News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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U Alberta's Andy Bush Studies Glacial Movement in the Karakoram: U of Alberta climate researcher Andy Bush is studying glacial movement in the Karakoram – the Western Himalayan region that takes in parts of Pakistan, India and the Hindu Kush. Bush and his team had hoped to revisit glaciers near K2, the world's second-highest peak. Their previous access point, Pakistan, was ruled out when the Taliban beheaded a Polish geologist in 2009. 'Science is fun, but it's not worth dying for", Bush observed sombrely. Science Contours Fall Winter 2010

UVic's Denise Cloutier Fisher Featured on CBC's *The National*: As the first wave of baby boomers turn 65, the number of Canadians approaching retirement is growing at a pace never seen in Canadian history. Population projections show the number of Canadians of retirement age continuing to increase for another 20 years, mostly a result of the baby boom. The number of persons aged 65 years and over doubled between 1981 and 2009 and will double again by 2036, Statistics Canada projections show. They also show that there will be more seniors than children (under 15 years) in Canada for the first time ever, sometime between 2015 and 2021.Recently CBC's The National included on air comments on the baby boomer generation from Denise Cloutier Fisher of the Department of Geography and the Centre on Aging at the University of Victoria. CBC News

U Calgary's Shawn Marshall on the Unstoppable Effects of Climate Change: New research indicates the impact of rising CO2 levels in the Earth's atmosphere will cause unstoppable effects to the climate for at least the next 1000 years. "We created 'what if' scenarios," says Dr. Shawn Marshall, Canada Research Chair in Climate Change and University of Calgary geography professor. "What if we completely stopped using fossil fuels and put no more CO2 in the atmosphere? How long would it then take to reverse current climate change trends and will things first become worse?" The research team explored zero-emissions scenarios beginning in 2010 and in 2100. The Northern Hemisphere fares better than the south in the computer simulations, with patterns of climate change reversing within the 1000-year timeframe in places like Canada. ClickGreen | Newstalk 1290 | Calgary Herald | Montreal Gazette

B.C.'s Hidden New Face of Poverty: Forget what you think you know about poverty in the Lower Mainland – it's no longer about the gritty images of the Downtown Eastside. Increasingly, the poor of Metro Vancouver are scattered outside the urban core. According to research by UBC geographer David Ley and the University of Toronto's Cities Centre, the areas where average income contracted the most in that same 35-year period are in the outlying areas of Vancouver and its suburbs: southeast Vancouver, north Richmond, Burnaby, Surrey and Coquitlam. Several were also among the poorest, compared to the rest of the city, in the 2006 census.These areas, magnets for both immigration and refugee settlement, have become nodes of low income, unemployment and the invisibly poor. The people who live there are disproportionately new Canadians and visible minorities. The Globe and Mail

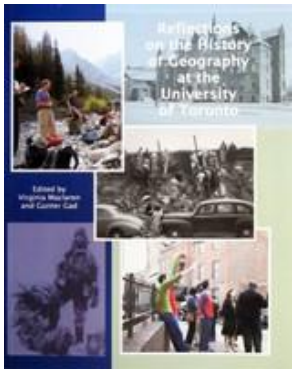
U Alberta's John England and his 'Book of Untold Stories': For most of his 40-year-long career working in the Arctic, University of Alberta scientist John England thought that Banks Island was a relic of an ancient world. But over time, England and colleagues found evidence to suggest that during the last Ice Age at least, there may have been a split in the jet stream that steered storms laden with moist Pacific air into the Canadian Arctic. This could have resulted in the snowfall needed to inundate the region with snow and ice. It's taken a long time for England to get to Banks Island to research this particular story. What they've discovered is a dynamic world in which temperatures were on average 10 degrees or more higher or lower than they are now and sea levels that either flooded vast regions of the Arctic or exposed huge landforms that are now submerged. Edmonton Journal

GAW and GIS Day Great Successes in Canada: Geography Awareness Week (GAW) and GIS Day 2010 were a great success. Numerous organizations in Canada held events to raise awareness for the importance of geography and GIS to society. The Canadian Association of Geographers organized a number of activities including map, photo and poster contests held at the University of Ottawa. Others across the country and around the world celebrated with map galleries, workshops, seminars and GIS Day cakes. Read more in ESRI Canada SDI News

Mount Allison's Brad Walters Talks Climate Change on CBC: Dr. Brad Walters, of the Mount Allison geography and environment department, is featured with Environment Canada climatologist David Phillips in a special report on CBC Radio One (Moncton). Listen to 'Whither the Weather,' originally aired on Jan 7, 2011.

