



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers**  
**No. 225, February 27, 2013**  
Compiled by Dan Smith [<cag@geog.uvic.ca>](mailto:cag@geog.uvic.ca)

---

**U Toronto Scarborough's Minelle Mahtani recognized for work in challenging stereotypes:**

Throughout her career as a journalist and academic, Minelle Mahtani has kept a close eye on how minorities are represented in media and other institutions in Canada. For her work Mahtani, recently received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for outstanding contributions to the field of ethnic media. "I am very flattered to be included among such an esteemed group," says Mahtani. "It was really humbling to have my work highlighted but it was extra special to share in the recognition with peers that I have admired for a long time." Considered an authority on multiraciality in Canada, Mahtani began her career as a journalist with CBC's The National while completing her PhD on mixed race identity. In addition to being president of the Association for Canadian Studies, she sits on various boards and external committees of Canadian media associations. Mahtani is also a former chair of the Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement, an immigration think tank, and is a fellow with the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. In the past she has consulted for the Ministry of Multiculturalism and Immigration, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage. Last year she received the prestigious [Glenda Laws Award](#) for geography, and has received numerous grants over the years for research into matters of race, identity and diversity in Canada. [UTSC Media](#)

**U Winnipeg's Joni Stori to use satellite imagery to help flood fight in Manitoba:** University of Winnipeg geography professor Joni Storie, who will study radar images that could allow flood forecasters to identify where flood waters naturally pool. Radar images already help flood experts understand the extent of flooding, but determining where water naturally pools can help flood fighters minimize damage from flood waters, Storie said. "This type of imagery that we acquire from the Canadian satellite has the ability to extract a lot of different types of information. I expect that we're going to be able to find these areas that will show an accumulation of water," she said. The floodwater can then be drained to areas where it will do less damage, sparing valuable residential or agricultural land. "You can put the water in a temporary storage location so that other places ... are protected and they're not being flooded," Storie said. [CBC News Manitoba](#)

**U Calgary conference marks 50 years of grad excellence in geography:** Department of Geography head John Yackel has seen his graduate students in action on Arctic expeditions, monitoring shrinking sea ice from icebreaker ships. Associate professor Darren Bender, whose research includes habitat mapping and conservation of endangered wildlife, has made strides thanks to his students. It's no

wonder that both researchers refer to geography's graduate students as invaluable. That crucial contribution will be celebrated on March 8 at the Department of Geography's 50th Annual Graduate Students Conference. "It's an event that showcases the outstanding research of our graduate students," explains Bender. "A lot of our students literally work side by side with professors out in the field. They help with the design of experiments, data collection and analyzing results . . . . As a prof, I might not have the ability to do all these things myself. To see these students take on a project and produce such amazing results is really impressive, and there's a lot of two-way learning that occurs." This is a tradition that predates the very existence of the University of Calgary. The department was established back in 1961 when the Calgary campus was a satellite of the University of Alberta. The work of graduate students was essential to the department even then. In acknowledgement, the first Graduate Students Conference was held in 1964. There are currently about 130 graduate students in the Department of Geography, Bender says. Many are lab-based, working in the Earth Sciences building, while others – probably 40 to 50 – join their professors "out in the field." [UToday](#)

**Mount Allison U's Ian Mauro documenting climate change in the Atlantic Canada:** Geography and environment professor, filmmaker, and anada Research Chair in Human Dimensions of Climate Change has been documenting climate change in the Canadian Arctic for the past decade. Upon arriving in Sackville in '11 he decided to focus his lens on Atlantic Canada. "This project is putting a human face on the issue of climate change in Atlantic Canada," says Mauro. "I want everyday citizens to understand that this a human issue and it affects communities. It is not just about statistics and climate models, it is about real life and real people." Mauro assembled a team of artists and researchers to develop a multi-media project on climate change and adaptation in Atlantic Canada — a collaborative effort between local stakeholders and his research lab that features a web site, video, and photo exhibit. [MTA Alumni Magazine](#)

**McGill U's Thomas A. Fox receives prestigious NSERC award:** Thomas A. Fox, of McGill's Department of Geography, received one of the \$10,000 André Hamer Postgraduate Prizes (master's and doctoral levels). The NSERC André Hamer Postgraduate Prizes are awarded to the four most outstanding candidates in NSERC's postgraduate scholarships competition at the master's level. The prizes were established by Arthur McDonald, winner of the 2003 Gerhard Herzberg Canada Gold Medal for Science and Engineering, in memory of André Hamer, a very promising young scientist who passed away in 2003. Thomas Fox is studying agricultural practices in Kerala, India to better understand strategies for balancing the needs of agriculture and biodiversity. He will set up a series of plots in rice fields of varying intensity that are located in diverse landscapes. His findings will contribute to humanity's goal of preserving biodiversity while meeting the world's food requirements. [McGill Media](#)

