



News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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Saint Mary's U's Jamie Spinney and Hugh Millward on Sustainable Transportation: As a child, Jamie Spinney rode the school bus and wondered why the school was so far away from his house. Fast forward a few decades and a few degrees and Dr. Jamie Spinney is still pondering the journey to school, and the complicated relationship between neighbourhood design and school planning. "My research interests are best described as interdisciplinary," says Spinney, a Saint Mary's Geography graduate (BA'94) and an Adjunct Professor at the University for the past three years. "However, it is possible to identify at least two predominant themes: behavioural geography and community/regional planning." Funding through an Insight Development Grant will enable Spinney and co-applicant, Dr. Hugh Millward, to investigate the factors affecting travel mode choices for the journey that children take to school, as well as the social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with school siting and neighbourhood design. The goal is to gain a better understanding of sustainable transportation options, and the ways in which they can reduce energy consumption and increase levels of physical activity among Canadian schoolchildren. Spinney will be engaging Saint Mary's students in all aspects of his research. "We'll be able to fund a graduate student and also hire students throughout the year," he explains. "They'll have the opportunity to get their hands dirty by collecting, processing, and analyzing data from a neighbourhood audit and journey-to-school surveys." [SMU News](#)

U Victoria's Chris Daimont and B.C.'s plan to cull wolves to save caribou: The British Columbia government has announced plans to killing up to 184 wolves to protect mountain caribou. Chris Darimont, the Hakai-Raincoast professor in geography at the University of Victoria, said, "This is a last ditch, Hail Mary effort to save caribou that are on their way out not because of wolves, but because of development, and aggressive development, by humans in their habitat for a few decades now." Forestry and oil and gas activity change the landscape in ways that favour wolves, Darimont said, including opening areas to roads and recreation. The threat to caribou has been known for at least a decade, he said, but there's been no slowdown in development. Culling wolves likely won't save the threatened caribou and it gives industry and the government an excuse not to move ahead with the habitat protection that's needed, he said. "Their way of dealing with it will likely not work, or certainly not work in every case," he said, citing research from wolf culls in Alberta. "These landscapes are not going to favour caribou again for a very long time," said Darimont. "The damage that's been done is greater than the ability of caribou to recover, even with aggressive intervention." [The Tyee](#)

Carleton U's Ryan Katz-Rosene geography seminar gives students unique insight into environmental policy: A Carleton geography instructor recently decided to explore a new teaching style to give

students a glimpse of how Canada's environmental policy decisions are really made. Instead of studying for an exam, students in Ryan Katz-Rosene's fourth-year geography seminar spent the fall semester preparing for a simulated committee hearing where each argued a different side of one of Canada's most controversial topics: the Alberta oil sands. The activity, Katz-Rosene said, provides a good taste of the kind of work many of his students will be doing after they graduate. "If they go and work for an environmental organization or some private-sector company or the government, they could be involved in this type of activity," he said. "It gives students a window into the democratic process and helps them understand the fact that the way people and resources and the environment interact is the result of a complex process." For the hearing, students were asked to take on the role of a real stakeholder in the oil sands and represent its interests or concerns in front of a group of peers modelled after the standing committee on Alberta's economic future. For one student the chief benefit of the exercise was being exposed to a diversity of perspectives for the first time. "I never would have thought about Enbridge's side of the argument in depth unless it was for a simulated activity like this," he said, "so the goal here is really understanding how important it is to think critically and be open-minded about something as huge as the oil sands." Katz-Rosene said the idea to organize the class this way came from his own experience as an undergraduate student at Trent University. "When I was a fourth-year student, I took part in a similar type of simulated assignment and it was a really formative experience," he said. "This is an important topic and a controversial topic and I thought it would be a good opportunity for them to learn this way."

[Carleton Newsroom](#)

McGill U's Kevin Manaugh on Montreal's plan to create five new walking streets: -McGill

University geography professor Kevin Manaugh was intrigued when he heard about a new pilot project from the city to create five new walking streets out of five completely different thoroughfares. "That's one of the most interesting aspects of this pilot project – how different they were," he said. "I mean there's one, like [Park-Stanley] in Ahunstic, where they're basically closing streets on the waterfront." Problems with parking appear to plague Church Street just as they have plagued some walking streets already established in Montreal. That street is more reminiscent of a main drag in Burlington, Vt. called Church Street. Yet, while the pedestrian streets in Montreal represent a city investment of \$500,000, Church street is managed by a city department with money from the businesses on the street. This is frequently an issue mentioned in conjunction with Prince-Arthur Street, a once-thriving commercial zone that recently has fallen on hard times. Manaugh added that Prince-Arthur's problems also stem from the mix of businesses there. "There's just restaurants, there aren't a lot of shops or other kinds of businesses," he said. "It doesn't attract business throughout the day." Though Manaugh was bullish on the new walking streets, the opposition in City Hall believes mayor Denis Coderre didn't go far enough in conceiving the pilot project, and that real issues involving public transit and traffic still remain. "Yesterday's announcement was more like a publicity stunt," said Marc-Andre Gadoury, the opposition leader in city council. "Especially given the low amount of funding." [Global News](#)

Western U geography student launches indigenous social network: Shyra Barberstock has created a social network that is all business. Barberstock, a fourth-year First Nations Studies and Health/Environmental Geography student, and her husband, Rye Barberstock, recently launched the [Okwaho Network](#), a social-networking site dedicated to global Indigenous business and economic development. Sparked out of a roadtrip conversation between the just-married couple, the project now fills a historic gap with a modern solution. For more details, go to: [okwahonetwork.com](#)

