



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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UNBC's Brian Menounos awarded a Canada Research Chair: [Brian Menounos](#), Associate Professor in the Geography at the University of Northern British Columbia has been named a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Glacier Change. Menounos studies the past, present and future response of glaciers to climate change in Western Canada and southernmost South America. "Glaciers are important natural resources for many mountain regions on Earth," says Dr. Menounos. "Support from the CRC program and UNBC will allow us to continue to quantify how glaciers respond to climate, the importance of glacier runoff in Western Canada, and how quickly these ice masses will disappear from our mountains under future climate change." [UNBC Newsroom](#)

Mould prompts move for Memorial U geographer Alistair Bath: A geography professor at Memorial University says the campus building he works in might not be safe. Alistair Bath and some of his students fear that mould and asbestos could be harming their health. A petition to address those concerns in the science building on the St. John's campus is currently being circulated by students. Bath has been out of his office since July, when there was a flood and mould was discovered. Bath has been working out of a temporary space in the same building for four months. "It seems like the university's plan at the moment is a Band-Aid approach on a cancer patient. In my own mind, our own health and safety has lost a lot of credibility. So there's a lot of trust and other, bigger issues that needs to be dealt with before we believe our own university health and safety," Bath told CBC News. Memorial University is planning on constructing a new science building, but no date has been given as to when that will be ready. [CBCNews | Newfoundland & Labrador](#)

U Victoria's Chris Darimont co-authors study showing grizzly bears at greater risk when salmon numbers low: Grizzly bears that consume low amounts of salmon have higher levels of cortisol, a stress hormone that helps the species cope with change but may have negative health effects in the long-term. Researchers from the University of Victoria, the University of Calgary, and the Raincoast Conservation Foundation examined stress hormones in hair samples of salmon-eating grizzly bears from coastal BC. The researchers found higher levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, in coastal bears that consumed less salmon. "This pattern would occur if bears are nutritionally stressed by lack of salmon or if bears experience social stress caused by intense competition when salmon numbers are low," explains Dr. Heather Bryan, Hakai postdoctoral researcher at UVic and the study's lead author. "Our [findings](#) highlight how salmon management can influence the health of coastal wildlife," says Dr. Chris Darimont, UVic geography professor, Raincoast science director and a co-author of the study. [UVictoria Media Tip | Globe and Mail](#)

UBC Geography doctoral student Justin Tse co-authors study showing children of rich Chinese home alone in Canada face challenges: A new UBC study examines the experiences of “astronaut families” – finding there are downsides to young people living and studying in the West with their families back in Asia. Justin Tse, a doctoral student at UBC’s school of geography, co-authored the study that found children of astronaut parents “often perceive [their parents] as inconsistent, fragmentary interruptions in their otherwise independent lives, [changing] the character of intra-family relations.” [South China Morning Post](#)

Dalhousie U’s James Boxall says more Geography needs to be taught in schools: Most of us turn to Google Maps these days to find our destination. But people may be depending on technology too much, especially young people. A Dalhousie professor thinks that’s the case, and students are losing the real meaning of geography. It’s pretty easy to type in a city and find it’s location on the computer. But, could you do it on your own? Furthermore, could you tie the location to an industry, terrain, or any distinctive figure? That’s a problem says Dalhousie University Professor [James Boxall](#). “The trick is to put it in the context of something about that place, so you remember the place,” says Boxall, “not memorize the location of something.” The Director of the GI Science Centre at Dalhousie says teachers often don’t have the expertise to teach geography — which means students don’t get the benefit of that experience. “Probably fifty per cent of the teachers have no background in geography, have never taken a course, have never learned during their BEd programs or professional development, how to actually teach what real geography is, which goes beyond maps,” says Boxall. Things changed with Google. “People are feeling that Geography isn’t that important because we have Wikipedia and Google Earth now, and so, who needs to know anything,” says Boxall. Boxall was recently appointed as a Governor of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and plans to use his role to improve Geography education. “We’re actually as a community looking at what resources can put together and support teachers and enhance geography,” says Boxall. He has established a foundation which he says will bring in funding to help teachers get trained in Geography, with the hope that their skills can be passed along to the students. [Global BC](#)

