



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
No. 287, February 8, 2014
Compiled by Dan Smith [<cag@geog.uvic.ca>](mailto:cag@geog.uvic.ca)

U British Columbia's Juanita Sundberg wins 2014 AAG Glenda Laws Award: [Juanita Sundberg](#), an Associate Professor in the Department of Geography at the University of British Columbia, has been named as the recipient of the 2014 [AAG Glenda Laws Award](#). This award recognizes work of exceptional merit and outstanding contributions to geographic research on social issues. This award is named in memory of Glenda Laws—a geographer who brought energy and enthusiasm to her work on issues of social justice and social policy. The committee deemed that this spirit was exemplified by Dr. Sundberg's vanguard efforts in both research and pedagogy. The Glenda Laws Award is administered by the Association of American Geographers and endorsed by members of the Institute of Australian Geographers, the Canadian Association of Geographers, and the Institute of British Geographers. [UBC Geography News](#)

U Regina's Emily Eaton confirms the importance of Federal PFRA management in mitigating oil and gas impacts: In Saskatchewan, management of 1.8 million acres of land in 62 former PFRA community pastures is being transferred from the Federal Government to the Province, a land area larger than Prince Edward Island. The divestiture of the PFRA community pastures from the federal government to the Province of Saskatchewan will reduce oversight of the oil and gas industry and compromise the mitigation of oil and gas environmental impacts in the pastures. Eighty percent of the natural landscape in Saskatchewan south of the forest fringe has already been lost to development, resulting in southern Saskatchewan being one of the most modified landscapes in North America. The grassland region of the Prairie Provinces contains more Species at Risk (SAR) than any other ecoregion in Canada. The PFRA pastures have been described as a "hidden park system" where some of our largest and healthiest remaining tracts of grassland are conserved. Yet these lands are still open to mineral development. The grassland ecosystems of many of the PRFA pastures have been compromised - many pastures already suffer serious environmental consequences from the proliferation of oil and gas wells, flow-lines, pipelines and access roads. This has occurred in spite of federal environmental protections and the efforts of dedicated PFRA staff monitoring oil and gas activity. When the management of our public grasslands is under provincial control the environmental protection and monitoring systems will be even weaker. If the Province relies on its existing policies, programs, regulations and staff, the oil and gas impacts will only increase because oversight will be diminished. At the very least, the province should have a management plan that equals the protections and practices of the departing PFRA. However, to properly mitigate oil and gas impacts, the province should go beyond these protections and tighten environmental assessment, regulation, audit, inspection, and enforcement. [Public Pasture-Public Interest](#)

Simon Fraser U PhD candidate Sarah Hunt presents TEDx talk: [Sarah Hunt](#), recently gave a TEDx talk on her Ph.D. research relating to the geography of indigenous law. Sarah is a PhD candidate in the Department of Geography at Simon Fraser University passionately working to change the high rates of abuse experienced by Indigenous people by examining tensions between law and violence. Sarah draws on her experience as a community-based researcher, educator, and as a member of the Kwakwaka'wakw nation to address the important subject of colonial violence. [YouTube](#)

U Waterloo's Richard Kelly on why a bad winter is actually good: As you shovel another back-breaking load of snow off your driveway and feel the cold biting at your fingertips, it's easy to curse winter. But, this harsh, snowy season has a few silver linings, both environmentally and economically. A bad winter, it turns out, is actually pretty good. A heavy winter helps recharge fields, wetlands, lakes and streams – as long as all that snow slowly melts away into the ground in the spring, rather than a rapid thaw that keeps all that moisture from soaking into the soil. "Snow is a renewable resource. So if you have a good accumulation of snow, and it stays around and doesn't melt out quickly, there's the possibility of ground water recharge," said Richard Kelly, a professor in the department of geography and environmental management at the University of Waterloo. That also means a winter like this could be good news for most aquatic species, including fish. Since snow and ice help prevent erosion and keeps water levels high, fishers should rejoice. For urban areas, a cold winter that fades slowly is good, Kelly adds, since storm water infrastructure can be overwhelmed by a quick snow melt, which can cause flooding. If you like dry basements, pray for a long winter. [The Record.com](#)

