



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers**

**No. 79, April 20, 2010**

**Compiled by Dan Smith [<caq@geog.uvic.ca>](mailto:caq@geog.uvic.ca)**

---

**WLU's Kevin Hanna on Resource Planning on Canada's 'Other Coast':** Kevin Hanna, associate professor of geography and environmental studies at Wilfrid Laurier University, spoke at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College about how the failure of the cod stocks could be an example of how not to manage resources. Hanna spoke about processes that lead to decisions in resource management which are inclusive. Processes that help people from different points of view talk the same language at the same table. Using the cod fishery as an example of Newfoundland's success with collaborative resource management doesn't give Scott a good impression of the history of integrative, deliberative management in the province. [The Western Star](#)

**U Regina's Randy Widdis to Deliver Opening Presentation at Library of Congress Symposium:** [Randy Widdis](#), Department of Geography at the University of Regina has been invited by the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, American Folklife, and the Canadian Embassy to deliver along with Victor Konrad the opening presentation of the Border Lines / Borderlands: Culture and the Canadian-U.S. International Boundary Symposium to be held at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. this June. Randy has also been awarded a Visiting Scholar Position in Canadian Studies at Carleton University for the period January 1-April 30, 2011. [Carleton SSC News](#)

**Queen's U's Audrey Kobayashi Elected AAG Vice-President:** In voting recently completed by Association of American Geographers members, Kenneth Foote of the University of Colorado has been elected as President of the AAG, and [Audrey Kobayashi](#) of the Department of Geography at Queen's University has been elected to the post of Vice President. Their terms begin on July 1, 2010. [AAG Newsletter 45\(4\)](#)

**Lethbridge U's Sarah Boon Joins Bob McDonald on CBC's *Quirks & Quarks*:** The Devon Ice Cap is about 14,000 sq km in area, as much as 880 metres thick - the second largest ice mass in the Arctic, after the Greenland Ice Cap - and apparently shrinking by the minute. Dr. Sarah Boon, a geographer from the University of Lethbridge, led a group that's been studying this huge mass of ice on Devon Island, and their latest work indicates that the ice cap has been losing mass since 1985. This is worrying, but they hope understanding the ice of Devon Island better might provide insights into the more important dynamics of the much bigger Greenland Ice Cap. [Listen to this CBC Segment](#)

**UQAM's David Hanna on Montreal LRT Plan:** Scrap a controversial new bus corridor, create a new suburban train line to serve the South Shore using existing tracks, and study the idea of a new light-rail transit system on new tracks on the Victoria Bridge. Such an LRT plan would cost about \$660 million and could be undertaken within a few years, with the LRT connecting the South Shore to Peel St., where it could connect to the métro network, said David Hanna, an urban geographer at UQAM head of Vision Montreal's urban planning committee. [Montreal Gazette](#)

---

**Geographers Tristan Pearce and James Ford Know Inuit See What's Happening to Arctic Ice:** In the politically charged atmosphere that is climate change, new data — information that Arctic sea ice cover is nearly back to average after years of dramatic declines — has been paraded by climate skeptics as yet more evidence that climate change is a hoax. While this would appear a happy story, it is just that: a story. Inuit in Ulukhaktomiut, in the Northwest Territories, a community of about 400 on the coast of Victoria Island in the Western Canadian Arctic, continue to experience dramatic changes in the Arctic Sea ice. In recent years, including this winter, there has been ice-free open water and very thin, unstable, temporary ice cover that is vulnerable to wind and currents in areas where the ice used to be eight feet-thick. Like the unusual growth of sea ice in the Bering Sea last month, the ice that is forming in the Beaufort Sea, near Ulukhaktok, is extremely thin and is easily smashed and blown away during a strong wind. [The Record](#)

**York U's Bill Found Presents Documentary Films on Caribbean Islands:** Bill Found, University Professor Emeritus in the Department of Geography (Arts) and the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, has produced a series of videos which document geographical features of selected Caribbean islands. All are based on Bill's research in 24 different Caribbean islands, and all illustrate how Caribbean islands are being quickly transformed in the face of modern tourism, changes in land use, and efforts by local people to preserve the best of the islands' natural and cultural landscapes. The videos, originally prepared for Bill's undergraduate class on the Geographical Transformation of the Caribbean Islands, can now be viewed publicly over the Internet. [Videos Currently Available](#)

**U Guelph's Aaron Berg Comments on Eramosa River Water Supply:** Despite an unseasonably warm winter, the City of Guelph isn't planning on implementing water restrictions during the spring. The city's manager of waterworks says he "wouldn't be surprised" to see the water use program implemented in May, but says the local rivers flow levels are high enough that it isn't necessary to start water restrictions early. The Eramosa River is one of the key triggers for deciding when to implement water restrictions because "what you see is what you get there," says Busatto, referring to the fact that the level is affected by run off from melted snow and rain fall. "We are behind in total volume of water this year," says Aaron Berg, a professor in the department of geography at the University of Guelph, adding, "a lot can be reversed with a normal or above average spring rain." [GuelphMercury.com](#)

