



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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U Guelph's Barry Smith wins SSHRC's highest research honour: A University of Guelph professor who is one of the world's leading authorities on climate change has won this year's top research honour from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Barry Smit received SSHRC's 2013 Gold Medal during the World Social Sciences Forum in Montreal. "This is a fantastic and well-deserved honour for Barry," said Kevin Hall. "Barry has always been one of the most outstanding and recognized researchers at U of G and in his field internationally. This gold medal goes beyond that and distinguishes Barry as truly one of the country's most innovative social science researchers. Smit was among the first to investigate human vulnerability and adaptation to climate change. His work has taken him to 68 countries and dozens of towns and villages in some of the most remote and underdeveloped regions of the world. Part of SSHRC's prestigious Impact Awards, the Gold Medal honours scholars for original thought, work and leadership that has advanced understanding in their field and enriched Canada's cultural and intellectual life. The winner is chosen by jury, and the prize money is to be used for research, promotion, knowledge mobilization or related activities. [U Guelph News](#)

Geography class at Western U turns into a fleet of canoes: Each fall, the third-year Honours students in the Department of Geography leave the conventional classroom behind and embark on a week that takes geography back to its roots — in the field. As part of Field Camp Week 2013, sections of the Field Methods and Practices course headed to three wildly different regions: the major urban centre of Montreal, Que.; the deep caves of Kentucky; and aboard a fleet of canoes in Killarney, Ont. Eight students started planning the Ontario excursion in September, in association with Western Geography professor Micha Pazner and lab coordinator Erika Hill. The group pulled together gear, shopped for supplies and brainstormed trip project topics. Once in the field, the group quickly bonded, learning to depend on each others' skills and abilities. In addition to locally relevant academic topics, students learned how to paddle, portage and set up a wilderness camp. They also navigated with maps, satellite images, compasses and GPS, to create field maps and co-exist with the local fauna. Pazner said the students, all safely back in London, are working on their term projects, and looking forward to the post-trip dinner, slide show and photo exchange. "Perhaps the most enduring legacy of Field Camp Week is the enthusiasm for hands-on geography that can only come from this kind of experience," he said. [Western News](#)

McGill U's Nigel Roulet calls for preservation of half of Canada's boreal forests: When the IBCSP released *Conserving the World's Last Great Forests is Possible*, it was an unequivocal call for Canada to ban development in half of its 5.8-million-square-kilometre boreal forests and wetlands. Nigel Roulet, James McGill Professor of Biogeoscience in the Department of Geography at McGill University, was

asked why so much forest needs so much protection. “Canada is unique in how much intact boreal forest we still have,” says Roulet. “Our north is poorly developed compared to the Europeans. You’d be hard-pressed to find any original boreal forest in Sweden, for example. So we’re talking about the preservation and conservation of a natural resource, not a secondary or tertiary set of forest. Canada is ahead of the game here.” Roulet says Quebec and Ontario already have some “very workable” provincial plans in place, “but they only cover 30 per cent of Canada’s boreal forest. [McGill Reporter](#)

Wilfrid Laurier U’s Alison Mountz to discuss island connection for immigrants: Islands are where many migrants and asylum-seekers around the world first land in their pursuit of safety and freedom. But for many, the archipelagos become a physical and legal trap. Alison Mountz, an associate professor of geography with the Balsillie School of International Affairs at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, will explore the processing and detention of these would-be immigrants on Oct. 23 at SUNY Cortland. Mountz, who holds her school's Canada Research Chair in Global Migration, has focused her studies on the peripheral edges of sovereign territory where migrants try to land, work and seek asylum. These islands are significant for border authorities, raising complex issues surrounding legality, sovereignty, governance and exclusion. She will describe how migrants and asylum-seekers are kept, literally, at the margins of the countries in which they seek refuge. Mountz is the author of a book, *Seeking Asylum: Human Smuggling and Bureaucracy at the Border* and the co-author of a second, *Key Concepts in Political Geography*. [readMedia Newswire](#)

