



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers**  
**No. 96, September 19, 2010**  
Compiled by Dan Smith [<cag@geog.uvic.ca>](mailto:cag@geog.uvic.ca)

---

**Ryerson U Geographers Receive SSHRC Support:** The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) has awarded 18 Ryerson researchers more than \$1.1 million in funding in its latest round of competitions. Included were awards made to geographers: Harald Bauder, *International Migration of Privileged Labour: How Workers in Canada and Germany Gain from Mobility*; and, Tony Hernandez, *Urban Growth Metrics and Planning Policy: a GeoVisual Approach*. [Ryerson University News & Events](#)

**l'Université Laval Faculté de Foresterie, de Géographie et de Géomatique Reconnue Établissement vert Brundtland:** La Faculté de foresterie, de géographie et de géomatique de l'Université Laval devient aujourd'hui la première faculté universitaire au Québec à recevoir la reconnaissance Établissement vert Brundtland (EVB). Cette reconnaissance, fruit d'un partenariat entre Recyc-Québec et la Centrale des syndicats du Québec, récompense les efforts et les réalisations des étudiants, professeurs et employés de la Faculté en matière de développement durable. / The Faculty of Forestry, Geography and Geomatics at Laval University today becomes the first university department in Quebec to receive recognition Institution Green Brundtland (EVB). This recognition, a partnership between Recyc-Québec and Centrale des Syndicats du Québec, recognizes the efforts and achievements of students, faculty and staff of the faculty's sustainable development. [Université Laval](#)

**Carleton Geography Grad Falls Foul of Harper Science Policy:** The Harper government has tightened the muzzle on federal scientists. Natural Resources Canada scientists were told this spring they need "pre-approval" from Minister Christian Paradis' office to speak with national and international journalists. The documents show the new rules being so broadly applied that one scientist was not permitted to discuss a study in a major research journal without "pre-approval" from political staff. NRCan scientist Scott Dallimore co-authored the study out a colossal flood that swept across northern Canada 13,000 years ago. The study was considered so newsworthy that two British universities issued releases to alert the international media. It was, however, deemed so sensitive in Ottawa that Dallimore was told he had to wait for clearance from the minister's office. [Ottawa Citizen](#)

**UVic's Rick Searle on Risk to Vancouver Island's Botanical Beach:** Between 1901 and 1907, scientists from around the world made the trek to Vancouver Island's Botanical Beach to study the amazing tide pools, brimming with diverse aquatic life. The rugged spot was the first marine research station in the Pacific Northwest. Today, on the terraced sandstone ledges where rogue waves from the Pacific can sweep away unsuspecting visitors, the pools' creatures are themselves in danger. "At some point, if trends continue, there won't be anything left but the hardiest species," said Rick Searle, a 55-year-old University of Victoria geography professor who has been visiting since 1973. Senior park ranger Hugh MacDonald said B.C. Parks is concerned about the popular beach park, 110 kilometres northwest of Victoria. [The Globe and Mail](#)

---

**Mount Allison U's Brad Walters Calls for Stricter Regulation of Hydro-Fracking in New Brunswick:** In a just-published essay for the [CBC-NB Votes website](#), Mount Allison Professor of Geography & Environment, Brad Walters, makes the case for stricter regulations of hydraulic-fracturing, a relatively novel and controversial practice increasingly used in New Brunswick to extract oil and gas from underground shale deposits. There are just too many unknowns about the health and environmental risks of "hydro-fracking", Walters argues. [cbcnews.ca](#)

**Concordia U Hosts International Cartographic Association Workshop:** A three-day International Cartographic Association workshop entitled "Mapping Environmental Issues in the City: Arts and Cartographic Cross Perspectives" was held in the Department of Geography, Planning and Environment at Concordia University September 8-10, 2010. Students, cartographic experts and artists from Australia, New Zealand, Norway, United Kingdom, Canada and the U.S.A participated in the workshop. This group came together to brainstorm innovative and interactive ways to visually represent and engage with environmental data related to Montreal. One outcome of this workshop will be an edited volume. Detailed information available at [Mapping Environmental Issues web site](#).

