



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers**  
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### **1. York University Geography Grad Jennifer Payton Receives Chan Fellowship** <http://www.yorku.ca/yfile/archive/index.asp?Article=12972>

Jennifer Payton, a first-year master's candidate in the Geography Department at York, is the 2009 recipient of the *Albert C.W. Chan Foundation Fellowship*. Her research interests are centred on female migration and boom crop production in Southeast Asia, specifically focusing on labour hierarchies and gendered divisions of labour on plantations. She will explore how unskilled female migrant women are being utilized as pesticide workers on oil-palm plantations surrounding Penang and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. The award funding will support Payton during her fieldwork in Malaysia, where she will be affiliated with KANITA, the Women's Development Research Centre, at the Universiti Santi Malaysia in Penang.

### **2. UBC's Greg Henry on July Heat Record in Eureka** <http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2009/08/06/ellesmere-hot-july.html>

Temperatures soared to record highs in the High Arctic in July. Greg Henry, a researcher who has studied plants on the tundra on eastern Ellesmere Island for almost 30 years, said he has noticed

major weather changes in the area since the mid-1990s. Henry, a geography professor at the University of British Columbia, said he's noticed rainstorms instead of snowstorms in the middle of July. The warmer weather has also meant plants are growing taller and faster, and blooming earlier in the High Arctic. Henry said that over the past 28 years, annual temperatures have risen by almost 3 C. That has led to denser vegetation both on wetlands and on drier land, especially an evergreen shrub known as the Arctic white heather.

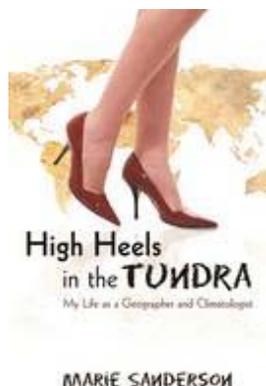
### 3. U Toronto's Jing Chen Upscales Microclimatological Data to Calibrate Imagery

<http://www.research.utoronto.ca/edge/july2009/2.html>

University of Toronto geography professor and Canada Research Chair in Ecosystem-Atmospheric Interaction Jing Chen is finding answers by quantifying Canada's carbon sink. With more than five million square kilometres of forest in Canada, measuring our carbon sink is an enormous task. For many years, this measurement has been done by reading data from 29 micrometeorological towers installed across the country. Chen and his students have developed an upscaling method to calibrate satellite remote sensing imagery.

### 4. Geographer and Climatologist Marie Sanderson Publishes Memoirs

<http://www.iuniverse.com/Bookstore/BookDetail.aspx?BookId=SKU-000125372>



'*High Heels in the Tundra - my life as a geographer and climatologist*' is the title of Marie Sanderson's just-published memoirs. For many years Marie was a professor of climatology at the University of Windsor - and after retirement was an adjunct professor at the University of Waterloo. She lives now in Toronto and is active in alumni affairs at University of Toronto's Department of Geography. The book is published by iUniverse and can be obtained from them on-line. All royalties go to the Griffith Taylor scholarship at the University of Toronto.

### 5. CAG Member Rebecca Handcock "Western Australian Spatial Professional of the Year"

<http://www.csiro.au/people/Rebecca.Handcock.html>

At the recent Western Australian Spatial Excellence Awards gala Dinner, Rebecca Handcock was awarded the "*Western Australian Spatial Professional of the Year*". The award is for geo-spatial achievements, including industry, research, and the spatial community. Rebecca is a CAG member residing in Australia, who completed her MSc and PhD in Geography at the University of Toronto, with Prof. Ferko Csillag in the GUESS research group. Her research program at (Commonwealth Science and Industry Research Organization) in Australia is focussed on the satellite remote sensing of dairy pastures for near real-time delivery to farmers, and on linking animal behaviour to

environmental interactions using GPS collars and satellite data.

