



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers**  
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**U Toronto's Monika Havelka Asks 'What's sex got to do with it?':** From an evolutionary standpoint, sexual reproduction just doesn't add up. So says Monika Havelka, a University of Toronto geography professor. The benefits that do come with sex are subtle and hard to pin down, she said. But one of the most obvious benefits is maintaining variability within a population. Havelka said it is actually easier to explain how sex originated rather than how it is maintained. Sex refers to the transfer of genes and there is an analogy that compares sex to a disease. Havelka used the example of bacteria that spread genes to other bacterium using a host and a recipient. If that element from the first cell is passed on to the next cell, it is much more probable that the second cell will be more likely to pass genes on to another cell. Sex drivers, she said, act almost like a virus spreading throughout a population. "If there is resistance, it evolves and changes a little bit," Havelka explained. [The Chronicle Journal](#)

**Queen's U's Audrey Kobayashi on Why Children of Immigrants are Challenged:** Research suggests that some immigrant children face parental criticism at home, while others cope with bullying at school. Several people have also sounded the alarm that many second-generation Canadians, like new immigrants, wind up joining gangs. "Sometimes they express their conflict by asserting their Canadian-ness, other times they express it by talking about how they feel excluded," said Kobayashi. "Those are two sides of the same coin." Kobayashi says second-generation teens are in the middle of a complex relationship with the Canadian society that features both opportunity and racism, and their parents, who offer guidance but are themselves struggling to deal with cultural change. This period of being stuck in the middle is, in fact, a "Canadian experience" of its own, Kobayashi said. It's not relegated to those considered by some to be "non-Canadians" or "others." [CBC News](#)

**U Toronto's Andre to Speak at Meeting on Rapid Transit Plans:** A pair of midtown Toronto councillors are teaming up to host a public meeting on Toronto's rapid transit plans. St. Paul's Councillor Josh Matlow and Eglinton-Lawrence Councillor Karen Stintz are co-hosting the meeting, which will also feature guest speaker and University of Toronto urban geography professor Andre Sorensen as well as TTC staff. The meeting will allow residents to hear about the city's transit future after Stintz made her opposition to Mayor Rob Ford's subway plan known, advocating light rail plans that will provide better public transit options to more of the city. Matlow was a strong proponent of the light rail plan. [InsideToronto.com](#)

**York U's Robin Roth Talks About Offered to Refugees Living on Thai-Burma Border:** Matt Galloway spoke with Robin Roth, she is a professor of geography at York University, and with Ei Phyu Han, she is a PhD student and a teaching assistant at York. They were speaking about a geography course taught at the university, that is also offered to refugees living on the Thai-Burma border. [CBC](#)

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**UBC's David Edgington Says Tofino, Ucluelet Unprepared for Earthquakes:** Chaos would prevail if a tsunami hit the west coast of Vancouver Island — especially during the busy summer tourist season — says a University of B.C. expert who studied Japan's emergency response to last year's magnitude-9 Tohoku earthquake. David Edgington, an associate professor of geography said he recently visited the Hawaiian island of Kauai and found a brochure in his room providing information on hurricanes. But during a recent stay in a Tofino waterfront bed-and-breakfast, he found no information describing what to do or where to go in the event of a tsunami. The puzzle for me is the tourist, even from the mainland," Edgington said. "How do they find their way there. You get into your car and drive to the highway and what do you do next?" The result: "Chaos. I don't want to think about it." [Vancouver Sun](#)

