Carleton University students just back from Batawa spoke glowingly Thursday of their remarkable project to convert the old factory town of 300 into a thriving eco-village. In keeping with the green theme, geography professor Patricia Ballamingie is developing an urban agriculture plan. The idea is for the village to produce some of its own food and become a central marketplace for Quinte West produce, including honey and vegetables.

### **2. Prairies show signs of extended drought, warns U Regina's Dave Sauchyn**

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/prairies-show-signs-of-extended-drought-researcher>

All across western Saskatchewan and southern Alberta, farmers are scanning crop-insurance policies and calculating how short they'll be on payments this year as one of the worst droughts on record parches their land and their bank accounts. Dave Sauchyn, a University of Regina geography professor and research co-ordinator for the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative, put together the thousand-year record of prairie water levels using tree rings. Judging by the rings, the prairie climate could easily plunge into an extended drought similar to that of the 1790s, when the North Saskatchewan River went dry.

### **3. UVic's Chuenyan Lai on Chinatown as Playground of 'Oriental' Stereotypes**

<http://www.timescolonist.com/Chinatown+playground+Oriental+stereotypes/1770060/story.html>

David Chuenyan Lai, professor emeritus of geography at the University of Victoria and author of *Chinatowns: Towns within Cities*, says that yes, Victoria's Chinatown housed gambling dens, brothels and opium in the mid to late 1800s. However, these practices were fairly common in many areas of Victoria, and not just Chinatown. "The police would raid Chinatown for gambling, even though they didn't raid the western gambling clubs," Lai says. The narrow passageways and secret doors were in place to defend against this discrimination by police, who would raid Chinese businesses and homes regularly, looking for ways to fine them.

#### **4. Memorial's Norm Catto on Water Use Restrictions in the St. John's Area**

<http://www.vocm.com/newsarticle.asp?mn=2&id=341&latest=1>

St. John's and the northeast Avalon are dealing with new restrictions on water use in the greater St John's area, and it raises the question of looking for new bodies of fresh water. Most of the ponds closest to the city won't work. Memorial University Professor of Geography, Dr. Norm Catto says any new water supply must be devoid of any adjacent development. Dr. Catto says the site can't have been used previously or close to a farm or industrial site. He says that excludes Octagon Pond, Dead Man's Pond and Paddy's Pond. But he says there is one body of water that has potential.

#### **5. Steinbach Student Top Geographer: Canadians are World Champions**

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/life/steinbach-student-top-geographer-50931672.html>

Steinbach student Peter Brandt and his teammates knew a few things about South Africa's longest river. Now the trio of Canadian geography whizzes will remember the Orange River for another reason: helping them win the National Geographic World Championship in Mexico City. The three students representing Canada beat out teams from the United States and Poland to win gold in the annual geography challenge, which included teams from 15 countries. Brandt claimed top honours and a \$3,000 scholarship in a Canada-wide geography contest in May, and was captain of Canada's three-person team competing in Mexico City.

#### **6. UBC Geographer Daniel Hiebert on Immigrants Chasing Home Dream**

<http://www.canada.com/story.html?id=1754930>

Each year for the past several Canada has received 250,000 immigrants and a pile of refugees on top of that. Their desire to find a home and the benefits that brings to their lives are no different than the street people that have been so much in the news. UBC geographer Daniel Hiebert reminds us of what others have written about the importance of stable housing and home ownership: "A progressive housing career is a key contributing factor to the successful integration of immigrants into Canadian society."

#### **7. McGill's Margaret Kalacska Reveals Technological Innovation Best Allay**

<http://www.exchangemagazine.com/morningpost/2009/week28/Friday/071001.htm>

A new study released by the Canadian International Council (CIC) reveals both Canada and the United States could do a much better job at harnessing new technologies to better survey the thousands of miles of open spaces between Canada-U.S. border points. Author Margaret Kalacska, a geography professor at McGill University, examines the porosity of the Canada-U.S. border, focusing specifically on the areas between ports of entry because she suggests these areas facilitate criminal activities that endanger the national security and economies of both countries.

#### **8. U Guelph's Barry Smit Discusses Implications of Prairie Drought**

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/climate-change-in-the-land-of-great-drought/article1>

University of Guelph geography professor Barry Smit discusses the implications of the drought that is

ravaging crops on the Canadian Prairies. In a piece titled “Climate Change in the Land of Great Drought,” Smit says modern farming practices made it possible to grow crops in the challenging and naturally variable moisture conditions of the Prairies. But there is strong scientific consensus that the severity and frequency of droughts are increasing due to the effects of climate change, making it essential for governments, scientists and farmers to work together to adapt the agricultural system to the new reality, he says.

### **9. McMaster’s Greg Slater Exploring Space in BC’s Pavilion Lake**

<http://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/story.cfm?id=6281>

British Columbia's picturesque Pavilion Lake may not look like the moon, but researchers are diving beneath its surface to advance their knowledge of astrobiology and to learn more about lunar and Martian exploration. The lake is the site of the Pavilion Lake Research Project (PLRP), an international, multi-disciplinary effort to explain the origin of freshwater rock structures known as microbialites. Understanding how modern microbialites grow and interpreting the signatures they leave behind in the rock gives the researchers, including McMaster’s Greg Slater, a window into the earliest life forms on Earth.

