



GeogNews

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Memorial U's Trevor Bell on Study to Test Levels of Lead in St. John's Kids: Researchers will test lead levels in St. John's children this summer after a preliminary study found high levels of lead in older homes and soil in parts of the city. Researchers with Eastern Health, the province's largest health authority, and with Memorial University plan to recruit 200 families in May and June to take part in the study, which will take place through July and August. Trevor Bell, a Memorial University geography professor, said children are the key to connecting blood/lead levels with environmental exposure. Bell found elevated levels of lead in a 2003 study in downtown St. John's. "There are lots of communities in Atlantic Canada that have a legacy of old clapboard-painted houses and coal-burning, especially," Bell said. [CBC News](#) | [Memorial Today](#)

UNBC's Greg Halseth Explores "The Next Rural Economies": [The Next Rural Economies](#) is the result of a workshop held at UNBC two years ago that brought together rural and small-town experts from seven countries and more than 60 officials from northern BC to share their thoughts and opinions on the future of rural development. "What emerged from the discussion was that northern BC is exceptionally well-placed with its abundance of assets and its understanding of the issues," says Greg Halseth, a Geography professor and Canada Research Chair at UNBC who was the lead for the workshop and the resulting book. "What we still need, however, is more attention on mobilizing our assets in support of local aspirations." [UNBC News Release](#) | [Williams Lake Tribune](#)

U Ottawa's Eric Crighton and UTM's Kathi Wilson Report that Asthma Rates in Inuit Below National Average: New research shows Inuit populations in the Canadian Arctic have asthma rates far below Aboriginal people in other parts of Canada, especially those in urban centres. The study, published recently in the [International Journal of Circumpolar Health](#), says reported cases of asthma in Inuit children was 5%, compared to 12% for all other Aboriginal groups. Eric Crighton, lead author of the paper and Geography Professor at the University of Ottawa, says while it's not unusual to see lower rates of asthma in rural areas, that doesn't always mean rural residents are healthier than their urban cousins. "It's my personal opinion . . . that it's the limited access to health care that explains this finding. Aboriginal populations are heavily underserved (by health care) all across Canada, but in the North it's a bit more extreme," says Crighton, adding "The biggest determinant of doctor reported asthma is whether you've been to the doctor." [Medical News Today](#)

Nipissing University's Shawn Mayhew-Hammond Receives Sportsmen Show Scholarship: The scholarships, worth \$1,000 each, were issued to students finterested in fish and wildlife or marine biology. A special presentation was held at the opening ceremony of the Toronto International Sportsmen's Show. Nipissing student Shawn Mayhew-Hammond, a third-year Environmental Geography with a minor in Biology and certificates in Geomatics and Environmental Management, was awarded a scholarship for research focused in fisheries science and management. [Nipissing News](#)

U Toronto's Bruce Huang Wins Outstanding Achievement Award for Technical Service: There was no question about systems software programmer Bruce Huang being the deserving recipient of this year's Technical Service Award when the Faculty of Arts & Science's annual Outstanding Achievement Awards were handed out recently. His colleagues in the Department of Geography & Program in Planning are unanimous in their overwhelming appreciation for his tireless, dedicated, innovative, painstaking and thorough approach to his work and their needs. But if there was an Outstanding Customer Service Award, he would get that one, too. According to Huang, one of the most gratifying aspects of his days is the opportunity to work with students. He explains that most students are hesitant to talk to him, and would rather struggle through with their technical problems until their course is over. "The students have inspired me since I began this job. I would rather visit with them in the labs and find out how things are going for them," he says, noting that the extra effort prevents students from feeling that U of T is an uncaring place where no one looks out for them. [UT Faculty of Arts & Science News](#)

U Toronto's Dan Harvey on Greening Toronto: Don't get Dan Harvey started on Toronto's eco-friendly initiatives. Renewable energy? Wind turbines? "A joke," the University of Toronto environmental studies prof says – at least, until we can start reducing our energy footprint, big-time. A lot has been made of the city's attempts to green its buildings, which suck up about 60 per cent of Toronto's energy consumption. But they don't go nearly far enough, he insists. And the problem isn't the city's huge supply of old, crumbling towers: It's the shiny new buildings going up we should be worried about. [Globe and Mail](#) | [Globe and Mail Article](#)

Vancouver Island U's Pam Shaw on Balancing Industry and Nature Collide in the Nanaimo River Estuary: The Nanaimo River Estuary, the largest on Vancouver Island and the fifth largest in B.C., was once considered the "breadbasket" of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. Pam Shaw is a member of the Nanaimo River management committee, a group of local stakeholders who are tasked to provide a balance of human activity, economic development and environmental health for the estuary through the management plan. She said that restoration of even the most abused and contaminated estuaries can be accomplished. "Work has been ongoing to re-establish species that have disappeared over the years, including herring in the Squamish estuary due to industry and pollution," she said. [Nanaimo Daily Times](#)

