



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers

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U Toronto's Alan Walks on Progressive Inner-City Voting and Conservative Suburban Voting: As the recent Alberta election demonstrated, the starkest difference in values is between inner cities and suburbs, particularly in Calgary and Edmonton. What accounts for this polarity? Research by University of Toronto geographer Alan Walks has demonstrated that this phenomenon — progressive inner-city voting and conservative suburban voting — carries across Canada. He found that suburban voters tended to believe that government is too big, taxes are too high, and the economy should be left to business. In broad strokes, suburbanites live a privatized consumption-oriented lifestyle characterized by car-dominated transport, big-box mall shopping and the desire for private space in big suburban homes. They tend not to see a political dimension to that lifestyle; it is natural. Inner-city dwellers, by contrast, seem to be much more deliberate in aligning their politics with their lifestyle and housing choices. They choose the inner city for its perceived sense of community, they support public transit and they trade off larger homes and yards for easier access to public spaces, from plazas to art galleries, museums and theatre. [Fast Forward Weekly](#)

York U's Ranu Basu on Spectre of 'Education Desert' in Hamilton's Inner City: A 10-kilometre stretch of Hamilton's inner city. One public high school. That's the option in front of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board trustees as they decide the fate of 15 local secondary schools. The aim is to reduce operational costs — a must in the wake of the province's recent decision to slash funding for underutilized schools — while providing students with a state-of-the-art facility and modern programs. For York University geography professor Ranu Basu, it adds up to a slow process of exclusion. "Who does it affect the most?" says Basu, whose research focuses on school closures. "Obviously people who don't have cars or who don't have access, who maybe are working a couple of jobs." They're the same people who tend to be disengaged from the school closure process in general, she adds. In the case of Hamilton's secondary school accommodation review, her observation holds up. thespec.com

U Ottawa's Antoni Lewkowicz Warns Half of Dawson City Could be Lost to Permafrost: Dawson City is sinking and half of the historic town of 1,319, which was the center of Canada's gold rush in 1896, could be destroyed by melting permafrost, says University of Ottawa geography professor Antoni Lewkowicz. "Half of Dawson is built on permafrost and if the permafrost temperature raises by one degree it will cause major problems for the buildings," he said. "It's an icon for Canadians and the only solution I can come up with is to put a lot of money into keeping the ground frozen." "Permafrost is like a turkey in that the surface warms quickly, but but then it takes a long time for the ice in the centre to thaw," he said. What he's worried about is the positive feedback loop melting permafrost creates. "To thaw a turkey you put warm water on it, and we have a site in the Yukon where we're watching nearby water helping it thaw." In 35 years working in and studying the Arctic, Lewkowicz said he is seeing "indications all around the Arctic that the permafrost is warming." [Metro](#)

Dalhousie U's James Boxall Uses Inbreeding to Illustrate how People Influenced by Geography:

The Gomers are the most infamous case of incest in Nova Scotian history. In 1984, a 14-year-old girl went to the police, revealing that incestuous sexual abuse ran rampant throughout her family. An investigation found that the abuse had taken place over many generations in the small community on South Mountain, near Kentville. James Boxall is a professor of human geography at Dalhousie University, and director of Dal's Geographic Information Centre. In one of the lectures for his introductory human geography course, Boxall uses inbreeding to illustrate how humans are influenced by geography. It's all a matter of isolation. "I started thinking about the isolation in that particular part of the province. Why would a group of people there be different? Regardless of the morality of it, or the genetics of it, what would lead them to that particular action? And then the isolation issues came up." Boxall describes not only geographic isolation, but also cultural isolation and isolation of ideas, which create societies of dogma and paranoia, pointing to Nazi Germany as an example. He surmises our isolated society has developed inbred ideas about inbreeding. "I find isolation intriguing because the things that can result from isolation---of any type---are actually amazing. Sometimes very horrible." [The Coast](#)

U Regina Geography Exercise Goes Awry: A group of university students' apparent geography exercise went awry this afternoon when their prize was mistaken as suspicious and a police explosives unit was sent in to investigate. To be on the safe side police called in the explosives disposal unit and sent their robot in to get a closer look, at which time students showed up saying that they were using GPS to find an item which had been left on the grounds as part of a GPS tracking exercise as some would call geo-tracking. [Leader-Post](#) |

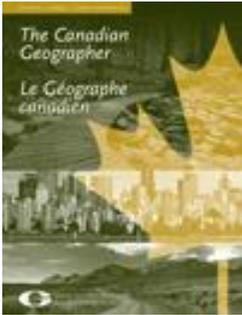
Memorial U's Trevor Bell Warns Rising Seas Threaten Coastal Archaeology in Newfoundland:

Trevor Bell of the Department of Geography at Memorial University is warning Newfoundland's coastal archaeological heritage is potentially vulnerable to increased erosion resulting from future sea-level rise and increased storminess. As all sites cannot be protected, it is essential that heritage managers know which sites and landscapes are most at risk so they can prioritize resources and decision-making most effectively. Bell and his research collaborators in a recent publication predict that 20% of the archaeological sites in their study are at risk over the next 15–50 years, and will be exposed to increased coastal erosion as sea level rises and surge activity increases. These include internationally important sites at L'Anse aux Meadows and Port au Choix that are adjacent to the modern coast and situated on low-lying topography. Though not in immediate danger, their analysis suggests that they may be threatened from 2050 onwards. [Memorial Geography](#)

McGill U's Tim Moore in Top 3 H-Index: [Tim Moore](#), chair of the McGill University Geography Department was identified as one of the top three environmental studies researchers in Canada. Tim's research examines the controls on the biogeochemistry of peatlands, particularly the cycling of carbon, involving measurements and modeling of plant production and decomposition, nutrient cycling, emissions of methane, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide and dissolved organic carbon and nitrogen. His research sites include both those with pristine conditions as well as peatlands that have been drained, harvested and restored. [3-H Index Scores](#).

