

GeogNews



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers

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U Waterloo's Susan Elliott giving back to village that was part of her research: As a medical geographer, Susan Elliott has turned her work on health and the environment into a personal project. Elliott has kick-started the building of a water and sanitation facility in the rural village of Usoma in Kenya. Elliott said it's her way, and that of her graduate students, of "giving back" to a community that has been part of her academic research. Elliott worked on issues of water sanitation and visited Kenya at least seven times, working with members of the Kenyan Medical Research Institute. That's when she met the people of Usoma, who live on the shores of Lake Victoria, the second largest freshwater lake in the world. The lake is heavily contaminated, she said. "The real irony is that there is lots of water there but no access to safe water," she said. The contaminated lake is a source of income for the villagers because fish is eaten from the lake and sand is harvested to make concrete. Elliott said the women of the village fetch dirty water at least 15 times a day, carrying 20-litre pails on their heads. Last fall, Elliott and graduate students visited Usoma and a water committee of community volunteers was established. They will build the water and sanitation facility and ensure it functions. "As researchers in general, we like to know that our research has had an impact," she said. Through her family and colleagues, Elliott raised \$5,000 in about six weeks over the Christmas holidays by asking people to participate in her buy-a-brick-for-\$10 campaign. But she needs to raise more — about \$5,000 — to finish erecting the building. [Metro](#)

U Toronto's Dan Harrington wins HERA's paper of the year: A paper written by Dan Harrington (Postdoctoral Research Fellow, UTM) and published in the journal of Human and Ecological Risk Assessment (HERA) was selected as one of HERA's papers of the year for 2012. See: Daniel W. Harrington, Susan J. Elliott, Ann E. Clarke, Moshe Ben-Shoshan, and Samuel Godefroy. 2012. [Exploring the determinants of the perceived risk of food allergies in Canada](#). HERA 18(6):1338-1358.

Brock U Geographers congratulate students who participated in Mapping the New Knowleges Conference: The Department of Geography at Brock University is offering congratulating to graduate students who participated in oral/poster sessions at the Mapping the New Knowleges Conference at Brock on April 10, 2013. Included were presentations entitled: "*Drought Impacts, Mitigation and Adaptation in the Canadian Prairies*" by Lisa Arblaster; "*Is Pork-Barrel Politics Evident in Revenue Sharing in Ghana? Evidence of the Disbursement of the District Assembly Common Fund*" by Micheal Boateng; "*Contemporary U.S. Border Policing: In Whose Interest is the Border and the Nation Secured?*" by Mert Coskan; "*Human Security and Disasters: The Case of Ghana*" by Oscar Asiedu Kuffour; "*Rural Road Construction in the Global South: How Does Process Shape Outcome?*" by Pushpa Hamal; and, "*Assessing the Adaptive Capacity for Climate Change Adaptation*" by Kerrie Pickering. [Brock News](#)

Trent U Students win for community-based research and innovative presentation: Engaging in the dynamic interplay of teaching and research beyond the classroom, Trent University students energized the community with presentations of their experiential learning projects at the Knowledge & Talent in Action Showcase (CIF:KTIAS) held April 4th, 2013, at the Peterborough Golf and Country Club. Close to 50 Trent University community-based education projects competed for awards in the Showcase at the third annual Community Innovation Forum. Students displayed their work for representatives of the local community and were judged on innovation, professionalism, commercial value and presentation. Runners up in the Innovative Presentation Award category were Brianna Peters and Natalie Fragomeni – Daycare Policy Scan – Hosted by Peterborough County-City Health Unit for Geography 4030Y (Supervised by Peter Lafleur and Heather Nicol). [Trent Daily News](#)

U Toronto's Deborah Cowen investigates markets without borders? In an era in which transnational corporations rely heavily on the unimpeded flow of goods and energy across borders, many governments now view anything that interrupts this flow as a threat to economic – and therefore national – security. So what happens when governments seem willing to sacrifice civil rights in order to keep goods moving across borders? That's a question that intrigues Deborah Cowen, a University of Toronto geography professor. In practice, Cowen notes, the interests of large corporations protecting their global supply chains through various territories often clash with the interests of citizens and workers who live there. She points to security clearance programs in Canada that violate the privacy rights of port workers and their families, allowing them to be suspended from work based on "reasonable suspicion" of terrorist affiliation – with little opportunity to appeal. "These new security regulations threaten to institutionalize racial profiling and directly undermine collective agreements and civil rights," says Cowen. [U of T Magazine](#)

