



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers

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Compiled by Dan Smith [<cag@geog.uvic.ca>](mailto:cag@geog.uvic.ca)

U Guelph's Evan Fraser Highlights Climate Change, Food Risk 'Hot Spots': The world's poorest societies may be better able to adapt to food supply threats posed by climate change than their slightly richer peers, says a new study by a University of Guelph professor. Countries are most at risk in the early stages of development before the benefits of that development kick in, says Evan Fraser, a professor in Guelph's Department of Geography. "It turns out that the very poor and the relatively wealthy are less vulnerable to the effects of drought than the group in the middle," said Fraser, an expert in food production and its relation to social and economic conditions. His research highlights areas at special risk of climate-induced crop failures, including southeast South America and northeast Mediterranean. "We're finding a real trade-off between adaptation and development," he said. "That's not to say we should discourage development, but you can't assume that by promoting it, you're also helping people adapt to climate change." [UG News Release](#)

U Trent Hydrologist Jim Buttle Participates in North-Watch: Jim Buttle of the Department of Geography at Trent University participated in the wrap-up workshop for the North-Watch International Research Project, held in Potsdam, Germany. The purpose of North-Watch is to facilitate inter-catchment comparisons that will synthesize a comprehensive, interdisciplinary and regional understanding of the recent effects of climatic change and provide a stronger scientific basis for predicting what further changes are likely to be. The project has brought together leading, cognate researchers working at long-term experimental catchments in different parts of the northern region comprising sensitive boreal, sub-arctic and sub-alpine environments. [Trent Geography News](#)

York U Department of Geography Celebrates 50th Anniversary, October 12, 2012: Founded in 1962, the Department of Geography invites all its alumni, students, faculty, staff and their friends and family to a series of events planned for the afternoon and evening of Friday October 12, 2012. Details @ [50th Anniversary Celebration](#)

U Toronto's Pierre Desrochers Promotes the 10,000-mile Diet: Big is beautiful. Especially when it comes to food supply. That's the message in [The Locavore's Dilemma: In Praise of the 10,000-Mile Diet](#), a book by Pierre Desrochers, an associate geography professor at the University of Toronto, and his wife, Hiroko Shimizu, a policy analyst. "My wife, born and raised in Tokyo, pointed out that the Japanese contribute a lot in terms of technology but don't have enough room to grow food. Historically they have gone through periods of starvation and malnourishment. So what's wrong with specializing in other stuff and importing food from countries with plenty of agricultural land? She prompted me to write a policy paper that turned into the book." [Toronto Star](#)

U McGill's Verena Seufert and Prof Navin Ramankutty Compare Yields of Organic and Conventional Agriculture: Many people pay a premium to make sure the food they eat is grown organically. But a [study published in Nature](#) by geographers Verena Seufert and Navin Ramankutty scientists at Montreal's McGill University suggest that feeding the world without destroying the planet is going to take a combination of both organic and conventional agriculture. Marc Montgomery, Radio Canada International speaks with Verena Seufert about the study. [Listen to RCI Interview](#)

Western U's Jenna Dixon Receives CAG's Health and Health Care Study Group's 2012 PhD Student Presentation Award: Western University's Jenna Dixon recently received the Canadian Association of Geographer's Health and Health Care Study Group's 2012 PhD [Student Presentation Award](#). This award recognizes excellence in research and presentation skills among students in the group. Jenna's research is focused on the impact of Ghana National Health Insurance Scheme in the Upper West Region.

McMaster U's Carolyn Eyles' Field Course Explores Geography and Geology of Iceland: Students in Carolyn Eyles' fourth-year field course take a break from exploring the unique geography and geology of Iceland. A group of seven undergraduates have recently returned from the Nordic country, where they spent 12 days studying its unique geography and geology. The students also visited the island of Heimaey, where they climbed the 200-metre-high Eldfell volcano, which last erupted in 1973. The group gained a better understanding of the heat still being produced by the volcano when the scraps of paper they tossed into it burst into flames in mere seconds. Eyles, who won a 3M Teaching Fellowship in 2009 for her innovative approach to teaching, has led previous field courses to Death Valley, the Grand Canyon and the Canadian Rockies. [McMaster Daily News](#)

U Winnipeg Geography Graduates Caleigh Christie and Matt Morrison Map Out Their Futures: When Caleigh Christie isn't singing the praises of riding a bicycle in a Winnipeg winter, she's likely getting up close and personal with polluted lichen from northern Manitoba or mapping the geography on Mars. Or maybe teaching kids how to ski and shoot in the biathlon, or studying our lousy winter driving habits. Life is somewhat eclectic for Christie, who is graduating from the University of Winnipeg in geography. Academically, she's working with Prof. Ed Cloutis of Mars research fame. "He is doing astrobiology research. He has a team of researchers looking at the geographic aspects" of Mars, Christie said. Closer to home, she focuses her studies on lichens. "I am looking at lichen as a biological indicator of pollution," said Christie, who analyzes the spectral signature of lichens from Thompson in U W labs. Pretty much the same story for math and geography grad Matt Morrison, who's a drummer in a rock band when he isn't choppers in to Moose Factory to conducted research into erosion threatening the Moose Factory national historic site on an island in the Moose River near James Bay. "It's in danger of falling into the river in the next 100 years. That's going to increase the erosion on the site. Melting permafrost -- that's the glue that's holding it together," he explained. [Winnipeg Free Press](#)