Trent U Professor Emeritus John Marsh honoured with J.B. Harkin Conservation Award: “I was honoured and thrilled. I was also a little surprised,” said Trent professor emeritus Dr. John Marsh in regards to winning the J.B. Harkin Medal for Conservation in recognition of more than 50 years of dedication to environmental conservation through his academic, volunteer and social undertakings. The Harkin Conservation Award, awarded by the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), honours individuals who have demonstrated a significant contribution throughout their lifetime through words and deeds to the conservation of Canada’s parks and wilderness. Prof. March was presented with the award at a ceremony at the Museum of Nature in Ottawa. Professor Marsh was a professor of Geography at Trent University from 1972 to 2002. During this time, his teaching and research at both the undergraduate and graduate level focused on nature conservation, recreation, tourism, and heritage. He also established the ongoing Trail Studies Unit and for many years was on the University’s Nature Areas Committee and co-authored the Stewardship Plan for Trent’s Nature Areas. Since retiring, as emeritus professor of Geography, Prof. Marsh has continued his academic activities at Trent, teaching a wilderness resources course, giving guest lectures and supervising students. [Trent Daily News](#)

UBC’s Kevin Hanna says pipeline projects linked to Alberta’s oilsands pose much risk: Kevin Hanna, an associate professor of Geography in the Irving K. Barber School of Arts and Sciences at UBC’s Okanagan campus, has been working with colleague Bram Noble, from the University of Saskatchewan, to evaluate the effectiveness of environmental assessment processes in Canada. This work is particularly timely given the current debates in B.C. over mines, pipelines and other energy projects. [UBC News](#)

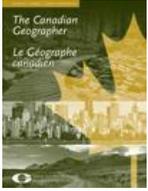
U Laval, WLU, Brock U and U Waterloo geographers show subarctic lakes drying up at rates not seen in 200 years: The decrease in snowfall observed in recent years in Canada's subarctic regions has led to worrisome desiccation of the regions' lakes. This is the conclusion arrived at by researchers from Université Laval, Wilfrid Laurier University, Brock University and the University of Waterloo. Researchers came to this conclusion after studying 70 lakes near Old Crow, Yukon, and Churchill, Manitoba. Most of the lakes studied are less than one metre deep. According to the analysis, more than half of those located on relatively flat terrain and surrounded by scrubby vegetation show signs of desiccation. The problem stems chiefly from a decline in meltwater; for instance, from 2010 to 2012 average winter precipitation in Churchill decreased by 76 mm compared to the averages recorded from 1971 to 2000. The drying of some lakes, which first became visible to the naked eye in 2010, was even more pronounced in summer 2013. "With this type of lake, precipitation in the form of snow represents 30% to 50% of the annual water supply," explained the study's lead author, Frédéric Bouchard, a postdoctoral fellow at Université Laval's Department of Geography and the Centre for Northern Studies. The kind of desiccation seen by the researchers is without precedent in 200 years. Isotopic analyses conducted on the remains of phytoplankton accumulated in lakebed sediment show that the lakes have maintained water balance for 200 years. This stability was abruptly disrupted a few years ago.