Wilfrid Laurier U’s Bill Quinton and collaborators receive funding for Water Knowledge Application Network Communications: Permafrost in the Northwest Territories is thawing and the ecosystem is changing. Over the past three years, Wilfrid Laurier University researcher William (Bill) Quinton, a Canada Research Chair in Cold Regions Hydrology, has been working with collaborators to map the change in the permafrost and to develop computer models that will help predict permafrost distribution and river flow. Quinton received funding from the Canadian Water Network (CWN) to create the Water Knowledge Application Network (WatKAN). WatKAN will focus on two-way knowledge transfer between knowledge producers and users working together to solve watershed management challenges arising from permafrost thaw. The project will build on earlier research projects in the Northwest Territories, developing ways to bring that knowledge to the communities and policymakers who can use it. “Laurier’s cold regions research, in partnership with the Northwest Territories, is both cutting-edge and crucial,” said Abby Goodrum, vice-president: research. “The Water Knowledge Application Network will share the research and prediction tools developed by Quinton and his team with local First Nations people, government policymakers, and Northwest Territories communities who will be making decisions about the ecosystem in which they live.” [WLU Headlines](#)

U Saskatchewan features Xulin Guo’s research using remote sensing to monitor endangered species: Dr. Xulin Guo studies the remote sensing of grasslands in effort to monitor productivity and examine habitats for endangered species. Grassland ecology, forest ecology, and biogeochemical cycles are utilized to understand and track changing landscapes and the resulting effects for animal health, particularly those species at risk of becoming endangered. The effects of disturbances such as fire and grazing have been funded by Parks Canada to analyze grazing effects of animal populations and the burn effects of wildfires. Dr. Guo has received funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) to examine the heterogeneity of grassland using temporal and spatial systems. Fieldwork has taken place in Grasslands National Park for the last decade which has also served as the grounds for graduate student training for fieldwork. Another project of Dr. Guo’s, the Northern Ecosystem Monitoring Program, uses satellites to monitor an area over a number of years to observe the effects of climate change. Future research interests for Guo include investigating the connection between the spread of West Nile Virus and landscape. [UofS College of Arts and Science](#)

U Victoria's David Chuenyan Lai has visited more than 40 Chinatowns and mapped their history:

When David Chuenyan Lai came to the University of Victoria in 1968, he couldn't find a single book in Chinese in its library. Today, the retired geography professor has written nearly a dozen books on Chinese-Canadian history, many of which now grace those shelves. When Lai arrived in B.C. from Hong Kong with his wife, what they did find was discrimination. "We found it difficult to get a place. We'd hear of an apartment open, we'd run over and they said the suite is taken," he recalled. Eventually, the departmental chairman secured them a place. Since then, Lai has spent his career mapping the history of neighbourhoods Chinese haven't been barred from: Chinatowns. Lai has visited more than 40. [The Province](#)

Recent Theses and Dissertations

Yolande Pottie-Sherman. 2013. [Vancouver's night markets: Intercultural encounters in urban and suburban Chinatowns](#). Ph.D. dissertation. Department of Geography, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia. Supervisor: Daniel Hiebert.

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Christine Bonnin and Sarah Turner. 2013. ['A good wife stays home': gendered negotiations over state agricultural programmes, upland Vietnam](#). Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography. DOI:10.1080/0966369X.2013.832663

Christina Goldhar, Trevor Bell and Johanna Wolf. 2013. [Rethinking existing approaches to water security in remote communities: An analysis of two drinking water systems in Nunatsiavut, Labrador, Canada](#). Water Alternatives 6:462-486.

Maxime Jolivel and Michel Allard. 2013. [Thermokarst and export of sediment and organic carbon in the Sheldrake River watershed, Nunavik, Canada](#). Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface 118:1729–1745.

Michele-Lee Moore. 2013. [Perspectives of complexity in water governance: Local experiences of global trends](#). Water Alternatives 6:487-505.