**U Victoria geographer David Chuenyan Lai presented with University of Victoria Community Leadership Award:** David Chuenyan Lai was recently presented with University of Victoria Community Leadership Awards acknowledging his outstanding leadership in linking UVic and the community for greater public benefit. The annual Victoria Leadership Awards (VLAs) showcase the distinguished accomplishments of local heroes — Victoria's very own Academy Awards for community leadership, service and achievement. [UVic Media Release](#)



March 7-9, 2013. Conference Website @ [WDCAG2013](#)

## Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Kean Fan Lim. 2013. [‘Socialism with Chinese characteristics’. Uneven development, variegated neoliberalization and the dialectical differentiation of state spatiality](#). Progress in Human Geography. doi:10.1177/0309132513476822

K.J.O. Norquay , F. Martinez-Nuñez , J.E. Dubois , K.M. Monson and C.K.R. Willis. 2013. [Long-distance movements of little brown bats \(\*Myotis lucifugus\*\)](#). Journal of Mammalogy. doi.org/10.1644/12-MAMM-A-065.1

Graham Pasternak, Leslie R. Brown, Stefan Kienzle, Andrea Fuller, Louise Barrett and S. Peter Henzi. 2013. [Population ecology of vervet monkeys in a high latitude, semi-arid riparian woodland](#). KOEDOE. 55(1).

Chunhua Zhang, John M. Kovacs, Mark P. Wachowiak and Francisco Flores-Verdugo. 2013. [Relationship between hyperspectral measurements and mangrove leaf nitrogen concentrations](#). Remote Sensing 5:891-908.

---

### Other “Geographical” News

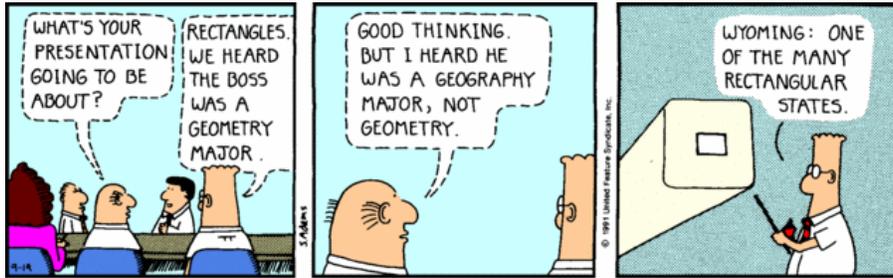
**Climate-changed coastlines need new maps:** The NOAA Coast Survey is getting set to make new charts of the Aleutian Islands. As multi-year sea ice continues to disappear, vessel traffic in the Arctic is on the rise,” said Gerd Glang. Multi-year ice is the thicker sea ice which persists for more than a single winter. He points out that the danger is not only to ships, of course, but to the coastline as well. “Given the lack of emergency response infrastructure in remote Arctic waters, nautical charts are even more important.” Underscoring the need for updated charts is the fact that in some locations little has been done to improve the bathymetric data since the survey of Captain Cook two centuries ago. [DNews](#)

**The myth of the four-year degree:** When Michael Prior came to the University of British Columbia in 2008, he expected to spend the standard 4 years at the school. Now in his 5th year, he realizes his original plan was unrealistic. Michael has funded most of his own education, so he works about 20 hours a week and that requires a lighter course load. Graduating more than 4 years after starting may be the new standard. A recent study reports that less than half of Ontario university students finish in 4 years. Hannah Talbot, a first year UBC student, was surprised. “I always thought that it was a four-year deal until I came to university and realized a lot of people were in their fifth or sixth year.” [Macleans.ca](#)

**Digital rights management: downloads, downers and a call for PDF publishing:** Modern academics don't read supine, snacking on grapes, writes Jefferson Pooley – we need book formats we can annotate, search, print and share. God gave PDF to journal articles and ePub to monographs. And then he decided to wrap those monographs in digital rights management (DRM). Why? The journal article – portable and easy to annotate – is flourishing in the digital age, while the scholarly book is languishing on a shelf or trapped in a Kindle. Right now academic books are painful to read in digital form, for no good reason. This is easy to fix: publish books as DRM-free PDF files. Just like journal articles. I groan inside when I discover that a piece of academic writing I want is trapped in a book. I know that it's torture to get those words into a format that I can actually use. So instead I read and annotate journal articles. [The Guardian](#)

---

## Some not so “Geographical” News



The CAG now works for geographers on [Twitter](#). Keep up-to-date by following [CanGeographers](#)  
GeogNews Archives: <http://www.geog.uvic.ca/dept/cag/geognews/geognews.html>