



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers  
No. 313, June 30, 2014**

**Compiled by Dan Smith <[cag@geog.uvic.ca](mailto:cag@geog.uvic.ca)>**

Release of GeogNews is suspended until August while I chase Coast Mountain glaciers.  
Be safe out there geographers.

*Dan Smith @mthemlock*

**McMaster U's John Maclachlan says caves make the best classrooms:** A week in Iceland, a week in the classroom, a week in Kentucky, a week in the classroom. For John Maclachlan, that's an ideal month of teaching – and not for the reasons you might think. “Students relate to what is practical around them, so I get them out there to see it,” he says. “It's not a vacation for them, it's a learning experience.” It's this innovative approach to teaching that has earned the assistant professor of geography and earth sciences a President's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Teaching and Learning, to be presented this week at Convocation. “Whatever it is, I find that they like a way to reinforce what you talked about. That reinforcement is really helpful.” Maclachlan uses a blend of experimental learning, field work, and hands-on tasks to help students visualize and apply concepts. For the past two years he has arranged a popular field trip to Kentucky that allows students to research and explore caves. He has also created online modules and 22 different courses for McMaster University, Brock University and the University of Guelph. [McMaster Daily News](#)

**Health geographer Trevor Dummer assembles world's largest collection of toenail clippings:** Trevor Dummer, recently recruited as an associate professor in the Cancer Prevention Centre of UBC's School of Population and Public Health, uses mapping and other geographic tools to understand the relationship between the environment and health, particularly related to cancer risk. Dummer talks about how our surroundings impact our health from head to toe. Trevor reports that he “spent the past seven years helping to establish the Atlantic Partnership for Tomorrow's Health (PATH) Project. We successfully recruited 35,000 Atlantic Canadians whose health will be tracked over the next 25 years, and the project will be a major resource for cancer prevention research. More than 22,000 participants provided blood and toenail clippings, which ended up being an official Guinness World Record. We assessed levels of heavy metal contaminants, including arsenic, in toenails. By examining this toenail collection, we found that arsenic bioaccumulation is closely linked to arsenic occurrence in well-water, but people with more body fat had significantly lower levels of arsenic in their toenails. For some reason, obesity seems to be protective against arsenic accumulation, but excess weight is linked to increased risk for several types of cancers and chronic health conditions. We haven't yet figured out why excess body fat reduces arsenic bioaccumulation, but we think we're getting closer to understanding the biological processes at work. Since consuming arsenic is linked to cancer, we are also trying to find ways to reduce arsenic exposure.” [UBC News](#)

---

## Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Mitalie Makhani and Marney E. Isaac. 2014. [Rhizosphere dynamics under nitrogen-induced root modification: The interaction of phosphorus and calcium](#). Journal of Plant Nutrition and Soil Science. DOI: 10.1002/jpln.201300381

Nancy Perry, L. Earle Reybold, and Nigel Waters. 2014. "[Everybody was looking for a good government job](#)": Occupational choice during segregation in Arlington, Virginia. Journal of Urban History 40:719-741.

Maria Pol and Jacqueline Binyamin. 2014. [Impact of climate change and variability on wheat and corn production in Buenos Aires, Argentina](#). American Journal of Climate Change 3:145-152.

Brian Ray and Valerie Preston. 2014. [Working with diversity: A geographical analysis of ethno-racial discrimination in Toronto](#). Urban Studies. doi:10.1177/0042098014536628

Sébastien Rioux. 2014. [Food quality and the circulation time of commodities: lessons from the British milk trade 1845–1914](#). Journal of Transport Geography 38:114–121.

Li Shen and Xulin Guo. 2014. [Spatial quantification and pattern analysis of urban sustainability based on a subjectively weighted indicator model: A case study in the city of Saskatoon, SK, Canada](#). Applied Geography 53:117–127.

Eric Vaz. 2014. [Managing urban coastal areas through landscape metrics: An assessment of Mumbai's mangrove system](#). Ocean & Coastal Management 98:27–37.

---

## Recent Theses and Dissertations

Evan Cleave. 2014. [Economic development in the contemporary global environment: the role of place branding as a tool of local economic development in Ontario, Canada](#). Unpublished MA thesis. Department of Geography. Western University, London. Supervisor: Dr. Godwin Arku.

Jenna Dixon. 2014. [Determinants of health insurance enrolment in Ghana's Upper West Region](#). Unpublished PhD thesis. Department of Geography. Western University, London. Supervisor: Dr. Isaac Luginaah.

Stephen Fitzpatrick. 2014. [Examining children's perceptions and use of their neighbourhood built environments: a novel participatory mapping approach](#). Unpublished MA thesis. Department of Geography. Western University, London. Supervisor: Dr. Jason Gilliland.

Elizabeth Hundey. 2014. [Nitrate sources and lake response in high elevation lakes, Uinta Mountains, Utah](#). Unpublished PhD thesis. Department of Geography. Western University, London. Supervisor: Dr. Katrina Moser.

Chuiqing Zeng. 2014. [Automated building information extraction and evaluation from high-resolution remotely sensed data](#). Unpublished PhD thesis. Department of Geography. Western University, London. Supervisor: Dr. Jinfei Wang.

---

### Other “Geographical” News

**Meet the man who wants to create a Google Maps for the world's sounds:** Udo Noll, a programmer, cartographer and Internet artist, began his map of all the world's sounds, in the midst of the Internet's great mapping craze, to combat that feeling. "I thought it could be very interesting to have a recorder, where you can focus on these in-between spaces, where things tend disappear in the rush of things that you have to do". In 2005, his Radio Aporee mapping project was a dark horse among better-publicized and monumental digital efforts to map the world in recent years, but Noll's effort is one of the first ever to map sonic spaces — to build a digital archive the fleeting sounds of our daily lives. To his mind, this is the only kind of map that truly gives us any sort of spiritual orientation — something generally called an affective geography. "[The term] describes something wider than the natural or the concrete landscape you see," Noll said. "It is a landscape of conscious[ness], connected to your whole perception and your memories. It's the landscape where you actually are." [Music.Mic](#)

**Precision in the fields:** Agriculture is getting a high-tech makeover. Farmers are increasingly using GPS-equipped machinery supported by computers that organize sophisticated data on plants, soil, and weather. Termed "precision agriculture," this system helps them identify and manage variability within fields. David Schimmelpfennig of the USDA Economic Research Service says that farmers have always made informed choices but that access to more data expands their decision-making toolbox. [National Geographic](#)

---

### Some not so “Geographical” News



The CAG works for geographers on [Twitter](#). Keep up-to-date by following [@CanGeographers](#)  
GeogNews Archives: <http://www.geog.uvic.ca/dept/cag/geognews/geognews.html>  
[@CanGeographers](#) Weekly: <https://paper.li/CanGeographers/1394987315>

---