[ScienceDaily](#)

U Toronto Mississauga's Ron Buliung wants to know whether your kids walk by themselves to school: Do you let your kids walk by themselves to school? If not, Ron Buliung of the Department of Geography at the University of Toronto Mississauga wants to know why. Buliung is a transport geographer who examines the relationship between children and cities, with a particular focus on how kids get around. "I'm interested in children, mobility, activity and health," he says, noting that some of the decisions adults make about children's lives relate to the politics, design and structure of cities — from political decisions about user fees for city-run programs to the layout of our roads and decisions regarding speed limits — and are informed by their beliefs about whether children are capable of navigating the city alone. Children, however, might have a very different way of looking at things. Consider the journey to school, something Buliung and colleagues have spent a lot of time thinking about. Today, employment is located all over the region, and many households contain two working adults. Parents, in this context, may tend to think of the trip to school as something to get over with as quickly as possible. But when you talk to children, it turns out they consider the journey a place in and of itself. "It's a place where children, particularly children who are walking, experience the environment in important ways," he says. "They play games on the fly and socialize. They told us about puddles that freeze over in winter and allow them to slide across. These are moments that adults don't think about as being important, but it's all physical activity and learning that can have positive feedback on a child's health." This study was part of the BEAT project, which Buliung works on with colleagues Guy Faulker and Caroline Fusco from U of T's Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education. [Events at UTM](#)

Family of York U Geography alumni Joseph Elrod participate in Remembrance Day ceremony: At the York University Keele campus, a crowd gathered at the flagpole in the Harry W. Arthurs Common on remembrance day. Among those at the ceremony were special guests Maria Elrod and her son Patrick, who attended in memory of her husband, American veteran Joseph Elrod (MA '13 [Posthumous]). Elrod was a graduate student at York University and an American Marine who had experienced two tours of duty in Afghanistan in 2002 and 2004. After the Marines, he earned a BA in Geography at the University of South Florida in 2011. He then moved, with his wife and three children, to Canada in 2011, where he attended York University's Master of Arts in Geography program. In February of 2013, he took a job in Afghanistan as a civilian contractor for DynCorp International supporting the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan program. He was killed on May 16 in Kabul, Afghanistan. The 2013 Remembrance Day ceremony at York University was dedicated to Elrod and York alumnus Brent Donald Poland (BA '92), who was killed in Afghanistan in 2007. [yFile](#)

New in [The Canadian Geographer](#)



Claudia Notzke. 2013. [An exploration into political ecology and nonhuman agency: The case of the wild horse in western Canada](#). *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien* 57(4):389–412.

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Sébastien Caquard. 2013. [Cartography II: Collective cartographies in the social media era](#), *Progress in Human Geography*. doi: 10.1177/0309132513514005

David Hill. 2013. [Evaluation of the temporal relationship between daily min/max air and land surface temperature](#). *International Journal of Remote Sensing* 34:9002-9015

Merle Massie and Maureen G. Reed. [Cumberland House in the Saskatchewan River Delta: flood memory and the municipal response, 2005 and 2011](#). *Climate Change and Flood Risk Management: Adaptation and Extreme Events at the Local Level*. Edited by E. Carina H. Kesitalo. Edward Elgar Publishing. 150-189.

Jamie Linton and Jessica Budds. 2013. [The hydrosocial cycle: Defining and mobilizing a relational-dialectical approach to water](#). *Geoforum*. doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2013.10.008

Dante D. Torio and Gail L. Chmura. 2013. [Impacts of sea level rise on marsh as fish habitat](#). *Estuaries and Coasts*. DOI 10.1007/s12237-013-9740-y

Simon van Bellen, Michelle Garneau, Adam A. Ali, Alexandre Lamarre, Élisabeth C. Robert, Gabriel Magnan, Hans Asnong and Steve Pratte. 2013. [Poor fen succession over ombrotrophic peat related to late Holocene increased surface wetness in subarctic Quebec, Canada](#). *Journal of Quaternary Science*. DOI: 10.1002/jqs.2670



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Other “Geographical” News

A degree of betrayal: the relationship between PhD students and mentors: The nature of interactions between a graduate mentor and a PhD student are intense and highly complex – with the potential for catastrophe. [The Guardian](#)