New Books

Reflections on the History of Geography at the University of Toronto
Edited by Virginia Maclaren and Gunter Gad



This book celebrates the 75th anniversary of the Department of Geography at the University of Toronto. It is not meant to be a complete history of the department but rather a history of selected moments and events. Some of the 16 contributions are based on reminiscences and some are based on archival research and interviews. Some are a bit of both. Chapter authors include current and emeritus professors, current and retired staff, and alumni. Contributing authors: John Warkentin, Marie Sanderson, Andrew H. Clark, Jacob Spelt, Jock Galloway, Dick Baine, Matthew Farish, Michael Bunce, Thomas McIlwraith, Byron Moldofsky, Joan Winearls, Joe Whitney, Gunter Gad, Jan Masijauskas, Virginia Maclaren. Contact the Geography main office for more information: mainoffice@geog.utoronto.ca

The New Normal. The Canadian Prairies in a Changing Climate
Edited by David Sauchyn, Harry P. Diaz and Suren Kulshreshtha

Global warming has led to regional climate changes, which are increasingly impacting the dynamics of local natural and social systems and their interrelationships. These impacts, which are expected to increase, could bring serious risks and damages to ecosystems and livelihoods, disrupting the precarious balance between people and their environment. The natural and social systems of the Canadian Prairies are particularly vulnerable to climate change. The New Normal brings together the work of 24 scholars representing various disciplines, who present their diverse knowledge and expertise about climate change and its impacts in the Prairie Provinces. See The New Normal book trailer on Youtube.

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

D.G. Barber; M.G. Asplin; Y. Gratton; J.V. Lukovich; R.J. Galley; R.L. Raddatz; and D. Leitch. 2010. The International Polar Year (IPY) Circumpolar Flaw Lead (CFL) System Study: Overview and the Physical System. Atmosphere-Ocean 48(4):225-243.

Terri L. Evans and Christina Miewald. 2010. Assessing the pocket market model for growing the local food movement: A case study of metropolitan Vancouver. Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development 1(2). doi:10.5304/jafscd.2010.012.011

Geographer of the Week: Dr. Cherie Westbrook, University of Saskatchewan

Dr. Cherie Westbrook is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography and Planning at the University of Saskatchewan. The theme of Cherie's research is landscape connectivity, which she approaches from an ecohydrological perspective. She is interested in the interactive pathways between surface waters and ground waters, and how the resultant hydrological conditions regulate the exchange processes of biogeochemical materials across wetland ecosystems, as well as how they shape habitat complexity. A main focus of her research is to develop a better understanding of the role of beaver in the pulsing of stream discharge and transient storage of stream water that determines the degree of hydrological connectivity and exchange of nutrients across mountain riparian and floodplain ecosystems.

Minke, A.G.; Westbrook, C.J.; and van der Kamp, G. 2010. Simplified volume-area-depth method for estimating water storage of prairie potholes. Wetlands 30(3):541-551.

Squires, A.J.; Westbrook, C.J.; and Dubé, M.G. 2010. An approach for assessing cumulative effects in a model river, the Athabasca River basin. Integrated Environmental Assessment and Management 6(1):119-134.

Westbrook, C.J.; Cooper, D.J.; and Baker, B.W. 2010. Beaver assisted river valley formation. River Research and Applications DOI 10.1002.rra/1359