U Saskatchewan's Ryan Bullock argues the role of the university in Canada's resource regions isn't apparent: There is a rich and romantic cultural history associated with natural resources and communities in Canada, one reinforced by images and narratives of self-reliant White northerners eking out an existence in isolated communities and rugged landscapes, surrounded by pristine and endless resources. A more modern and less positive view of resource communities is that they are antiquated, marginal settlements, wrought with social conflict and racial tension, whose glory days passed when the last resource industry left town. [University Affairs](#)

[Communications from the CAG Executive...](#)



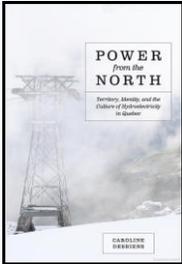
Canadian Association of Geographers
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[Communications du comité exécutif de l'ACG...](#)

The latest issue of the CAG Newsletter "*Communications from the CAG Executive*" is now available for downloading from the Association website. Included is the Presidents Column from Jean Andreys, and a contribution from Norm Catto on the Canadian Geographic Education November 2012 meeting. [Communications 20\(1\)](#)

New Book

Caroline Desbiens. 2013. [Power from the North: Territory, Identity, and the Culture of Hydroelectricity in Quebec](#). UBC Press.



In the 1970s, Hydro-Québec declared "We Are Hydro-Québécois." The publicity campaign slogan symbolized the extent to which hydroelectric development in the North had come to both reflect and fuel French Canada's aspirations in the South. The slogan helped southerners relate to the province's northern territory and to accept the exploitation of its resources.

In *Power from the North*, Caroline Desbiens explores how this culture of hydroelectricity helped shaped the material landscape during the first phase of the James Bay hydroelectric project. She analyzes the cultural forces that contributed to the transformation of the La Grande River into a hydroelectric complex. Policy makers and Quebecers did not, she argues, view those who built the dams as mere workers -- they saw them as pioneers in a previously uninhabited landscape now inscribed with the codes of culture and spectacle.

This dynamic book reveals that drawing power from the North involves not only the cultural erasure of Aboriginal homelands but also rewriting the region's history in the language of identity and territoriality. To reverse this trend, Desbiens calls for a truly sustainable resource management, one in which all actors bring an awareness of their own cultural histories and visions of nature, North, and nation to the negotiating table.

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Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Matthew Farish. 2013. [The Lab and the Land: Overcoming the Arctic in Cold War Alaska](#). *Isis* 104:1-29.

James D. Ford, Graham McDowell, Jamal Shirley, Mike Pitre, Richard Siewierski, William Gough, Frank Duerden, Tristan Pearce, Peter Adams and Sara Statham. 2013. [The dynamic multiscale nature of climate change vulnerability: An Inuit harvesting example](#). *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. DOI:10.1080/00045608.2013.776880

Martin Simard et Carl Brisson. 2013. [L'industrie minière et le développement urbain en milieu nordique: l'exemple de Fermont au Québec](#). *Cybergeographie* : *European Journal of Geography*. Document 637.

Other “Geographical” News

Does going to university make you feel inadequate? Higher education is supposed to give you skills and confidence. But lots of students end up feeling just plain anxious. For years, we have been labelled "first class", "average" or "low-performing" based on our grades. Only a minority of students will achieve first class degrees. So for everyone else, the system increases feelings of self-doubt and uncertainty about their potential. Being told your work isn't up to much is demotivating and can trigger a reluctance to experiment and push boundaries. No doubt, university unlocks many closed doors. But too much exposure to the system's beam of scrutiny leaves many students unsure of whether they are capable of opening doors for themselves. [The Guardian](#)

Mars' 'raindrop' sand dunes swarm: There are countless examples of dunes on Mars -- features created by the transport of the fine Martian regolith blowing in the wind. However, on analyzing a swarm of dunes inside Mars' Copernicus Crater, the Compact Reconnaissance Imaging Spectrometer for Mars (CRISM) on board NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter (MRO) picked out the presence of olivine, a mineral that forms in the presence of water. The High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) was then used for follow-up observations. Tiny olivine particles have been blown in the wind, collecting in "raindrop" shaped dunes. [DNews](#)

Study reveals water conservation efforts of ancient cultures: New research at the ancient Maya site of Medicinal Trail in northwestern Belize led by Jeffrey Brewer, a doctoral student in the University of Cincinnati's Department of Geography has revealed how populations in more remote areas built reservoirs to conserve water and turned to nature to purify their water supply. The artificial reservoirs are topographical depressions, or aguadas, that were lined with clay to create a watertight basin. Brewer says that these basins further our understanding of how the Maya conserved water from the heavy rain season that runs from December through spring. The ability to conserve this water allowed them to survive the extreme dry spells that stretched from summer to winter. [redOrbit](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



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