News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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Ryerson's Department of Geography gets a name change: It looks like the landscape is changing for the newly named Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, formerly the Department of Geography. The Ryerson University Senate approved the name change along with two new minors, according to Ryerson Today. Students in the Faculty of Arts will now be able to get a minor in global politics and development and journalism students can now get a minor in public relations. According to the Senate agenda, the name change will "better reflect the diverse offerings of the department and success of the new environmental urban sustainability program in the field of environment it is believed that the proposed name is more suited." The Eyeopener

Carleton U PhD student Beth Mburu writes about her fieldwork in Kenya: I have to admit that doing field work in rural Kenya has been the highlight of my doctoral work. Which reminds me of something I read from a blog recently "doing a thesis is like mucking out a stable ……you have to tackle it one wheelbarrow load of sh*t at a time – if you stay in the stable too long, the stink will kill you" (Thesis Whisperer, 2011). This post is a way for me to step out of the stable for a breather but it is actually more about wheelbarrows than muck. My research is focused on smallholder farmers in Kenya – assessing their interaction with and the role of institutions around themes of climate change and food security. gLoeb Xpress

UVic's David Atkinson on wny weathering forecasting is tricky in British Columbia: You may almost feel sorry for B.C. weather forecasters, they wrestle with some of the toughest conditions in Canada from which to pull a forecast. It's difficult to make accurate forecasts for a province that sprawls from rain-soaked Haida Gwaii to the northern plains of the Cariboo to the desert of Osoyoos to the slopes of Whistler, says David Atkinson, a geography professor at the University of Victoria. "Some areas are easier, some harder," Atkinson says. "Mountain areas are often difficult." Meteorologists admit that weather forecasting is an imperfect science. Small errors in timing or in plotting atmospheric systems can make a big difference, Atkinson says. Even predicting something as seemingly basic as clouds can be tricky, he says. A small change in moisture or temperature spells the difference between clouds and no clouds. "Same with the type of precipitation. If it rains through a freezing layer for just the right distance, it is a freezing rain," Atkinson says. "If the freezing layer isn't quite thick enough, it stays as rain. Too thick, the rain drops freeze to form ice pellets." The Province

McGill U's Sarah Turner brings together students *Minorities in the Southeast Asian Massif Research Lab*: The Minorities in the Southeast Asian Massif research laboratory brings together students working with Professors Sarah Turner (Geography, McGill) and Jean Michaud (Anthropology, Université Laval, Québec City) on a number of cross-disciplinary research projects. Lab members investigate a broad array of topics that generally relate to better understanding the livelihoods of upland ethnic minorities in the Southeast Asian Massif, encompassing southwest China, Vietnam, Laos, and Thailand. Members of the lab and collaborators are researching cross-border trade and livelihood dynamics across the southwest Yunnan-northern Vietnam border. Some lab members concentrate on highland livelihoods with regards to agrarian change and market integration. In Vietnam, we are trying to better comprehend the activities, interactions and power relations that occur between upland minorities such as Hmong and Yao, and Kinh (lowland Vietnamese). Another group is undertaking research examining environmental decision making in the northern Vietnam uplands and south-eastern Yunnan among a number of ethnic minority groups. McGill Geography Spotlight

Carleton U's Murray Richardson studies metal and mercury exposure in water on Temagami First Nation: "Mercury is one of the leading causes of fish consumption advisories for Ontario's inland lakes," says Murray Richardson, assistant professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Carleton University. With funding from Health Canada, Richardson is conducting research in the community, located near Sudbury, Ont., from June 2014 to March 2015. He is studying the types of metals and amount of mercury found in aquatic life and water, and establishing a database that can be used to track changes in metal contaminants from local industries and regional pollution sources over time. This data will help create a baseline that will be available to the community, says Murray – which is especially important since pressure for industrial development is expected to increase, such as the new Young-Davidson gold mine in the northern end of the territory. He is also working in close consultation with the community – including a local fisher, Alex Paul, who will use traditional knowledge, skills and harvesting techniques to select different types of fish from up to 15 lakes throughout the Temagami First Nation territory. Carleton Now

Wilfrid Laurier U's Philip Mount Project SOIL examines food production at schools, hospitals and other institutions: Hospitals, schools and other public institutions already provide communities with vital services. But what if they could double as food producers? That's the idea behind Project SOIL, a study being led by Laurier researcher Philip Mount that explores the potential for on-site food production at public institutions. Launched in September 2013, Project SOIL — Shared Opportunities on Institutional Lands — is investigating the feasibility of using institutional land to grow organic produce by examining on-site food production systems already in place at Ontario institutions and supporting five pilot projects around the province. "The project grew out of three ideas," said Mount. "Public institutions in Ontario are being encouraged to provide more local food; many of these institutions have land that could grow that food; and many new and young farmers have the skills to produce this food, but no access to land." In addition to Mount, the Project SOIL research team includes Irena Knezevic from Laurier's Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, and researchers from national non-profit My Sustainable Canada and from the University of Guelph, Carleton University and Lakehead University.