U Trent's Rachel Herron in Convocation Spotlight; M.A. Graduate and Geography Professor to be Has a Strengthened Commitment to Community-Based Research: Rachel Herron's initial interests in geography and English evolved, with the support of enthusiastic professors, into a particular interest in the places people live and women's experiences of care-giving on farms. Ms. Herron credits the Academic Skills Centre as part of her success, where she found support for her work and people who were interested in what she was doing. Over the course of her time at Trent, Rachel received research awards from the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, the Frost Centre for Canadian and Indigenous Studies, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. She was also awarded a doctoral fellowship from the Canadian Institute of Health Research to continue research in the fields of rural aging and health. [Trent Grad Profile](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Moshe Dalva, Margaret Kalácska, Tim R. Moore and André Costopoulos. 2012. [Detecting graves with methane](#). *Geoderma* 189-190:18-27.

Carri Hand, Mary Law, Mary Ann McColl, Steven Hanna and Susan J. Elliott. 2012. [Neighborhood influences on participation among older adults with chronic health conditions: a scoping review](#). *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health*. DOI: 10.3928/15394492-20111222-02

Anne Lee and Geoffrey Wall. 2012. [Food Clusters: Towards a Creative Rural Economy](#). Working Paper Series: Martin Prosperity Research. University of Waterloo. REF. 2012-MPIWP-009

Meiling Liu, Xiangnan Liu, Jonathan Li and Ting Li. 2012. [Estimating regional heavy metal concentrations in rice by scaling up a field-scale heavy metal assessment model](#). *International Journal of Applied Earth Observation and Geoinformation* 19:12-23.

S. Lowe, X. Guo and D. Henderson. 2012. [Landscape spatial structure for predicting suitable habitat: The case of *Dalea villosa* in Saskatchewan](#). *Open Journal of Ecology* 2(2):60-73.

Jim Simmons. 2012. [The Evolution of Commercial Structure in the North American City: A Toronto Case Study](#). Cities Centre University of Toronto. Research Paper 221. 30 p.

Recent Theses and Dissertations

Sarah Peirce. 2012. [Characterization of ephemeral streams using electrical resistance sensors in a southern Ontario watershed](#). MSc thesis. Department of Geography, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario. Supervisor: John Lindsay.

Other “Geographical” News

The Race to Map Africa’s Forgotten Glaciers: Ptolemy thought they were the source of the Nile and called them the Mountains of the Moon because of the perpetual mists that covered them; Stanley claimed to be the first non-African to see their icecap; and the many thousands of subsistence farmers who today live on the slopes of the fabled Rwenzori mountains in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo fear that warming temperatures are devastating their harvests. But last month, a micro-expedition returned from Uganda with the best [photographic evidence](#) yet that the 43 glaciers found and named in 1906 are still mostly there, but are in dire condition and can be expected to disappear in a decade or two. Taylor attributes most of the Rwenzori glacier melt to increased air temperature rather than lack of rainfall, which is widely thought to be responsible for the shrinkage of the glaciers on Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. "The rainfall there is many times that on Kilimanjaro. There, the evidence suggests that the glaciers are being starved of moisture, effectively desiccating them rather than melting." [The Guardian](#)

Full-time Canadian University Professors Report High Job Satisfaction: Full-time Canadian university faculty members work harder than their counterparts in other developed nations and also report higher levels of job satisfaction, according to new research faculty reported working over 50 hours per week on academic activities when classes were in session, which is more than their peers in the US, Australia, and the UK. Canadian respondents had the highest job satisfaction rates of any

nation, with 75% describing their job satisfaction as high or very high, compared to 64% in the US, 55% in Australia, and slightly more than 45% in Britain. However, about 40% of Canadian faculty surveyed agreed with the statement: "My job is a source of considerable personal strain," a larger share than in the US, but well below levels reported by their Australian and British peers. [University Affairs](#)

Some not so "Geographical" News

'The Typographer's Dream': The three people in Adam Bock's "The Typographer's Dream" want to believe they made wise, satisfying career choices, but they're not really so sure about that, or anything, by the end of the play. Annalise is a Canadian geographer obsessed with how boundary lines have emerged on the grizzled face of the earth, and how her chosen field has been cheapened by the way schools blend it into "social studies." [Baltimore Sun](#)

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