UBC's Greg Henry comments on brilliant detective work that led to the solving of ancient Arctic mystery: Duane Froese, an earth scientist at the University of Alberta co-author a recent Nature paper, has concluded that from 50,000 to 10,000 years ago, Arctic vegetation was dominated by forbs. Forbs are much higher in protein and easier to digest than grasses. So their dominance could help explain how so many unique megafauna were sustained in the Arctic — and also perhaps why they died out. After about 10,000 years ago, the new study found, the type of vegetation in the Arctic shifted rapidly, and diversity fell to the levels seen today. "This is a brilliant piece of detective work," said Greg Henry, a professor of biogeography at the University of British Columbia who was not involved in the study. "The authors have shown that these new tools can provide evidence at levels of detail we have not been able to achieve before. With further studies like this, we may well come closer to understanding why we don't have mammoths, mastodons and rhinos in the Arctic today." [Toronto Star](#)

U Saskatchewan conference connected students and professionals to plan for a green Saskatoon: The University of Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon and the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists spent the day at a conference discussing planning strategies for Saskatoon, one of Canada's most rapidly growing cities. As Saskatoon grows, urban design and transportation strategies that encourage less reliance on cars are important and necessary to promote a city that is vibrant, affordable, and sustainable, explained conference presenter [Bob Patrick](#), associate professor and chair of the U of S Regional and Urban Planning program. "In most North American cities – Saskatoon included – we have designed our cities around cars," said Patrick. "This dependence on cars comes at a very high price – road congestion, traffic fatalities, high infrastructure and maintenance costs, and increased obesity rates are just some of the impacts." "It's time to question our love affair with the car and explore other options including improved public transit, car share co-operatives, more walkable neighbourhoods and bicycle friendly communities, said Patrick. "The urban youth of today deserve more sustainable urban transportation options in getting to where they need to go. The time for action is now and this conference provides an excellent opportunity to engage youth in the issues and hear their solutions." [U of S Recent News](#)

U Calgary's Geoffrey Hay maps Calgary's wasted heat – and wasted dollars: A few years ago, when Geoffrey Hay discovered that his energy-efficient home was still leaking a lot of heat, he didn't just add weatherstripping. Using his own predicament as inspiration, the University of Calgary geography professor made thermal maps of nearly 38,000 homes in 29 northwest Calgary neighbourhoods. The HEAT ([Heat Energy Assessment Technologies](#)) project is an unprecedented undertaking yielding unprecedented results. Thermal city data was initially collected over two nights in May 2012, using a low-flying plane and the TABI-1800 — a Calgary-made, state-of-the-art thermal infrared camera. Hay and his research team captured images of heat emitted from the surface of geographical features, including rooftops, roads and trees, then compared them to geographic information system data from the city, including property boundaries and house shapes and ages. Wasted heat for small roof sections and across entire neighbourhoods was determined based on peaks in roof-surface temperature relative to the ambient air temperature. Each dwelling and neighbourhood was assigned a "HEAT Score" between 0 and 100. The lower the better: a score of 83, for instance, is high on the inefficiency scale, while 25 is moderately low. The next steps, says Hay, are to include every single-dwelling home in Calgary — nearly 300,000 more residences — followed by cities across Canada. [Canadian Geographic](#)

York U's Glen Norcliffe - a geographer and tricycle historian: Whereas the history of two-wheeled vehicles starts in 1817, when a German named Karl Drais devised a "running machine" that worked like a Flintstones car, inventors had long been much more forward-thinking when it came to trikes. A watchmaker, Stephan Farfler, built a three-wheeled, hand-powered vehicle in the 17th century, and lever-driven, three-wheeled "pilentums" or "accelerators" were around by 1820. "There were half a dozen kinds of tricycles in Germany and France and England," says Glen Norcliffe, a geographer and tricycle historian at York University, "but they never really took off. They were prototypes." By the 1860s, biking was a mainstream pastime. Huge front wheels made for fast machines, with riders perched unsteadily on top. As the hobby grew more popular, some sought a safer ride — for women and older men. "At first, Starley tried to do this with a sort of sidesaddle penny-farthing, a crablike machine that never worked," Norcliffe says. "Eventually he decided that he needed another wheel to balance it." So he produced something more like the old pilentums. Soon Starley had a three-wheeled vehicle that worked with pedals and a chain and rack-and-pinion steering. The boom that he created quickly ended, though. [Corrected Link - The New York Times](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Apurba Krishna Deb, C. Emdad Haque and Shirley Thompson. 2014. [Man can't give birth, woman can't fish': gender dynamics in the small-scale fisheries of Bangladesh](#). *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*. DOI:10.1080/0966369X.2013.855626

Patrick Lajeunesse. 2014. [Buried preglacial fluvial gorges and valleys preserved through Quaternary glaciations beneath the eastern Laurentide Ice Sheet](#). *Bulletin of the Geological Association of Canada*. doi: 10.1130/B30911.1

Natalie Oswin. 2014. Chapter 7. Queer Theory. In: [The Routledge Handbook of Mobilities](#). Edited by Peter Adey, David Bissell, Kevin Hannam, Peter Merriman, Mimi Sheller.