The 100-Mile Myth and UT's Pierre Desrochers: What locavores forget, or don't stop to consider, is that calculating the emissions over the entire life-cycle process is far more complex than counting transportation miles. Local producers, for example, often store their fruits and vegetables using refrigeration for several months to stretch into the off-season. Certain climates also demand more CO₂-heavy inputs, such as pesticides and fertilizers. And suboptimal growing conditions often mean clearing and farming more land to gain yields. "If you want to preserve wilderness areas, the way to go is modern, intensive farming and international trade," says Pierre Desrochers, a geography professor at the University of Toronto. [Regina Leader-Post](#)

UT Instructor Kirsty Duncan Pushes Liberals to Go Positive for Change: Carolyn Bennett and Kirsty Duncan, both Toronto MPs, gave a passionate and substantive presentation about multiple sclerosis and the reluctance of governments in Canada to recognize through funding a new and controversial procedure to diagnose and treat it. Dr. Bennett is a physician, and Dr. Duncan has a PhD and has taught medical geography at the University of Toronto. They laid out what the Liberals could do to help Canadians who have the disease: push the federal government to provide \$10-million to help research the new hypothesis that MS is not an auto-immune disease. [Globe and Mail](#)

Memorial U's Geography Department Launches Newsletter - *The Geographer*: Feature items include a description of the teaching awards received by faculty member Norm Catto; a description of new faculty member Kelly Vodden; and, research updates related to Alistair Bath, grad student Chris McNabb, and a study of cold-water corals by MUN geographers Evan Edinger and Rodolphe Devillers. [The Geographer](#)

WDCAG 2011 to be Hosted by SFU Geography: Members of the Western Division of the CAG will be delighted to learn that the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University will be hosting the next divisional meeting. Stay tuned for updates. [SFU Geography](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Jutta Gutberlet. 2010. [Waste, poverty and recycling](#) (Editorial). *Waste Management* 30(2):171–173.

Dana Helene Wilson and Nancy A. Ross. *In press*. [Place, gender and the appeal of video lottery terminal gambling: unpacking a focus group study of Montreal youth](#). *GeoJournal*. DOI: 10.1007/s10708-009-9284-7

Zoe A. Meleti and Emma C. Harrison. 2010. [Tourists and turtles: Searching for a balance in Tortuguero, Costa Rica](#). *Conservation and Society* 8(1):26-43.

Geographer of the Week: Dr. Valerie Crooks, Simon Fraser University

Dr. [Valerie Crooks](#) an Assistant Professor in the [Department of Geography](#) at Simon Fraser University. Valerie completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Western Ontario and an M.A. degree at McMaster University. For her PhD Valerie returned to the School of Geography & Geology at McMaster University where she examined how women living with a contested chronic illness, fibromyalgia syndrome, experienced everyday socio-spatial life and health services. She was awarded the 2006 Jacques May Thesis Prize by the Medical Geography Specialty Group for the contribution of this work to health geography. Following this she started postdoctoral fellowships in the York Institute for Health Research at York University and the Health Care, Technology & Place Strategic Training Program at the University of Toronto, before accepting her position at Simon Fraser University in 2006.

Valerie's research is characterized by four interrelated areas of inquiry: socio-spatial processes of disablement; doctor-patient Interactions; geographies of primary health care; and, social policies and programs. In addition to these areas of inquiry, Valerie has emerging interests in issues related to the formal and informal provision of palliative care in the community, the use of support groups by persons with chronic illnesses, and the delivery of primary mental health care for immigrant women. For more information on Dr. Crooks's research, check out her [faculty webpage](#).

Recent Theses and Dissertations

David Mazzucchi. 2010. [Postglacial vegetation history of mountainous landscapes on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada](#). Unpublished PhD dissertation. School of Earth and Ocean Sciences, University of Victoria.

Other “Geographical” News

Professors and Social Media: Professors, particularly those in the senior ranks, might have a reputation for being leery of social media. But they are no Luddites when it comes to Web 2.0 tools such as Facebook and YouTube, according to a new survey. The data suggest that 80 percent of professors, with little variance by age, have at least one account with either Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Skype, LinkedIn, MySpace, Flickr, Slideshare, or Google Wave. Nearly 60 percent kept accounts with more than one, and a quarter used at least four. A majority, 52 percent, said they used at least one of them as a teaching tool. [Inside Higher Ed](#)

From Maps To Apps: Where Are We Headed? Through the centuries, humankind has been using progressively cooler tools to find the best way from Point A to Point B. Navigation has morphed from crude compasses to interactive online maps. But in the past couple of months there has been a spate of stories about people getting lost while using computerized maps, and wrecking vehicles while checking global positioning system teleprompters. Consider: A man driving from Texas to New York -- with a truckload of marijuana -- blamed his GPS-enabled device when he mistakenly wound up in Canada. He was arrested for drug smuggling. [Wbur.org](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



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