Queen's U's Beverley Mullings Awarded SSHRC Insight Grant: Beverley Mullings of the Department of Geography at Queen's University has been awarded a SSHRC Insight Grant for her project entitled *Diasporic Assemblages, Gender Asymmetries and Challenge of Social Transformation*. Insight Grants support research excellence in the social sciences and humanities.

New in [The Canadian Geographer](#)



Heather Castleden, Vanessa Sloan Morgan and Christopher Lamb. 2012. "[I spent the first year drinking tea](#)": Exploring Canadian university researchers' perspectives on community-based participatory research involving Indigenous peoples. Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI: 10.1111/j.1541-0064.2012.00432.x

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Liane Ginsburg, Evan Castel, Deborah Tregunno and Peter G. Norton. 2012. [The H-PEPSS: an instrument to measure health professionals' perceptions of patient safety competence at entry into practice](#). BMJ Quality & Safety. doi:10.1136/bmjqs-2011-000601

Jason Grainger Kerr and M. Catherine Eimers. 2012. [Decreasing soil water Ca²⁺ reduces DOC adsorption in mineral soils: Implications for long-term DOC trends in an upland forested catchment in southern Ontario, Canada](#). Science of the Total Environment. doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2012.04.016

Peter Johnson and Renee Sieber. 2012. [Motivations driving government adoption of the Geoweb](#). GeoJournal. 1-14.

D.D. Kemp. 2012. [Quantification of descriptive weather records: an example from the Canadian fur trade](#). Weather. DOI: 10.1002/j.1477-8696.1984.tb06733.x

François Lapointe, Pierre Francus, Scott F. Lamoureux, Meriem Saïd and Stéphanie Cuvén. 2012. [1750 years of large rainfall events inferred from particle size at East Lake, Cape Bounty, Melville Island, Canada](#). Journal of Paleolimnology. DOI: 10.1007/s10933-012-9611-8

Antoni G. Lewkowicz, Philip P. Bonnaventure, Sharon I. Smith and Zoé Kuntz. 2012. [Spatial and thermal characteristics of mountain permafrost, northwest Canada](#). Geografiska Annaler Series A. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-0459.2012.00462.x

Andrew Ross, H. Damon Matthews, Andreas Schmittner and Zavareh Kothavala. 2012. [Assessing the effects of ocean diffusivity and climate sensitivity on the rate of global climate change](#). Tellus 64.

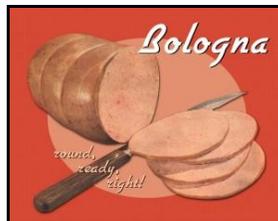
D.G. Steyn and T. R. Oke. 2012. [Effects of a small scrub fire on the surface radiation budget](#). Weather. DOI: 10.1002/j.1477-8696.1980.tb04758.x

Other “Geographical” News

AGI Launches GeoWord of the Day: In celebration of the release of the revised 5th edition Glossary of Geology for the Kindle and Nook platforms, the American Geosciences Institute (AGI) has started a free GeoWord of the Day service. The GeoWord of the Day is a fun and convenient way to learn a new geoscience term every day. Each morning the service will highlight a new word or term featured in the Glossary of Geology, ensuring daily authoritative terms and definitions for years to come. Users may choose to receive the GeoWord of Day directly through email by [subscribing online](#).

The Geography of U.S. Manufacturing: Since 2010, manufacturing jobs have made a very modest comeback in the United States — although not nearly enough to reverse a long, three-decade slide. (Between 1979 and 2010, the U.S. economy lost 7.9 million manufacturing jobs; since then, it’s gained just 350,000.) So what jobs still remain? The Brookings Institution has a new report on the geography of U.S. manufacturing jobs that delves into this topic, and a few charts stand out. As the authors of the report find, the vast majority of U.S. manufacturing jobs — about 79.5 percent — are located in large metropolitan areas. The numbers are even higher for high-tech manufacturing, which is particularly dependent on dense clusters of workers and suppliers. What’s more, many cities tend to specialize strongly in a particular type of manufacturing. The six most common clusters are computers and electronics, transportation equipment, low-wage manufacturing, chemicals, machinery, and food production. For example, just 20 cities around the country specialize almost exclusively in chemical manufacturing — including, most prominently, Baton Rouge, Louisiana. [Report on Trends in Geography of Production](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



[The Baloney Detection Kit: A 10-Point Checklist for Science Literacy](#)

1. How reliable is the source of the claim?
 2. Does the source make similar claims?
 3. Have the claims been verified by somebody else?
 4. Does this fit with the way the world works?
 5. Has anyone tried to disprove the claim?
 6. Where does the preponderance of evidence point?
 7. Is the claimant playing by the rules of science?
 8. Is the claimant providing positive evidence?
 9. Does the new theory account for as many phenomena as the old theory?
 10. Are personal beliefs driving the claim?
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