**UBC's Dan Hiebert Meets with Danes to Discuss Solutions to Immigration Tensions:** There is one social problem with which the Danes still struggle. They're not sure how to move beyond ethnic tensions and respond more creatively to immigrants, particularly those from Muslim countries. With Canada developing a global reputation as one of the few countries in the world where high immigration and visible minorities are tolerated and even celebrated, SFU economics professor Krishna Pendakur, UBC geographer Dan Hiebert and UBC sociologist Sylvia Fuller tried to explain why that might be so. Hiebert, who just returned from a year living in Scandinavia, speculated some of the tensions in Denmark could be attributed to the significant differences in the immigration and economic systems of Canada and Nordic countries. While most Canadian immigrants come from the educated "economic" class and few arrive as refugees, Hiebert said the situation is virtually reversed in Nordic countries such as Denmark. [The Vancouver Sun](#)

**U Toronto's Deborah Cowen Comments on Scarborough Bridge as Symbol of Hope:** Locals simply call it the bridge – and they hate it. But over the past year, community organizers have come up with an idea to celebrate the bridge and linking the two communities. It has led to beautification efforts including a mural designed and drawn by Scarborough youth. Deborah Cowen, a University of Toronto geography professor who works on community issues in Scarborough, notes how strange it is that a bridge became a barrier – but emphasizes it is being reversed by residents. "It's indicative of this community. There is so much collaboration, so much good spirit," she said, though she worries about continuing future efforts with so much attention in the mayor's race focused on cutting costs at city hall. "This little project has had so much effect. This is a priority neighbourhood and that funding is in jeopardy," Cowen said. "When there is care and investment, these communities can do amazing things." [Thestar.com](#)

**U Guelph's Evan Fraser Featured on CBC Radio's Quirks & Quarks:** [Evan Fraser](#), Associate Professor of Geography at the University of Guelph was featured on the radio science program discussing his latest book *Empires of Food: Feast, Famine and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations*. In the book, he shows how the history of the decline of world powers is linked to food and hunger by examining how societies from the Roman Empire to imperial Britain crumbled as their food supplies crashed. Fraser, who is an expert in food security, also suggests in the book that we may currently be facing the same fate and need to start altering the way we produce, store and consume our food. [Canada views.ca](#)

**UBC Geography September 2010 Newsletter:** Volume 6(1) welcomes 32 new graduate students, and new post-docs Ju Hui Judy Han and Faran Ali. Featured is news of the 5<sup>th</sup> Summer Institute in Economic Geography host at the end of June, Pacific Worlds in Motion conference hosted in early June, and the Hydrologic Synthesis Institute. During May-June 2010, Dr. David W. Edgington led a two-week field-trip to western Japan (the Kansai region) to examine urban and rural change in and around historic Kyoto city. The class was GEOG 379C. Dr. Brian Pendleton (Langara College) accompanied Dr. Edgington and 22 undergraduate geography students. The newsletter contains a few observations taken from students' daily diaries kept during the field trip. Included as well is a memorial describing the career and contributions of Warren Gill. [UBC Geog Sept 2010 Newsletter](#)

**SFU Geography Announces First Annual Distinguished Lecture in Geography:** SFU Geography's inaugural Distinguished Lecturer is Professor Stuart C. Aitken, Chair of the Department of Geography, and Director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of Youth and Space at San Diego State University. Prof. Aitken is an urban social geographer with longstanding and pioneering research interests in families and communities, children and youth, and film. Professor Aitken will speak on: "Doing Geography at the Edge of the World: Embattled Leagues of Children and Seals Teeter on the Rim"; Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup>; 3:30 p.m.; Simon Fraser University; Burnaby Campus; Halpern Centre; Room 126. [SFU Geog Events](#)