### **10. Sanjukta Mukherjee Joins UT Geography as an Assistant Professor**

Sanjukta Mukherjee will be joining the UT geography department as an Assistant Professor (contractually-limited appointment) for the academic year 2009-2010. Sanjukta is just finishing a post-doc at the Asian Institute, Munk Centre here at the University of Toronto. Her research interests are in the areas of urban and economic geography. She will teach four courses: JPG 1614 Regional Development and Policy; JPG 1501 Political Economy of the City; JPG 1509 Feminism, Postcoloniality and Development; JPG 1805 Transnationalism, Diaspora and Gender.

### **11. UNBCers Creyke and Naziel Receive Honours**

Christine Creyke (MA Natural Resources & Environmental Studies – Geography Stream; supervisor: Dr. G. Halseth) of the Tahltan First Nation was awarded a Northern Resident Award for Graduate Studies (\$10,000) through the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS). The award supports Christine’s graduate thesis research: *The Tahltan First Nation and our Consultation Process with Mining Industry; How a Land Use Plan can Improve Community Based Consultation*. See: <http://www.acuns.ca/cnstcurrentrec.htm>

Lorraine Naziel (MA Interdisciplinary Studies; supervisor, Dr. C. Nolin) of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation was awarded a Minerva Education Award and invited to give a keynote address at the Minerva Foundation of BC Conference “Learning to Lead: Combining our Strengths” at St. John’s College, UBC, June 12-14. The vision of this Leadership Development Program is to empower Aboriginal women, to create space for them to connect – with other women leaders and with themselves – and to enable them to gain deeper knowledge of their own values and passions. See: [http://www.theminervafoundation.com/programs/ltl\\_cosprogram.html](http://www.theminervafoundation.com/programs/ltl_cosprogram.html)

### **12. Geographer of the Week: Dr. Brett Eaton, University of British Columbia**

<http://www.geog.ubc.ca/people/index.php?action=2&cat=faculty&memberID=200040>

Dr. Eaton is a fluvial geomorphologist interested in how gravel bed rivers respond to landuse & environmental changes. Brett completed his BSc (Honours) at the University of British Columbia, his MSc degree McGill University, and his PhD at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Eaton joined the Department of Geography at the University of British Columbia in 2004 as an Assistant Professor. His research group is conducting laboratory experiments and field studies as part of a larger effort to improve our ability to model channel change as a function of the relevant governing conditions.

### 13. Recently Completed Theses/Dissertations:

Caroline von Schilling (2009) "Entropy Debt: A Link to Sustainability?" MS Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (Geography), University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, British Columbia. Supervisor: Dr. Darwyn Coxen (NRES Graduate Program). See:

[http://www.unbc.ca/geography/whats\\_new/graduate\\_and\\_undergraduate\\_student\\_news.html](http://www.unbc.ca/geography/whats_new/graduate_and_undergraduate_student_news.html)

### 14. Other "Geographical" News

#### **Downtown McGill Campus Earns Place on Geotourism Map**

<http://reporter.mcgill.ca/2009/07/downtown-campus-earns-place-on-new-geotoursim-map/>

McGill's downtown campus has been presented with a Certificate of Excellence in geotourism. The campus was recognized by the Geotourism Council of Montreal and the National Geographic Society as a distinct location respecting the values of geotourism, defined as "tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents."

#### **New Study Ranks 'Hotspots' of Human Impact on Coastal Areas**

[http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2009-07/uoc--nsr070909.php](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-07/uoc--nsr070909.php)

Coastal marine ecosystems are at risk worldwide as a result of human activities, according to scientists at UC Santa Barbara who performed the first integrated analysis of all coastal areas of the world. "Resource management and conservation in coastal waters must address a litany of impacts from human activities, from the land, such as urban runoff and other types of pollution, and from the sea," said Benjamin S. Halpern. "Our results identify where it is absolutely imperative that land-based threats are addressed — so-called hotspots of land-based impact — and where these land-based sources of impact are minimal or can be ignored."

#### **Amazon River is 11 Million Years Old**

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/07/090707155827.htm>

The Amazon River originated as a transcontinental river around 11 million years ago and took its present shape approximately 2.4 million years ago. These are the most significant results of a study on two boreholes drilled in proximity of the mouth of the Amazon River by Petrobras, the national oil company of Brazil. This research has large implications for our understanding of South American paleogeography and the evolution of aquatic organisms in Amazonia and the Atlantic coast. It is a defining moment as a new ecosystem originates which at the same time forms a geographic divisor.

### 15. Some not so "Geographical" News

#### **CAG President Breaks Ankle and Fractures Leg**

<http://www.geog.uvic.ca/uvtrl/2009/index.html>

In a misadventure last week at a remote backcountry site in the British Columbia Coast Mountains, CAG President Smith tumbled over a loose rock and landed heavily on his left ankle. Bad weather prevented emergency helicopter egress until the next day. Following drives to Bella Coola and subsequently on the following day to Williams Lake, Smith was flown to Victoria for "plate and screw" surgery four days after the accident. Now at home (most likely driving family members crazy), Smith has placed photographs of the trip to Jambeau Glacier in the Mt. Waddington area, on the web for anyone with a love of glacier and mountain viewsapes.

GeogNews Archives: <http://www.geog.uvic.ca/dept/caq/geognews/geognews.html>