



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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@UofRMetStation: Bringing social media and science together: When was the last time you used social media to monitor measurements of temperature, precipitation or wind speed? Although NASA's Mars missions now routinely include a social media feed, most data collection in science does not. In an attempt to help fill this void, the University of Regina Geography Department recently installed a meteorological ("weather") station, nicknamed Zephyr, on the rooftop of the Classroom Building where a safe, outdoor teaching space already exists. The station monitors temperature, humidity, precipitation and wind speed/direction continuously, and posts detailed updates to a local website. Zephyr also posts a subset of the data feed autonomously to Twitter. Geography professor Kyle Hodder is the person responsible for maintaining Zephyr, and the use of Twitter allows him to check that the station is operational at-a-glance. Kyle notes that one of the most rewarding aspects of the social media feed is the conversation that is possible with students, and the off-campus community. He regularly answers questions about the nature of hydrology, weather and climate in our city, as well as our province, and each interaction is an opportunity to share knowledge beyond our campus. It is his hope that the Twitter feed also allows Zephyr to provide a glimpse into the education that Geographers offer in the realm of hydrology, climate and weather sciences. [University of Regina Yourblog](#)

McGill U Geography PhD candidate Michael Becker on a long, cold slog: Michael Becker, a doctoral student at McGill University, was a scientific diver on an expedition to Lake Untersee, Antarctica. Untersee is the largest surface lake in East Antarctica. It's necessary to say surface since many lakes in Antarctica are covered by thousands of feet of ice, and it's just not practical or possible to go diving in them. While not buried under glacial ice, Untersee is still covered by a 9- or 10-foot-thick perennial ice cover. Few people have seen this area of the planet and it has been relatively unexplored scientifically. There's not many places left in the world where your scientific reference list is shorter than a McDonald's dollar menu. [The New York Times](#)

Building geographical literacy through integrated learning: Geographical literacy has been in the news this week, thanks to some recent coverage on CBC. The initial news story discussed a Sociology professor's belief that students lack "elementary" geographical literacy. Charles Mather, Head of Geography, responded to this article in interviews with Leigh Anne Power and Anthony Germain on two of CBC Radio's morning stations in Newfoundland. While acknowledging that levels of geographical literacy are low at Memorial, Dr. Mather argues that shaming students or having students identify geographical features on blank maps out of context is not effective: "Instead of giving students blank maps, [we] integrate geographical literacy and...integrate geographical knowledge into the courses that we offer." He offers an example from a first year course offered by the department. Students doing GEOG 1050: Geographies of Global Change – a course that deals with Arctic and Northern Rim countries – are able to identify geographical features of the region because these are "integrated into

particular sets of knowledges and processes so that they make sense for students. For example, our students can locate Mary River on Baffin Island. And they know where Mary River is because it's a huge iron ore resource, it's part of a bigger drive to extract resources from the north and because there are likely to be considerable logistical problems in getting the ore out of this remote location". He continued, "We think this is a way of getting students to have better geographical literacy." [MUN Geography News](#)

Simon Fraser U geographers remember Dr. Edward Gibson: Our colleague Edward Gibson died in Vancouver on October 26th, 2012. In 1965, the year when Simon Fraser University first opened to students, Ed was appointed to the Department of Geography — a "Charter Member" as designated by the university. Ed was a very popular – and more importantly a well regarded – teacher at all levels of instruction. Former students have recently attested to the inspiring and positive influence he had upon their lives, not only recalling his insightful lectures and encouragement of student research, but also of his field excursions, class exchanges with other universities and effective thesis direction. [SFU Geography New & Events](#)

Homemade skating rinks recruited for climate change research: Charlie Mattina stands in Beasley Park, gesturing at the wooden enclosure that he helped to set up on the mostly green, slightly muddy field. A string of mild winters, the result of a global rise in temperatures, has changed his approach to crafting a do-it-yourself skating rink. Mattina has signed up for a new online project called [RinkWatch](#). The site, created by a group of geographers at Wilfred Laurier University, invites people to register online and record the state of their homemade ice surfaces. Researchers will use the data — when the flooding is done, how many weeks the ice is useable — to track the progression of climate change. According to Robert McLeman, one of the project's creators, it's also a chance to educate Canadians about the real-world implications of climate change, an issue that can seem abstract when discussed on TV or in the classroom. "People appreciate the scale of the problem, but don't understand personally how it fits in with their life," McLeman, an associate professor of geography and environmental science, told CBC Hamilton. [CBC Hamilton](#) | [The Record.com](#)