Stéphane Roche. 2014. [Geographic Information Science I. Why does a smart city need to be spatially enabled?](#) *Progress in Human Geography*. doi: 10.1177/0309132513517365

Other “Geographical” News

How to shine in an academic interview: Many dread going to job interviews. Yet it is a fact not often acknowledged that interviews are pretty predictable. You can prepare for them without feeling as if you are submitting to a dark ritual in the face of which passive acceptance is the only option. First, a lot of researchers say that they feel caught out by academic interview questions that don't seem to engage sufficiently with their work. Don't let this catch you out. Panels are often not experts in your precise area, and they need to understand why your work is genuinely important (not merely interesting) and how it sits within the field. Be prepared to think at the peripheries of your research and to make links. Secondly, don't be selective in how you read job descriptions. There's no denying that they can feel like a feast of HR-speak and buzzword bingo. But give the panel the benefit of the doubt: assume that they meant what they wrote. You need to consider carefully (and be prepared to discuss) all of what's being asked for, not just the bits that seem most relevant to you. [The Guardian](#)

Ditching lectures for group work isn't always the answer: Quest University President David Helfand published the kind of airy opinion piece that university presidents like to write. It's another genial screed about how universities are tired old remnants of 19th century thinking where dusty old professors drone endless lectures to students who subsequently regurgitate the cold useless facts on a pointless test. It would be mean spirited if it were true. It's outrageous because it is false. First, the picture he paints of universities probably never existed and it certainly is not the norm today. University courses are and always have been much more than lectures. Even the most traditional professor assigns readings, projects, essays, and holds office hours for personal, one-on-one consultations with students. Good students have always been active learners and good professors have long seen themselves as doing far more than imparting information. When Helfand claims that today's professors don't care about imparting thinking skills, I have to wonder whether he knows any professors. [Macleans.ca](#)

Government of Canada invests in NWT traditional economy: Minister Aglukkaq announced funding for a project that will promote opportunities for employment and skills development training in both the traditional and industrial sectors of the Sahtu regional economy. With increased activity in the resource sector in the region, this project will focus on developing a diversified economy which benefits both traditional and industry sectors, ensuring that those hired in one sector are aware of opportunities in the other sector. The two-year project is being led by the Sahtu Renewable Resources Board in partnership with local Renewable Resources Councils and the Government of the Northwest Territories Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment. CanNor's investment of \$185,000 together with partner funding over two years. The project will identify emerging opportunities in both traditional and industrial sectors and present an action plan to maximize opportunities in both sectors in the years ahead. [Newswire.ca](#)

Fish biomass in the ocean may be 10 times higher than estimated: With a stock estimated at 1,000 million tons so far, mesopelagic fish dominate the total biomass of fish in the ocean. However, a team of researchers has found that their abundance could be at least 10 times higher. Mesopelagic fishes, such as lantern fishes and cyclothoids, live in the twilight zone of the ocean, between 200 and 1,000 meters deep. The fact that the biomass of mesopelagic fish (and therefore also the total biomass of fishes) is at least 10 times higher than previously thought, has significant implications in the understanding of carbon fluxes in the ocean and the operation of which, so far, we considered ocean deserts. Mesopelagic fish come up at night to the upper layers of the ocean to feed, whereas they go back down during the day in order to avoid being detected by their predators. This behaviour speeds up the transport of organic matter into the ocean, the engine of the biological pump that removes CO₂ from the atmosphere, because instead of slowly sinking from the surface, it is rapidly transported to 500 and 700 meters deep and released in the form of feces. [ScienceDaily](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



“REPEAT AFTER ME: AT LEAST WE DON’T GET HURRICANES...
AT LEAST WE DON’T GET HURRICANES... AT LEAST...”



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