Twitter can be used to predict flu outbreaks: Geography experts have discovered that posts on the social network predicted flu outbreaks in different parts of the US. They believe Twitter could help medical professionals learn where and when severe flu outbreaks are occurring in real time so they can prepare for busy periods. Whenever people tweeted the keywords "flu" or "influenza," a computer program recorded characteristics about the tweets, including the username and location of the people who sent them as well as whether they were original tweets or retweets and whether they linked to a website. The researchers compared the location data of those tweets to data on the flu virus rates recorded in the relevant cities and counties. They discovered that of the 11 cities where tweets were examined, there was a "significant" correlation between tweets about flu and the rates of flu-like illnesses in nine of the cities. [The Australian](#)

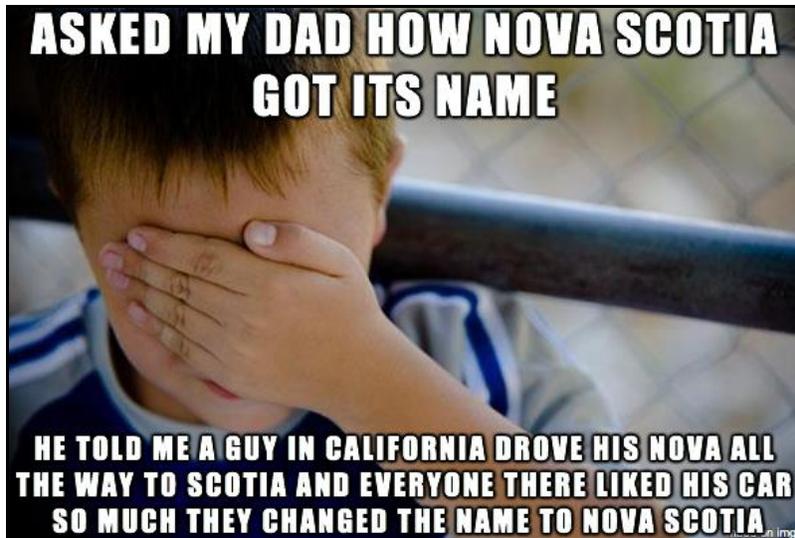
City of Airdrie, Alberta, gives crash course on Geographic Information Systems: The City of Airdrie took part in GIS Day at City Hall. The day has been formally observed since 1999 and for the first time, Airdrie took part by offering an open house to highlight the unique and diverse uses of GIS in the city. The GIS department is able to monitor population growth and in areas of the city in order to assist with planning and infrastructure to ensure that all neighbourhoods of Airdrie are receiving the same levels of service with respect to items like emergency response and snow clearing. GIS Day holds a great value from an educational standpoint, according to Williams. “This is a great opportunity for us to educate our residents on the value of geography,” said Williams. “There’s more to geography than maps and numbers and words, this is an important tool for city planning. The idea of GIS Day is to interact with the public and show them how this is benefitting them.” [City View Airdrie](#)

Academic cover letters: 10 top tips: The classic counterpart to a CV, cover letters are standard in almost all job applications. Academic cover letters are typically allowed to be longer than in other sectors, but this latitude comes with its own pitfalls. For one, many cover letters are written as if they were simply a retelling in full sentences of everything on the CV. But this makes no sense. Selectors will have skimmed through your CV already, and they don't want to re-read it in prose form. Instead, approach your cover letter as a short essay. It needs to present a coherent, evidence-based response to one question above all: why would you be an excellent hire for this position? [The Guardian](#)

Ontario graduate survey shows some degrees losing value: An annual survey by the Council of Ontario Universities asks new graduates what they took in school, whether they were employed full-time two years after graduation and how much money they made. The numbers are useful for tracking the demand for degrees. The trend isn't looking good. [Macleans.ca](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News

McGill prof pens hilarious response to extension request: Students in a third-year McGill Middle Eastern politics class, calling themselves the Paper Extension Movement, recently petitioned their King, Prof. Rex Brynen, for a week-long extension on a paper. His hilarious response has since been viewed on the site BuzzFeed more than 110,000 times. [Macleans.ca](#)



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