Researchers at the University of Manitoba welcome chilly temperatures: Why? It's perfect for their Sea-ice Environmental Research Facility (SERF). "There are a lot of brave people working outside at the facility right now because it's just wonderful conditions for us to conduct our research," said Feiyue Wang, a lead scientist at SERF and a professor in the U of M's department of environment and geography, and department of chemistry. The unique laboratory opened last February and is made up of a large, outdoor, saltwater pond with sophisticated devices that monitor the pond's sea ice formation. By "growing" sea ice under controlled conditions, scientists better understand how sea ice forms and melts on polar oceans, and gain insight into the processes that regulate the exchange of molecules between the ocean and atmosphere. [ChrisD.ca](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Arun Agrawal, Daniel G. Brown, Gautam Rao, Rick Riolo, Derek T. Robinson and Michael Bommarito II. 2013. [Interactions between organizations and networks in common-pool resource governance](#), *Environmental Science & Policy* 25:138-146

Jules C. Carlson, Julie C. Anderson, Jennifer E. Low, Pascal Cardinal, Scott D. MacKenzie, Sarah A. Beattie, Jonathan K. Challis, Renee J. Bennett, Stephanie S. Meronek, Rebecca P.A. Wilks, William M. Buhay, Charles S. Wong and Mark L. Hanson. 2013. [Presence and hazards of nutrients and emerging](#)

[organic micropollutants from sewage lagoon discharges into Dead Horse Creek, Manitoba, Canada.](#) Science of the Total Environment 445–446:64–78.

John Paul Catungal. 2012. [Safe houses in contact zones: Race politics, place-making, and ethno-specific AIDS service organizations in Toronto.](#) Munk School Briefings. Comparative Program on Health and Society Lupina Foundation Working Paper Series, 2010–2011. Edited by Antony Chum and Lisa Forman. Munk School of Global Affairs. University of Toronto

Marianne Cheveau, Louis Imbeau, Pierre Drapeau and Louis Belanger. 2013. [Marten space use and habitat selection in managed coniferous boreal forests of eastern Canada.](#) The Journal of Wildlife Management. DOI: 10.1002/jwmg.511

Betsy Donald. 2013. [Food retail and access after the crash: rethinking the food desert problem.](#) Journal of Economic Geography. DOI:10.1093/jeg/lbs064

Christopher Harding, Zachary Patterson, Luis F. Miranda-Moreno and Seyed Amir H. Zahari. 2013. [A spatial and temporal analysis of the effects of land use clusters on activity spaces in three Quebec cities.](#) Centre interuniversitaire de recherche sur les reseaux d'entreprise, la logistique et le transport. CIRRELT-2013-03.

Roberta Hawkins. 2012. [Shopping to save lives: Gender and environment meets ethical consumption.](#) Geoforum 43:750-759.

Edward W. Pollock and Andrew B.G. Bush. 2013. [Atmospheric simulations of southern South America's climate since the Last Glacial maximum.](#) Quaternary Science Reviews. doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2012.09.019

Dominic Senici, Aurore Lucas, Han Y. H. Chen, Yves Bergeron, Alayn Larouche, Benoit Brossier, Olivier Blarquez and Adam A. Ali. 2013. [Multi-millennial fire frequency and tree abundance differ between xeric and mesic boreal forests in central Canada.](#) Journal of Ecology DOI: 10.1111/1365-2745.12047

Paul C. Stoy, Matthias Mauder, Thomas Foken, Barbara Marcolla, Eva Boegh, Andreas Ibrom, M. Altaf Arain, Almut Arneth, Mika Aurela, Christian Bernhofer, Alessandro Cescatti, Ebba Dellwik, Pierpaolo Duce, Damiano Gianelle, Eva van Gorsel, Gerard Kiely, Alexander Knohl, Hank Margolis, Harry McCaughey, Lutz Merbold, Leonardo Montagnani, Dario Papale, Markus Reichstein, Matthew Saunders, Penelope Serrano-Ortiz, Matteo Sottocornola, Donatella Spano, Francesco Vaccari and Andrej Varlagin. 2013. [A data-driven analysis of energy balance closure across FLUXNET research sites: The role of landscape scale heterogeneity.](#) Agricultural and Forest Meteorology 171–172:137–152.

Other “Geographical” News

Evolution of natural and social science interactions in global change research programs - Geographers Join the Fray: Efforts to develop a global understanding of the functioning of the Earth as a system began in the mid-1980s. This effort necessitated linking knowledge from both the physical and biological realms. The transitioning process to this new program will take time as scientists adjust to new colleagues with different ideologies, methods, and tools and a new way of doing science. [PNAS Early Edition](#)

Geography has always been sort of an “underdog” in our educational system; it’s been misunderstood, generalized, and sometimes ignored: This is very unfortunate. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Geography touches heavily on all of these disciplines, and the application of geospatial technology helps us to better understanding cross-disciplinary phenomena and solve important problems. GIS, GPS, and remote sensing can be used to simultaneously engage students in science, technology, engineering, and math. To overlook geography as a critical component of STEM flies in the face of the goals of STEM—to improve education, the work force, and national competitiveness [Esri Insider](#)

Social media a great tool for environmental academics at UWaterloo: Group ([#ECGGroup](#)) hosted workshop titled ‘Social Media for #environmental #academics’ was a total success! Graduate students and faculty in the University of Waterloo’s Faculty of Environment united for an afternoon and dispersed from the workshop feeling inspired and enabled to try on the social media outfit.