P.D. Morse and Chris R. Burn. 2013. [Field observations of syngenetic ice wedge polygons, outer Mackenzie Delta, western Arctic coast, Canada](#). Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface 118:1320–1332.

S L.F. Sutton, C. McKenna Neuman and W. Nickling. 2013. [Lee slope sediment processes leading to avalanche initiation on an aeolian dune](#). Journal of Geophysical Research: Earth Surface 118:1754–1766.

Other "Geographical" News

Drone squad maps Matterhorn Mountain: Swiss company senseFly has joined forces with Drone Adventures to autonomously create a 3-D map of Matterhorn mountain. A fleet of eBee drones mapped the 17-mile area along the border of Switzerland and Italy in less than a day. Equipped with an onboard

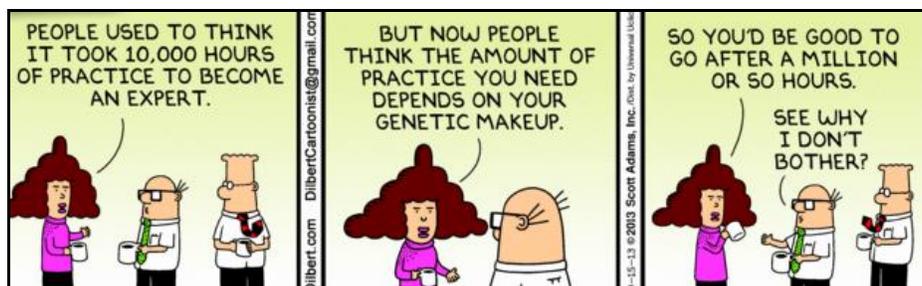
high-resolution camera, eBee drones can be launched by hand and have a flight time of up to 45 minutes. Prior to launch, GPS coordinates can be outlined in Google Maps. Flight planning software helps the drone steer clear of natural obstacles like mountains and trees. Once the the eBee has run its plotted course and gently glides back to the ground, it can be plugged into a computer to obtain the map. After one eBee was thrown off the 14,692 foot summit of Matterhorn, five more drones mapped the lower sections of the mountain. The system allows for use of up to ten drones at once, all of which can be controlled from a single base station. [DNews](#)

How many mega impacts have whacked Earth? If you enjoy leaves turning, pumpkin patches and other rites of autumn, thank the giant impact event early in Earth's history which knocked our planet's axis off kilter, creating the seasons we that know and love today. But was there just one planet-tilting impact? University of Western Ontario geologist Grant Young thinks there were two, separated by billions of years. He has been studying rocks from the Ediacaran Period, 540 to 635 million years ago and says he sees signs of massive changes to Earth's seasons and climate that can best be explained by a axis-shifting collision of a small planetary body into the ocean about 570 million years ago. [DNews](#)

Why universities should quit adding more breaks. The last thing students need is fewer days on campus: For the first time this fall, a majority of Ontario universities have scheduled a break from classes in either October or November. The idea is that a fall break will help students cope with the high workload of university, leaving them less likely to get stressed, depressed or anxious. A break may indeed temporarily lift spirits and improve mental health but further diminishing the amount of time they're expected to show up may also make it harder for them to cope in the long run—especially if they get full-time jobs where they're expected to show up five days a week. Showing up to the same place at the same time each day is a skill and it's one that universities aren't taking seriously enough if they think they can drop even more days from their schedules. [Maclean.ca](#)

World ocean systems undermined by climate change by 2100: A new study describes the full chain of events by which ocean biogeochemical changes triggered by human- made greenhouse gas emissions may cascade through marine habitats and organisms, penetrating to the deep ocean and eventually influencing humans. Factoring in predictable synergistic changes such as the depletion of dissolved oxygen in seawater and a decline in productivity of ocean ecosystems, the new study shows that no corner of the world ocean will be untouched by climate change by 2100. [ScienceDaily](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



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