



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers**  
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**Wilfrid Laurier U's Robert McLeman receives funding for NatureWatch 2.0:** Robert McLeman has received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for his digital NatureWatch 2.0 community partnership project. McLeman, an associate professor in Laurier's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, will receive two years of funding to lead a project entitled "NatureWatch 2.0: reconnecting Canadians with nature in a digital age." The goal of the project is to create a new, Canada-wide generation of enthusiastic, educated and engaged citizen scientists, to provide them with the tools to have fun learning about the environment around them, and to engage them with researchers and one another in environmental reporting and monitoring. McLeman's partners in this project include the David Suzuki Foundation, Nature Canada, Desire2Learn, and the University of Ottawa. The partnership team will develop cutting-edge smartphone and online collaboration tools for citizen science and nature education. McLeman launched [www.RinkWatch.org](http://www.RinkWatch.org), another citizen scientist initiative, in January. The website invited Canadians who maintain a backyard or neighbourhood hockey rink to report skating conditions over the winter, providing valuable data about the impact of climate change. The site garnered hundreds of participants from across North America. [WLU Headlines](#)

**Brock U's Tony Shaw involved in productions for Virtual Researcher on Call: Brock University** Geography Professor, Tony Shaw, recently took part in a couple of video productions for Virtual Researcher on Call. In the YouTube video [Climate Change and Viticulture](#), Tony takes us to the Henry of Pelham Estate and discusses how climate change, global warming, frost, and precipitation is affecting wine production in the Niagara region. In a companion video entitled [Wind Machine and Viticulture](#), Tony explains how the use of wind machines help sustain wine grape vines in the Niagara region. [Brock News Around Campus](#)

**U British Columbia's graduate Elliot Siemiatycki on UOIT's impact on Oshawa's development:** Ever since Oshawa hitched its star to General Motors in 1915, their fortunes have risen and fallen together. The last time Oshawa's downtown was this bustling it was the 1960s. Now "there are some very nice vegetarian restaurants" — full of young people from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. "Relative to most other municipalities in the GTA, Oshawa has been independent — it's

had its own kind of economy," says Elliot Siemiatycki, a PhD geography student at UBC, who wrote his masters thesis on UOIT's impact on Oshawa's development. "It hasn't sought out or needed population and certainly until the last few years hadn't sought out much attention of anything. There wasn't a great need to attract people to Oshawa — and a great deal of people who worked there didn't even live in the city." [Toronto Star](#)

**U Calgary's Shawn Marshall on declining Rocky Mountains snow packs:** The snowpack in the Rocky Mountains is getting smaller. Scientists say it will have serious repercussions for the water supply on both sides of the border. "The trends we do see in Canada are consistent with this study and it is disconcerting," said Shawn Marshall, a climatologist and glaciologist at the University of Calgary. "It's going to mean a real change in our water supply and our water systems here — things we're already seeing — but this is just more evidence that this is likely to continue and accelerate going forward." [CBCNews|Calgary](#)

**Memorial U's Norm Catto on why tom cod are landlocked in Deer Lake:** The reason why tom cod are landlocked in Deer Lake is a phenomenon that goes back thousands of years. The entire Humber Gorge was once an arm of the ocean and salt water stretched well inland. Geography Professor at Memorial University, Norm Catto, says the cod became stranded when the ocean receded. Catto says it's the same reason why the Department of Transportation is currently encountering problems with the Trans Canada Highway near Pasadena. Recent heavy rain and run-off has saturated the clay bed in the area, causing the road to become unstable. One area collapsed last month, while another portion has also shown signs of ground movement. Catto says a thick layer of clay was left in the region when the ocean retreated thousands of years ago. [VOCM New Now](#)

**U Lethbridge's Sarah Boon SFSYO Scientist of the Month:** Sarah Boon is hydroecologist, which means she studies where water comes from, where it goes, and how it interacts with living things. She is particularly interested in how snow interacts with trees, and what happens to streams – and the fish in them – when snow melts. Sarah did an undergraduate degree in Physical Geography with a minor in Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria. After five years in Victoria she moved to Edmonton, Alberta to do a PhD in Earth & Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Alberta. She finished in 2003 and now lives in Lethbridge, after 2 years in Prince George, British Columbia as a 'substitute' professor. [Science Decoded](#)

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### Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Kirsten Greer. 2013. [Geopolitics and the Avian Imperial Archive: The zoogeography of region-making in the nineteenth-century British Mediterranean](#). Annals of the Association of American Geographers. DOI:10.1080/00045608.2013.78409

Christiana Miewald, Aleck Ostry and Sally Hodgson. 2013. [Food safety at the small scale: The case of meat inspection regulations in British Columbia's rural and remote communities](#). Journal of Rural Studies 32:93–102.