Quebec universities to face further cuts next year: *La Presse* reports that Quebec Higher Education Minister Pierre Duchesne confirmed Thursday that the province's universities will see further cuts next year to allow the government to balance its budget. Duchesne did not say whether the \$124 million in university budget cuts the province imposed for the current fiscal year are recurring. [La Presse](#)

McGill to reduce number of arts courses: McGill University arts students will have 100 fewer courses to choose from next academic year. The arts dean says the decision was made in response to student interest in having more courses taught by full-time instructors. [Montreal Gazette](#)

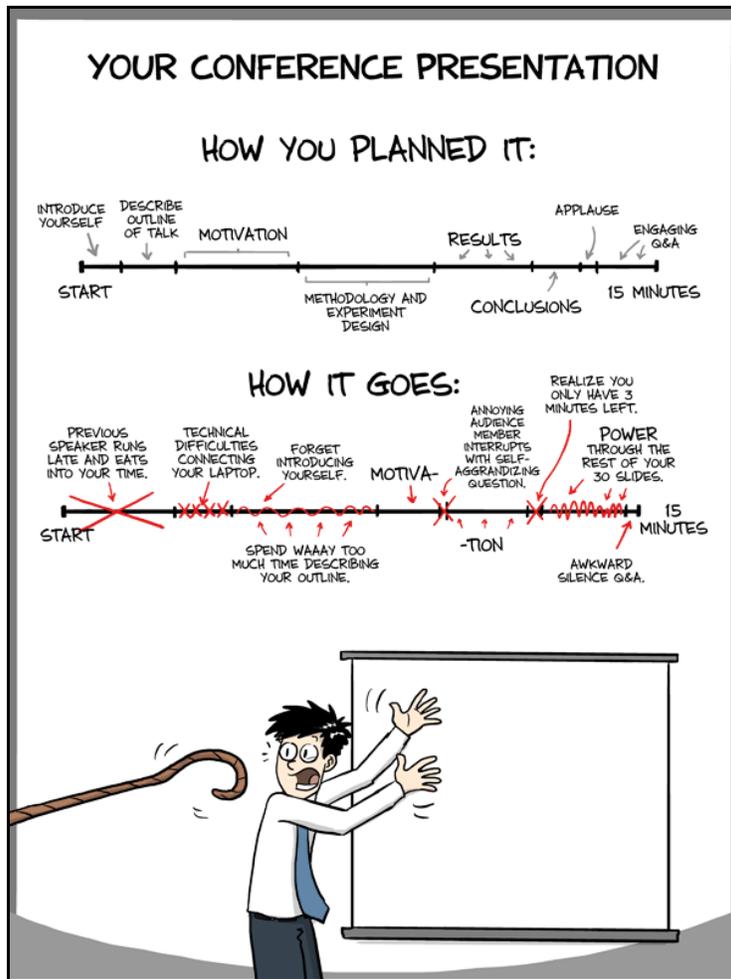
Dal report identifies options to address \$17.5-million shortfall: Dalhousie University's Budget Advisory Committee has released its first discussion report for 2013-14, which identifies a \$17.5-million shortfall that will have to be made up through spending cuts, efficiencies, and increased revenue. [Dal News](#)

University of Saskatchewan cutting dozens of jobs to reduce deficit: As part of its effort to reduce a projected \$44.5-million annual deficit, the University of Saskatchewan is laying off approximately 40 employees. More job losses are planned for April, the university announced. [Leader-Post](#)

Why the federal government's attempt to muzzle its scientists hinders public knowledge and damages science discourse in Canada: In November 2007, Environment Canada implemented new guidelines for its employees. The new policy required practices such as getting media relations to respond or “asking the programme expert to respond with approved lines,” depriving scientists of their own voice on the subject. This has been a trend throughout the Canadian government. The resulting interview delays and denials have had a significant effect on science journalism in Canada. [Ryerson Review of Journalism](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News

Death by GPS in the desert: Five harrowing days after becoming stuck on a remote backcountry road in Death Valley National Park, Alicia Sanchez lay down next to her Jeep and prepared to die. Danger has long stalked those who venture into California's desert in the heat of summer. But today, with more people pouring into the region, technology and tragedy are mixing in new and unexpected ways. "It's what I'm beginning to call death by GPS," said Death Valley wilderness coordinator Charlie Callagan. "People are renting vehicles with GPS and they have no idea how it works and they are willing to trust the GPS to lead them into the middle of nowhere." [The Sacramento Bee](#)



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