**U Regina's Jeannine-Marie St. Jacques Shows North America Could Be Hit With Decades-Long 'Megadrought':** When a drought hit North America in the 1930s, creating a giant dust bowl and crippling agriculture from Saskatchewan to Oklahoma, it entered history as the Dirty Thirties. But University of Regina paleoclimatologist Jeannine-Marie St. Jacques says that decade-long drought is nowhere near as bad as it can get. "What we're seeing in the climate records is these megadroughts, and they don't last a decade - they last 20 years, 30 years, maybe 60 years, and they'll be semi-continental in expanse," she said. "So it's like what we saw in the Dirty Thirties, but imagine the Dirty Thirties going on for 30 years. That's what scares those of us who are in the community studying this data pool." While it would be nice to predict when a megadrought is going to occur, St. Jacques says that's just not possible. "It's certainly a very lively area of research, everyone's very curious why they happen, but we see evidence of these droughts throughout the past 2,000 years in North America and we don't see why it's going to change," she said. "They could get worse under global warming, for all we know. And that's just it — we don't know." St. Jacques said her research into megadroughts has hammered home the role politics plays in being prepared. [Calgary Herald](#) | [The Vancouver Sun](#)

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### **Geographer of the Week: Dr. Johannes Koch, Brandon University**

Dr. [Johannes Koch](#) was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography at Brandon University. Johannes completed an MSc in geography at Albert-Ludwigs-University of Freiburg and his PhD in earth sciences at Simon Fraser University. His research is focused on Post Glacial glacier history in the Americas, specifically British Columbia, the Yukon, Washington State, Alaska, and Chilean and Argentine Patagonia. Furthermore, he is interested in what forced those changes. He uses tree-rings to help with this research, as well as other smaller research projects. His field based research means that he is familiar with geomorphological mapping, tree coring, lichen measurements, snowpack measurements, geological mapping, lake coring from ice and rafts, stream monitoring, glaciological studies with ablation stakes and radar equipment, peat coring, installation of automated weather stations, and vegetation mapping. [Koch webpage](#)

Koch, J. and Clague, J.J. 2011. [Extensive glaciers in northwest North America during Medieval time](#). Climatic Change 107: 593-613.

Clague, J.J. Koch, J. and Geertsema, M. 2010. [Expansion of outlet glaciers of the Juneau Icefield in northwest British Columbia during the past two millennia](#). The Holocene 20: 447-461.

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**2012 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers:** The 2012 Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers will be held jointly with the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. Registration information at: [CAG 2012, "Toward Integration"](#)

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### Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Joan Bunbury and Konrad Gajewski. 2012. [Temperatures of the past 2000 years inferred from lake sediments, southwest Yukon Territory, Canada](#). Quaternary Research. doi.org/10.1016/j.yqres.2012.01.002

A.S. Hamilton and R.D. Moore. 2012. [Quantifying uncertainty in streamflow records](#). Canadian Water Resources Journal 37(1):3-21.

Peter D. Luciani, James Y. Li and Douglas Banting, D. 2011. [Distributed urban stormwater modeling within GIS integrating analytical probabilistic hydrologic models and remote sensing digital image analysis](#). Water Quality Research Journal of Canada 46(3):183–199.

Ted Rutland. 2012. [Activists in the making: Urban movements, political processes and the creation of political subjects](#). International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01110.x

James W. N. Steenberg, Peter N. Duinker and Peter G. Bush 2011. [Exploring adaptation to climate change in the forests of central Nova Scotia, Canada](#). Forest Ecology and Management. DOI:10.1016/j.foreco.2011.08.027

Jennifer Throop, Antoni G. Lewkowicz and Sharon L. Smith. 2012. [Climate and ground temperature relations at sites across the continuous and discontinuous permafrost zones, northern Canada](#). Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences, 10.1139/e11-075

Jon Tunnicliffe, Michael Church, John J. Clague and James K. Feathers. 2012. [Postglacial sediment budget of Chilliwack Valley, British Columbia](#). Earth Surface Processes and Landforms. DOI: 10.1002/esp.3229

Rob Vanwysberghe, Björn Surborg and Elvin Wyly. 2012. [When the games come to town: neoliberalism, mega-events and social inclusion in the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games](#). DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2427.2012.01105.x

Hongxu Zhao, Kaz Higuchi, James Waller, Heather Auld and Thomas Mote. 2012. [The impacts of the PNA and NAO on annual maximum snowpack over southern Canada during 1979–2009](#). International Journal of Climatology. DOI: 10.1002/joc.3431