## **6. UBC Geography Department to Celebrate 50th Anniversary**

[http://www.geog.ubc.ca/department/alumni/geogramme\\_09.pdf](http://www.geog.ubc.ca/department/alumni/geogramme_09.pdf)

2009 marks the 50th year of Geography's existence as an autonomous department on the UBC campus and the 40th anniversary of the Geography Club, now known as the Geography Students Association. This is cause for celebration, and the department intends to mark the occasion in fine style on September 25th and 26th. The department is inviting friends and alumni to come and to see how the department and your old haunts have changed over the years. For details see:

[http://www.geog.ubc.ca/department/alumni/Geog50\\_Poster2.pdf](http://www.geog.ubc.ca/department/alumni/Geog50_Poster2.pdf)

## **7. At 88, Wilf Tschirart earns his PhD in Geography at Wilfrid Laurier University**

[http://www.wlu.ca/news\\_listing.php?grp\\_id=149](http://www.wlu.ca/news_listing.php?grp_id=149)

Wilf Tschirart is looking for a challenge after finishing a PhD in the very year he turns 88. Tschirart earlier completed his master's thesis in which he compared the efforts of area conservation authorities to restore river basin ecosystems. He who will soon be lining up for convocation at Wilfrid Laurier University to receive a PhD in geography and environmental studies. For his dissertation, Tschirhart examined the conservation management of southern Ontario's small protected areas. For his field work, he spent days and days in the Lower Maitland River Valley and in the Apps' Mill Conservation Area, observing the ecological communities and doing case studies.

## **8. CAGONT Conference at University of Toronto Mississauga, October 16-17, 2009**

<http://info.wlu.ca/~wwwgeog/Cagont/cagont.htm>

Ontario geographers take note. The Department of Geography at the University of Toronto Mississauga is hosting the Annual Meeting of the Ontario Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers. The conference will begin on the evening of Friday October 16th 2009, with a reception, while all paper sessions will be on Saturday, October 17, 2009. While this year's conference will be partially organized around the exploration of Canada's "suburban futures", papers from all subdisciplines are welcome, as are submissions unrelated to the conference theme. CAGONT provides an exceptional opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to connect with one another, and faculty from other universities.

## **9. 2009 Fieldwork Updates from UNBC Geography Graduates**

[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)

UNBC Geography graduate students are doing some amazing fieldwork this summer. Several of them, Claudette Bois, Nate Einbinder, Courtney LeBourdais, Joe LeBourdais, Lorraine Naziel, and Cristian Silva have web links online that share some of their work that takes them from northwestern and northeastern British Columbia, to Guatemala and further south to Chile. Click on each name to learn more about their research.

## **10. UBC's Geraldine Pratt on Canada's Live-In Caregiver Immigration Program**

<http://www.walrusmagazine.com/articles/2009.09-immigration-nannys-other-family-susan-mccl>

Citizenship and Immigration Canada's live-in caregiver program is unique in the world, in that it

allows participants to apply for permanent residency after two years' employment. Only then, however, can they sponsor their children to join them, a process that generally takes several more years. By then, the children barely know their mothers, and they tend not to fare well. Geraldine Pratt, a University of British Columbia geography professor who has conducted some of the limited research in Canada on caretakers' kids, explains: "These children are first abandoned by their mothers; then they're plucked from the grasp of those relatives caring for them and brought to a new country, a new climate, a new language, and into the arms of a stranger. They end up feeling a huge amount of anger and resentment."

#### **11. UBC's Tim Oke Comments on "Do Cities Deflect Rain Storms"**

[http://www.philly.com/philly/health\\_and\\_science/20090810\\_Do\\_cities\\_deflect\\_rain\\_storms\\_.htm](http://www.philly.com/philly/health_and_science/20090810_Do_cities_deflect_rain_storms_.htm)

Recent research suggests that dense, urban building might enhance rain just outside cities. A NASA study based on satellite data showed that summer rainfall in Memphis and Atlanta was half what it was 20 to 40 miles away. Other studies have found that urban heat might alter lightning-flash patterns and the paths of thunderstorms and perhaps even afford downtowns a small measure of protection against severe weather. All this remains controversial. "As a scientific conundrum," Oke said, "it's very difficult to untangle." City buildings might be deflecting or altering the course of storms. "As a scientific conundrum," Oke said, "it's very difficult to untangle."

#### **12. Université de Montréal's Pierre Richard et d'histoire au lac des Castors**

<http://www.nouvelles.umontreal.ca/culture/belles-soirees-et-matinees/13-000-ans-dhistoire-au-l>

En 1937, au moment où l'on a creusé le bassin, l'endroit était plutôt un pré marécageux sur fond de tourbe. Auparavant, la zone avait été colonisée par des castors, d'où le nom donné au plan d'eau. Il y a 13 000 ans, alors que le mont Royal était une île, l'eau de la mer de Champlain s'engouffrait dans cette petite dépression et y a laissé des plages dont on peut encore voir la trace. Ce sont quelques-unes des étapes qui ont marqué l'histoire de ce lieu et que relatera Pierre Richard, professeur au Département de géographie, dans sa conférence sur les secrets du lac des Castors. Le professeur vient de prendre la relève de son collègue de l'Université McGill John Elson, qui, dans les années 70, a étudié les sédiments recueillis en 1937 là où se trouve actuellement l'étang.