Other "Geographical" News

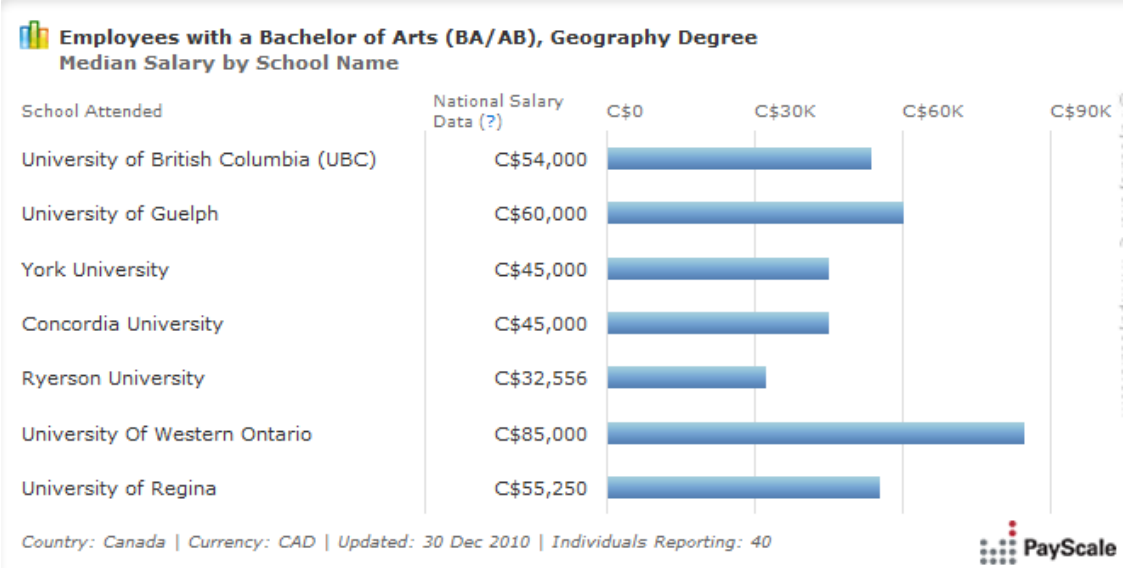
State and Evolution of Canada's Glaciers: The State and Evolution of Canada's Glaciers initiative provides information and data products produced by the Federal Government's National Glacier-Climate Observing System (monitoring, assessment and data portal) and related freshwater vulnerability research in western and northern Canada. The Glacier-Climate Observing System is delivered through an integrated monitoring and research collaborative comprised of Natural Resources Canada-Geological Survey of Canada (lead agency), Geomatics Canada-Canada Centre for Remote Sensing, Environment Canada-National Water Research Institute and Water Survey of Canada, Parks Canada Agency, C-CORE PolarView, and academic partners that include the universities of British Columbia, Alberta, Lethbridge, Saskatchewan, Regina, Toronto, Brock, Trent and Ottawa, and related academic initiatives. Canada's Glaciers

Montreal Aglow in New NASA Photo: The Montreal region glows like a jewel in a new photo from space made public by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The photo, taken by a crewmember on the International Space Station on Dec. 24 from a distance of about 600 kilometres, shows the Montreal region on an angle because the station was orbiting over the Pennsylvania-New York border (near Warren, PA), southwest of Montreal, at the time. "This astronaut photograph of the city lights of Montreal illustrates the extent of urbanization," the website explains. "Major roadways and industrial areas are traced by bright white lighting, while the adjacent residential and commercial lands are characterized by more diffuse yellow-gold lighting." Montreal Gazette

G. William Skinner Map Collection: Professor G. William Skinner of the University of Washington was a major theorist of family systems and of spatial social science. Professor Skinner's maps are products of his "lifelong interest in the spatial distribution of social variables." His maps document subjects such as agrarian China, 19th century France, and Japan. Some of the variables he was most interested in included agricultural wages, fertility rates, and the sex ratio in various regions. This digital collection brings together all 1200 maps from the Skinner Collection. Visitors can browse the maps by country and region, subject, or theme. The site also includes several documents by Professor Skinner on his work dealing with hierarchical regional space and a complete list of all the publications related to this work. Skinner Map Collection

National Science Foundation, Predicting Seasonal Weather: How does a meteorologist or other such individual predict seasonal weather? This interactive report starts by offering an explanation of how the U.S. economy is affected by weather conditions, and it reviews a bit of material on how different businesses attempt to mitigate the effect of varying weather conditions caused by warmer sea temperatures and the like. The remainder of the report is divided into five sections, including "Fall Predicts Winter" and "New Seasonal Forecast Model". The "New Seasonal Forecast Model" section talks about a more accurate model of weather prediction that has been developed in cooperation with NSF scientists. Each section contains a range of graphs and maps that help illustrate the key concepts within each topical area. Predicting Seasonal Weather

Some not so “Geographical” News



Source: Payscale.com

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