McMaster U alumna Susan Cunningham speaks about being a woman in the oil patch: Business executive and philanthropist Susan Cunningham recently returned to campus to speak about "Leadership and the Oil Patch: How I Got There and What is Needed." Cunningham graduated from McMaster in 1979 with a degree in geology and physical geography. She began her career in 1980 as a geologist at Amoco Canada. Currently, she is executive vice president at Noble Energy, Inc., where she has worked since 2001. At Noble, she oversees global exploration, geoscience, new ventures, environment, health, safety and regulatory, as well as business innovation. McMaster Daily News

Memorial U's Carissa Brown shows that maple migration moderated by munching mammals: Carissa Brown, Assistant Professor of Biogeography in the Department of Geography, and collaborators in Québec have found that non-climatic factors can slow down a species' response to climate change. As temperatures warm with climate change in northern ecosystems, species are expected to expand their distributions northwards and upwards in elevation. Soil is also a dominant driver of species' distributions, but little is known about how soil will affect a species' response to climate change. Brown and colleagues conducted an intensive field experiment reciprocally transplanting soil up and down an elevational (i.e., climatic) gradient at Parc national du Mont-Mégantic in southern Québec to tease apart climatic vs. substrate controls on the distribution of sugar maple. What they found was surprising: seed that was planted beyond sugar maple's current range, at high elevation, was heavily predated upon by small mammals. This was some of the first empirical evidence of a biotic factor overriding a species' response to the favourable effects of climate change at its range limit. When soil was brought downslope from beyond sugar maple's range limit to within its distribution sugar maple recruitment was reduced, indicating that even in favourable climatic conditions, soil from beyond sugar maple's range has characteristics that negatively affect sugar maple emergence or survival. These findings tell us that, at minimum, we can expect a time lag in the range expansion of sugar maple under climate change. Listen to Carissa in conversation with Bob McDonald on Quirks & Quarks. Memorial U Geography News

Carleton U's Pablo Mendez is in a season of firsts: On a cold Monday morning, in January of 2014, Pablo Mendez traversed the blustery winter winds on his way to Carleton for his first teaching experience with the university. While facing a new class for the first time might be intimidating for some, Dr. Mendez resourcefully leveraged the cold as a topic in order to interact with his students. "Telling the students that I was new to real Canadian winters and asking them for winter survival tips was a great way to quickly establish a connection them" says Dr. Mendez. Dr. Pablo Mendez is a new faculty in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. Online Focus

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Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) 2015 annual conference and meetings will be be held at Simon Fraser University, June 1-5, 2015. This celebration of Geographic Diversity and Dialogue will take place in Simon Fraser's downtown locations, principally at Harbour Centre and the (adjacent) Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue.

The conference begins with an icebreaker event on Monday evening, has oral presentations, posters and special events from Tuesday to Friday, and field trips throughout the conference. The John Wiley Presentation will be delivered by Professor Andrew J. Weaver, a leading authority on global climate change and the first Green Party member of British Columbia's Legislative assembly.

Following the AGM, the banquet will be held on Thursday, June 4th in the Stanley Park Pavilion.

For more info, please visit CAG2015 home page.

GIS Day at Brock University is Tuesday, November 18th: GIS Day at Brock features student presentations that highlight their use of GIS technology in their research. Hosted by the Brock University Geographical Society and taking place in the Map, Data & GIS Library (Room MC C306). Brock News Around Campus

Lethbridge U's Ian MacLachlan to give PUBlic presentation on November 20 entitled "*Changing Livestock Geographies and Global Meat Consumption: What are the implications?"* Public Professor Series

Simon Fraser U offers Canada's first bachelor of environment (BEnv) degree. BENV students have three options for majors: Global Environmental Systems, Environmental Resource Management, and Sustainable Business—a joint major offered collaboratively by FENV and SFU's Beedie School of Business. SFU News

UTM's Geography department's Amrita Daniere awarded $2.5 Million Climate Change Grant. The project consists of a network of scholars and researchers and will take an interdisciplinary approach to reduce the economic, social and environmental impacts in vulnerable communities. UTM News

York U presents a GLRC / Department of Geography Roundtable on November 18th. Moderated by Steven Tufts, the discussion will focus on the topic: *A Hopitable World? Hotel Workers Organizing the Global Hospitality Industry.* GLSSA Poster