#### **13. UT Mississauga's Brian Branfireun Examines Mercury in the Environment**

<http://www.research.utoronto.ca/edge/july2009/3.html#2>

Geography professor Brian Branfireun at the University of Toronto Mississauga interested in the transport and transformation of mercury in the environment. Mercury is a natural element that exists in forms that aren't particularly toxic. It's only when it goes through a series of chemical transformations that it becomes what's called methyl mercury, which is the kind that bioaccumulates in fish and acts as a central nervous system toxin in humans. The question is how — and where — this transformation happens.

#### **14. Geographer of the Week: Nicole Yantzi, Laurentian University**

<http://geography.laurentian.ca/Laurentian/Home/Departments/Geography/Faculty/Dr.+Nicole+Y>

Dr. Yantzi received her Ph.D. from the Department of Geography, Queen's University. She is an Assistant Professor of Geography at Laurentian University, and is also affiliated with the Center for Rural and Northern Health Research and the School of Rural and Northern Health at Laurentian and the Health Care, Technology and Place initiative and the University of Toronto. She has two

main research interests that intersect the geographies of children and youth, disability, and health and health care. The first examines how the socio-spatial exclusion and marginalization of children with disabilities in the key spaces of childhood impacts their ability to fully participate in their communities. Her second area of research examines the spatial experiences, negotiations and conflict that occur when complex and sophisticated care is provided in spaces not expressly built for caring activities including homes and schools.

## 15. Other “Geographical” News

### **British Columbians Tops in North America in Geographical Knowledge**

<http://www.theprovince.com/folks+tops+geography/1880469/story.html>

A survey commissioned by the International Association for the Study of Canada and the Association of American Geographers tapped 2,500 people on both sides of the border to gauge their familiarity with world geography and frequency of out-of-country travel. In both categories, B.C. residents topped the polling for all Canadian provinces and U.S. states. While respondents in the Atlantic provinces claimed more knowledge of local geography than others, B.C. residents scored significantly higher than the rest on world geography, with 29% of those surveyed describing their international sense of place as "very good." Residents of Alberta and Quebec (both 16%) and the U.S. Midwest (15%) were the least likely to rate their knowledge of global geography as solid.

### **Researchers Reveal the Dance of Water**

[http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2009-08/dnal-srr081109.p hp](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-08/dnal-srr081109.p hp)

Water is familiar to everyone, but despite this it exhibits many strange properties that are still poorly understood. New research reveals that water's density maximum at 4° Celsius can be explained by the fact that the tetrahedral structures are of lower density, which does not vary significantly with temperature, while the more disordered regions—which are of higher density—become more disordered and so less dense with increasing temperature. Likewise, as water heats, the percentage of molecules in the more disordered state increases, allowing this excitable structure to absorb significant amounts of heat, which leads to water's high heat capacity.

### **How Geography Determined the Canadian Musical Landscape**

<http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/Magazine/jf06/indepth/archaeology.asp>

Long before whaling ships began crashing against the rough shores of Canada's Arctic islands and making wood available to locals for the first time, drums were built from raw materials — such as whalebone and caribou skin — the rugged landscape provided. Now, says Dr. Paula Conlon, a Canadian ethnomusicologist who teaches at the University of Oklahoma, contemporary Inuit have plastic and other man-made materials at their disposal from which to craft their drums.

## 16. Some not so “Geographical” News

### **Songs for Teaching Canadian Geography**

<http://www.songsforteaching.com/canadasongs.htm>

Songs about Canada's geography, and way of life. Including such classics as “Lower Canada Rebellion Rap”, “Foolish Frobisher”, and “The Canadian Province Rap”.

### **Quiz - Canadian Geography in Music**

<http://www.funtrivia.com/trivia-quiz/Music/Canadian-Geography-in-Music-196661.html>

There are not many out there, but there are some songs that make reference to Canadian geography. Test your knowledge of the Great White North and see how many of these places you can name.

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