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### Other “Geographical” News

**NASA Map Sees Earth's Trees in a New Light:** A NASA-led science team has created an accurate, high-resolution map of the height of Earth's forests. The map will help scientists better understand the role forests play in climate change and how their heights influence wildlife habitats within them, while also helping them quantify the carbon stored in Earth's vegetation. The map, available at <http://lidarradar.jpl.nasa.gov>, depicts the highest points in the forest canopy. Its spatial resolution is 0.6 miles (1 kilometer). The map was validated against data from a network of nearly 70 ground sites around the world. [ScienceDaily](#)

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**Academic Publisher Elsevier Hit with Growing Boycott:** To publish or not to publish? That is the question medical and science academics are asking after 6,000 of their colleagues boycotted one of the world's largest publishers. The "Cost of Knowledge" campaign was started by an international group of researchers in January after a blog post by Cambridge University professor Timothy Gowers. He criticized Elsevier for charging "very high prices" for access to its articles, using a "ruthless" approach to negotiations with academic libraries and supporting legislation that could hamper the move to more open access to published research. Since then, thousands of researchers around the world, including several university and government researchers in Canada, have publicly committed to the protest by declaring they will not publish in Elsevier journals, peer review papers for those journals, or do editing work for them. "The boycott is saying we are no longer going to provide our services to you for free. We are no longer going to write articles and submit them to your journals, and we are no longer going to review for your journals". [CBC News](#)

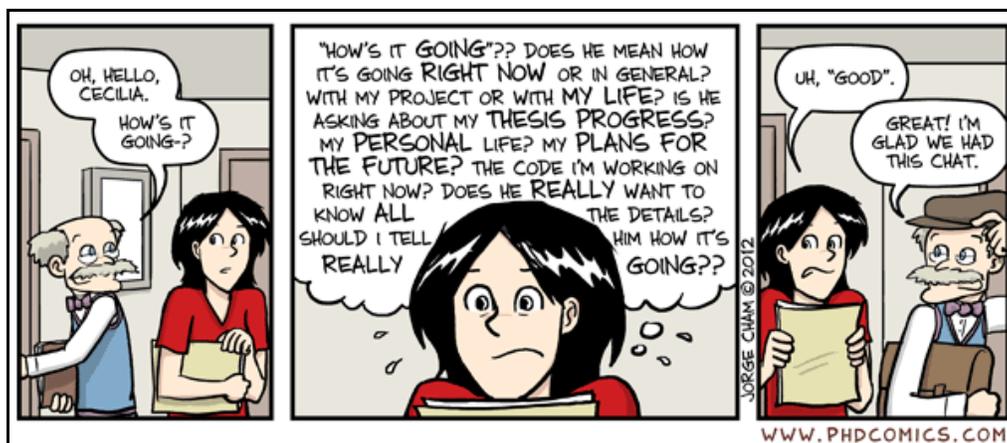
**Peter Knight Offers a Quick Introduction to the Idea of Thresholds:** A quick introduction to the idea of (Geomorphic) Thresholds, primarily for 1st-year students doing module esc-10038 at Keele University. [YouTube](#)

**BC Parks and Nature Trust Team up to Secure Threatened Lands:** One of the most threatened areas in British Columbia situated in the Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) biogeoclimatic zone on Salt Spring Island is now protected, Environment Minister Terry Lake and The Nature Trust of British Columbia announced. Along with the surrounding parks and ecological reserve, this property protects the largest stand of Garry oak woodland in Canada. [MoE News Release](#)

**Global Permafrost Zones in High-Resolution Images on Google Earth:** Thawing permafrost will have far-reaching ramifications for populated areas, infrastructure and ecosystems. A geographer from the University of Zurich reveals where it is important to confront the issue based on new permafrost maps -- the most precise global maps around. They depict the global distribution of permafrost in high-resolution images and are available on Google Earth. [ScienceDaily](#)

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### Some not so "Geographical" News



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