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Rosemary-Claire Collard. 2014. Electric elephants and the lively/lethal energies of wildlife documentary film. Area. DOI: 10.1111/area.12133

Marion Doull, Vivian Welch, Lorri Puil, Vivien Runnels, Stephanie E. Coen, Beverley Shea, Jennifer O'Neill, Cornelia Borkhoff, Sari Tudiver, and Madeline Boscoe. 2014. Development and evaluation of 'briefing notes' as a novel knowledge translation tool to aid the implementation of sex/gender analysis in systematic reviews: a pilot study. PLOS ONE. DOI:10.1371/journal.pone.0110786

Carmen Teeple Hopkins. 2014. Social reproduction in France: Religious dress laws and *laïcité*. Women's Studies International Forum. DOI:10.1016/j.wsif.2014.09.002

E.J. Hundey, K.A. Moser, F.J. Longstaffe, N. Michelutti and R. Hladyniuk. 2014. Recent changes in production in oligotrophic Uinta Mountain lakes, Utah, identified using paleolimnology. Limnology and Oceanography 59:1987-2001.

Dennis E. Jelinski. 2014. On a landscape ecology of a harlequin environment: the marine landscape. Landscape Ecology. DOI:10.1007/s10980-014-0109-9

Josh Lepawsky, Grace Akese, Mostaem Billah, Creighton Conolly and Chris McNabb. 2014. Composing urban orders from rubbish electronics: Cityness and the site multiple. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research. DOI: 10.1111/1468-2427.12142

Ian G. McKendry and David S. Gutzler. 2014. A possible link between wildfire aerosol and North American Monsoon precipitation in Arizona–New Mexico. International Journal of Climatology. DOI:10.1002/joc.4195

Chaoyang Wu, Wenjiang Huang, Qinying Yang and Qiaoyun Xie. 2014. Improved estimation of light use efficiency by removal of canopy structural effect from the photochemical reflectance index (PRI). Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment 199:333–338.

Other "Geographical" News

How academics can grab policy makers attention: As academics face increased pressure to prove the impact that their research is having on the wider world, universities are considering how they can communicate more effectively with policymakers. There are fundamental problems that confront the relationship between academics and politicians. The rules, incentives and institutional architectures that distinguish the academic field are different from those of the policy landscape. Policymakers often have relatively tight timeframes when compared to academics: they frequently want short, clearly written synopses of research that can throw light on their policy problems. In contrast, academics are driven by the need to secure grants and get published in high quality journals. Having been trained to think carefully and at length about the problems they confront, they find responding to the more immediate demands of policymakers a challenge. The Guardian

Fringe activists learn to use 'predatory' science journals: The university librarian who popularized the term "predatory" science journal has identified a new threat from the shadowy publications: Distributing fake evidence for political or commercial gain. Want to claim that global warming is a hoax? Or that vaccine causes autism? Jeffrey Beale of the University of Colorado says predatory journals are giving these claims a platform that can look scientific on the surface. And Google helps, he claims, by including them in the world's largest index of scientific papers, Google Scholar. "The problem is that Google Scholar aims to be comprehensive, indexing articles from as many scholarly appearing journals as possible," Beale writes in a blog on predatory publishers. "Because predatory publishers perform a fake or non-existent peer review, they have polluted the global scientific record with pseudo-science, a record that Google Scholar dutifully and perhaps blindly includes in its central index. "Ottawa Citizen

Bizarre mapping error puts newly discovered species in jeopardy: Scientists in the Democratic Republic of Congo have discovered a new species of plant living in a remote rift valley escarpment that's supposed to be inside of a protected area. But an administrative mapping error puts the reserve's borders some 50 kilometers west of the actual location. ScienceDaily

Ignore university rankings: It's that chilly time of year: The university ranking season is upon us. Around the world, academic administrators hold their breath, as the results flood in like a statistical tsunami. Some international surveys are already out, and Maclean's magazine's annual report card on Canadian universities will fly off the shelves this month. Before you race out to see who stacks up, consider this: Rankings are endemically flawed. They have some entertainment value, they pander to our hunger for simple bromides, but they shouldn't be used by families anxiously planning their children's academic futures. National Post

More than 50 classes at UBC are turning midterms into a group learning experience: A roomful of young adults engaged in a loud and enthusiastic debate is not exactly what you'd expect to see during a high-stakes university midterm exam. But that's precisely the scene taking place across UBC as more than 50 classes embrace a new model of assessment: the two-stage exam. In this innovative format, students still write an individual exam, but immediately after handing it in they get into groups of four to tackle the same exam questions again. Each group submits one copy of the completed exam. [UBC News]

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