**Ryerson University Geography Field Trip to Italy and Austria:** From September 17-26, 2010, Thirty-six students and three professors will be taking part in Geo773: Field Studies to Italy and Austria. Field Studies is a professional elective course offered to students in the 3rd and 4th year of the Geographic Analysis Program. [Ryerson Geog 773](#)

**McMaster's Richard Harris Named Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada:** "It's really cool!" That's Richard Harris' immediate reaction when asked how he feels about being one of three McMaster professors - Bruce Gaulin and Paul O'Byrne are the other two - to be named as Fellows in the Royal Society of Canada. Harris composes himself and adopts a more professorial tone. Even in the excitement of such an honour there is humble and fulsome praise for helpful colleagues and a supportive workplace. "I've been at Mac for most of my working life [since 1988]," says Harris, whose academic work involves urban history and suburbanization. "So I think this award says a lot about how supportive an environment McMaster has been, and continues to be." [McMaster Daily News](#)

---

### **Geographer of the Week: Dr. Jianghua Wu, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University**

Dr. Jianghua Wu was recently appointed as an Assistant Professor at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University of Newfoundland. Jianghua finished a PhD in Physical Geography at McGill University in 2009, specializing in environmental modeling, specifically biogeochemical cycle modeling for terrestrial ecosystems (in particular, northern peatland ecosystem). Jianghua completed a post-doc at McGill University, examining how the construction of hydro-electric reservoir affects the greenhouse gas emission in Northern Quebec with and without changes in climate. Jianghua was appointed as an Assistant Professor in Sustainable Resource Management at the Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Memorial University of Newfoundland in August 2010. Jianghua's research interests focus on how climate change and/or human disturbance influences hydrological and biogeochemical cycling in boreal ecosystem, in particular, northern peatlands, and how peatlands/wetlands affect the catchment-scale biogeochemical cycling and water quality.

---

## Other “Geographical” News

**NSERC Discovery Grant Competition Receives Record Number of Applications:** NSERC expects to receive a record number of Discovery Grants applications for the 2011 competition. Notification of Intent forms received by the August 1 deadline exceeded 3,700 compared to 3,300 applications submitted for the 2010 competition.

**Tropical Forests Slashed for Farmland:** Global agricultural expansion cut a wide swath through tropical forests during the 1980s and 1990s. Over half a million square miles of new farmland was created in the developing world between 1980 and 2000, of which over 80 percent was carved out of tropical forests. While this huge increase was happening within the tropics, agricultural land in the non-tropical countries actually decreased in area. The patterns of change make it clear that during the 1990s, less of the deforestation was done by small family farms than was the case in the 1980s and more was done by large, corporate-run farms. Big agribusiness tends to be more responsive to global economic signals as well as pressure campaigns from advocacy organizations and consumer groups than individual small farmers. [EuerkAlert!](#)

**Magnificent Maps:** The British Library is well-positioned to create an exhibition with the title "*Magnificent Maps: Power, Propaganda and Art*". This digital exhibit is meant to complement an in situ exhibit that explores these main themes through 80 different maps. On this site, visitors can look over four of these marvellous maps in exquisite detail, and also watch and listen as the exhibit's curators talk about each work. The maps include the Psalter World Map from 1625, which is most likely a copy of the lost map which decorated King Henry III's bedchamber in Westminster Palace. "The Island" map shouldn't be missed either, as it satirizes "the London-centric view of the English capital and its commuter towns as independent from the rest of the country." [Magnificent Maps](#)

**A Puzzling Collapse of Earth's Upper Atmosphere:** NASA-funded researchers are monitoring a big event in our planet's atmosphere. High above Earth's surface where the atmosphere meets space, a rarefied layer of gas called "the thermosphere" recently collapsed and now is rebounding again. The collapse happened during the deep solar minimum of 2008-2009—a fact which comes as little surprise to researchers. The thermosphere always cools and contracts when solar activity is low. In this case, however, the magnitude of the collapse was two to three times greater than low solar activity could explain. "Something is going on that we do not understand," says John Emmert of the Naval Research Lab. [NASA Science News](#)

---

## Some not so “Geographical” News



---

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