**Mount Allison U's Geraldine Jordan on Popularity of Weather Program:** Not only do people like to talk about it, but they also like to learn more about it. Dr. Geraldine Jordan of Mount Allison University in Sackville can certainly vouch for that fact. Her second year course on weather and climate boasts 75 students and could have had more if more spaces were available for them. The course is part of the university's geography and environment department program. Dr. John Fox, the head of the department, said the weather and climate course has seen a remarkable 80 per cent increase in students in just the past three years. He said the department as a whole has increased its enrolment by 50 per cent in that time. [Times & Transcript](#)

**Discovering Interdisciplinary Studies at Queen's University with Audrey Kobayashi:** Queen's increasing number of interdisciplinary courses is creating dialogue on how departments will be organized in the future. Geography professor Audrey Kobayashi said interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary are two different styles of learning. Kobayashi teaches an interdisciplinary course, IDIS302, "Race" and Racism. "The class is multidisciplinary but the course is interdisciplinary," she said, adding that her students normally come from about 30 different disciplines. Kobayashi said she thinks multidisciplinary learning is valuable because students from different disciplines learn to work together. The fact that they can bring in a lot of views really enriches the programs, she said. Queen's doesn't have many interdisciplinary programs yet, she said, adding that she thinks well-thought out interdisciplinarity could help offset some of the University's budget challenges. [The Journal](#)

**University of Toronto's Lisa Freeman Concerned About Safety of Rooming Houses:** Economic uncertainty, years on the social housing waiting list and overflowing emergency shelters often make renting a room the only option for the poor. Rooming houses are an essential part of our affordable housing stock. Sometimes, they are the only place people can call home. Fires have long plagued the history of rooming houses in Toronto. Licensing is essential but we need more. Allocating municipal funds to ensure safety in suburban rooming houses through regular inspections and tenant education is hardly an outrageous demand, especially given the city's recent announcement of a budget surplus. Lisa Freeman is a PhD candidate in the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Toronto and a Trudeau Scholar researching and writing about rooming houses in Toronto's inner suburbs. [Toronto Star](#)

**Brock University Geography Society Participates in First Official Enviro-Week:** From March 22 to April 1, Brock will be featuring a bevy of green friendly events for its first ever Enviro-Week. With plans to include giveaways, markets and workshops, it is shaping up to be a memorable four days. Enviro-Week is being organized by a number of clubs and organizations including the Brock University Geography Society (BUGS). [The Brock Press](#)

**Memorial Geography Students Supported by Harris Centre Applied Research Fund:** The Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development announced \$100,000 in funding to support Memorial researchers. Awarded through the applied research fund, and provided by the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development and The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the support will be shared by nine successful recipients including two from the Department of Geography. PhD student Ryan Gibson received support to examine regional governance on the Great Northern Peninsula and master's candidate Kim Olson obtained funding to examine voluntary fishery closures in western Newfoundland and Labrador. [Memorial Online](#)

---

### **Geographer of the Week: Dr. Marney Issac, University of Toronto Scarborough**

Dr. [Marney Issac](#) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical and Environmental Sciences and International Development Studies (Cross-appointment), University of Toronto at Scarborough. Marney completed her BSc and MSc degrees at the University of Guelph, and her PhD at the University of Toronto.

Her research program applies ecological principles to agricultural landscapes, with particular attention on identifying and developing strategies for conservation, management and system resilience. Marney investigate practices that improve the efficiency of nutrient cycles, optimize plant-soil interactions, and promote ecosystem services and food security in low-input agricultural and agroforestry systems. Her research approach makes use of a diverse set of technical research tools and employs various temporal and spatial scales: from mechanistic manipulative trials at the rhizosphere scale to large agroecosystem dynamics.

---

### **Other "Geographical" News**

**Resources for Earth Sciences and Geography Instruction:** Dr. Mark Francek of Central Michigan University has created this helpful website for science educators and students interested in the fields of earth science and geography. This clearinghouse of useful educational resources is organized alphabetically around the sequence of topics that one might encounter in an introductory earth science or physical geography class. Some of these topics include "Atmospheric Moisture", "Glaciers", "Water

Pollution", and "Population". Each topical area includes links to high- quality online resources, complete with a short description authored by Professor Francek. Visitors to the site can also sign up for Professor Francek's "Earth Science Site of the Week" email update. [RESGI](#)

---

### **Some not so "Geographical" News**



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