Tracy L. Rowlandson, Aaron A. Berg, Paul R. Bullock, E. RoTimi Ojo, Heather McNairn, Grant Wiseman and Michael H. Cosh. 2013. [Evaluation of several calibration procedures for a portable soil moisture sensor](#). Journal of Hydrology. doi.org/10.1016/j.jhydrol.2013.05.021

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## Other “Geographical” News

**Academic entitlement does not equal higher grades:** While the majority of students aren’t suffering from a sense of academic entitlement, for the ones who are, there can be serious negative consequences both during school and after they leave. Academically entitled students are those who, for example, might believe it’s acceptable if they leave class early, that exams should be rescheduled if they conflict with their personal plans, or believe they should get marks simply if they demonstrate that they’re trying hard. [UWindsor Daily News](#)

**Terrible job market doesn’t make the ‘college is dead’ argument worthwhile:** Many recent studies and reports have lamented the relatively meager job market open to graduates, especially those outside of rapidly growing fields. In an exhaustive research review of the return on investment of a college education available at the NBER website, the University of Toronto’s Philip Oreopoulos and Uros Petronijevic find that not only does the research find college boosts wages and is a good long term investment, but that those returns have stayed constant, and even grown as the supply of graduates has exploded. [Business Insider Australia](#)

**Publishers with questionable practices prey on academics:** Faculty members say they are being bombarded with spam emails from dubious publishers of online academic journals soliciting contributions for articles or inviting them to review manuscripts and sit on editorial boards. Some publishers even send personalized emails to professors, praising their earlier published work and inviting them to submit an article. Scholars who do so are then charged article-processing fees that range from hundreds to thousands of dollars. [University Affairs](#)

**Construction resumes on controversial Skywalk in Jasper National Park:** Construction resumed last month on the attraction, now re-named the Glacier Skywalk by Brewster Travel Canada. The site is located on Highway 93 along Tangle Ridge in Jasper National Park. Design plans include a 400-metre long walkway with glass floors that extends 30 metres out over the Sunwapta Valley, giving "skywalkers" a view of nearby glaciers on Mount Andromeda and Athabasca. Some environmental organizations had initially protested the new construction, saying it would disturb the park's natural beauty and negatively affect wildlife; but they have since conceded to the inevitable. [Hinton Parklander](#)

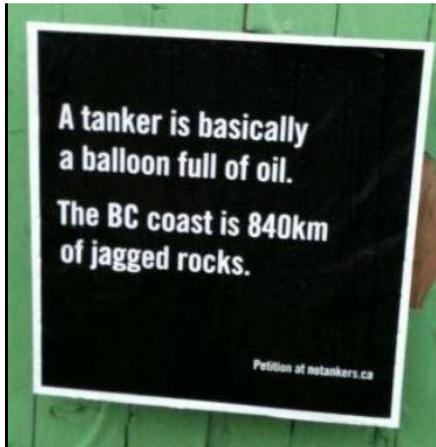
**Grant writing, an occupational hazard:** In the early days of my graduate work, when I was spending far too many late-night hours in the company of pipettes and green algae, I’d sometimes encounter zombie-like professors wandering aimlessly through the biology department hallways. My attempts to engage with these eerie academics were usually met with a loud holler of “get out while you still can.” Grant writing is tedious and gruelling work, and it can make the best of us go a little bonkers. My previous boss, an upbeat and easygoing person, disappeared for weeks when working on grants, and would re-emerge, despondent, with bags under his eyes, asking questions like “why would anyone want to pursue a career in research?” [University Affairs](#)

**Are Ph.D.s an academic dead zone?** Two decades ago, if you sat at a dinner party next to someone with a Ph.D., chances were, those letters made an impact. These days, a doctorate is as likely to inspire pity as veneration. Universities are cutting back on tenure-track jobs. The federal government is laying off scientists. The economy, meanwhile, is skewing ever harder toward resource extraction, where the demand for highly specialized knowledge is limited. The result has devalued a once-estimable badge of academic achievement—to the point that some observers worry Canada is becoming a dead zone in the advancement of human knowledge. That sluggishness has a direct impact on Ph.D.s. “Canada is cold—not just climatically, but also intellectually.” [Macleans.ca](#)

**Students turn to gambling and medical trials to fund university:** Students are resorting to high-risk strategies to fund the ever-increasing cost of living. In an attempt to get hold of extra cash one in five students has turned to gambling with their limited funds, while one in four said they would consider selling their body for medical trials or take a job in the adult entertainment industry. [The Guardian](#)

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### Some not so “Geographical” News



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