U Victoria's Trisalyn Nelson creator of BikeMaps.org, a citizen tool for safer cycling and venting road rage: At the end of the turkey and shortbread season, I was desperate to hop on my bike and ride my commute to work. I love bikes and maps and I had been pondering a way to incorporate these two passions for a while. On a commute home I got the idea for a citizen mapping website. BikeMaps.org is a website where citizens can map cycling crashes, near misses, hazards, or bike thefts. The data citizens provide to BikeMaps.org will enable researchers and planners to better determine where and when safety is a problem and to monitor changes in safety over time. Since the BikeMaps.org website launched in October 2014 we have had over 14,000 visitors and more than 600 mappers in 14 countries. The inclusion of near miss data will allow us to be proactive in our planning and will enable more complete monitoring of, for example, how well the new cycling infrastructure planned for the City of Victoria is working out. [Saanich News](#)

U Victoria's Janis Shandro and Aleck Ostry lead health study into possible impacts of mine in central B.C.: A small First Nation says it has given up waiting for government and industry to address its concerns about the Gibraltar Mine expansion in B.C.'s Interior and has launched its own investigation. The Esdilagh First Nation has secured a research grant for a team of international experts to lead a health impact assessment, which the group is calling the first of its kind in Canada. The Gibraltar Mine is the second-largest open pit copper mine in Canada. Originally designed to process 36,000 tonnes of ore per day, the mine underwent an expansion in 2012 and can now process up to 85,000 tonnes daily. The First Nation study is being supported by grants from the Vancouver Foundation and the Canadian Institute for Health Information. It will be led by Dr. Janis Shandro and Dr. Aleck Ostry at the Department of Geography at the University of Victoria. Shandro said the study will meet international standards and will explore environmental, health and cultural impacts of the Gibraltar Mine and provide recommendations for Taseko and the government. She said the mine has never undergone an environmental impact assessment because it was built before legislation requiring such studies was introduced. The current study Taseko is undertaking is too limited, Shandro said. "The reason for the commissioning of this project is that we want to see communities, governments and industry working together in a more rigorous fashion," she said. [The Province](#) | [Globe and Mail](#)



U British Columbia's Simon Donner talks about the report from US government scientists confirming that 2014 is the hottest year on record. "The way to really think about climate change is the rate of change. The rate of temperature increase on land and in the ocean is really unprecedented in human history," Donner says. [UBC News](#)

U British Columbia MA student Sarah Przedpelska and PhD student Alison Cassidy win 2014 Outstanding TA Awards: Each year the department awards teaching prizes to two teaching assistants (one human geographer and one physical geographer) to recognize the significant contribution that teaching assistants make to undergraduate education. [UBC Geography News](#)

York U Department of Geography recently celebrated its brightest and best undergraduate students at our 2015 Undergraduate Awards Ceremony. [York U Geography](#)

U Regina Department of Geography weather station current conditions at [UR Weather](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Dongmei Chen, Haydi Wong, Paul Belanger, Kieran Moore, Mary Peterson and John Cunningham. 2015. [Analyzing the correlation between deer habitat and the component of the risk for lyme disease in Eastern Ontario, Canada: A GIS-based approach](#). ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information 4:1-5-123.

Rob Kitchin, Tracey P. Lauriault and Gavin McArdle. 2015. [Knowing and governing cities through urban indicators, city benchmarking and real-time dashboards](#). Regional Studies, Regional Science, 2:6-28.

Colin J. Courtney Mustaphi, S.M. Rucina and R. Marchant. 2014. [Training in emerging palaeoenvironmental approaches to researchers on the dynamics of East African ecosystems](#). Frontiers of Biogeography 6:169-172.

Jorge A. Ramirez, Andy J. Baird, Tom J. Coulthard and J. Michael Waddington. 2015. [Testing a simple model of gas bubble dynamics in porous media](#). Water Resources Research. DOI:10.1002/2014WR015898

Vishnu Reddy, David Vokrouhlický, William F. Bottke, Petr Pravec, Juan A. Sanchez, Bruce L. Gary, Rachel Klima, Edward A. Cloutis, Adrián Galád, Tan Thiam Guan, Kamil Hornoch, Matthew R.M. Izawa, Peter Kušnirák, Lucille Le Corre, Paul Mann, Nicholas Moskovitz, Brian Skiff and Jan Vraštil. 2015. [Link between the potentially hazardous asteroid \(86039\) 1999 NC43 and the Chelyabinsk meteoroid tenuous](#). Icarus. DOI: 10.1016/j.icarus.2015.01.006

D.K. Thompson¹, A.S. Baisley and J.M. Waddington. 2015. [Seasonal variation in albedo and radiation exchange between a burned and unburned forested peatland: Implications for peatland evaporation](#). Hydrological Processes. DOI: 10.1002/hyp.10436

Vanessa Wirz, Marten Geertsema, Stephan Gruber and Ross S. Purves. 2015. [Temporal variability of diverse mountain permafrost slope movements derived from multi-year daily GPS data, Mattertal, Switzerland](#). Landslides. DOI:10.1007/s10346-014-0544-3

Recent Theses and Dissertations

Victoria Kyeyune. 2014. Yielding to high yields: Hybrid maize and Hmong food security in Hà Giang Province, northern Vietnam. Unpublished MA Thesis. Department of Geography, McGill University, Montreal. Supervisor: Sarah Turner

Jean-François Rousseau. 2014. [Green energies the socialist way: Hydropower, energy crops and Handai livelihoods along the Red River, Yunnan Province, China](#). Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Department of Geography, McGill University, Montreal. Supervisor: Sarah Turner

Other “Geographical” News

Nunavut's hunger problem: 'We can't pretend it doesn't exist anymore': The federal government's \$60-million food subsidy, Nutrition North, is only the latest of the proposed solutions that has stumbled under mismanagement and the enormity of the hunger problem. Food has always been expensive in

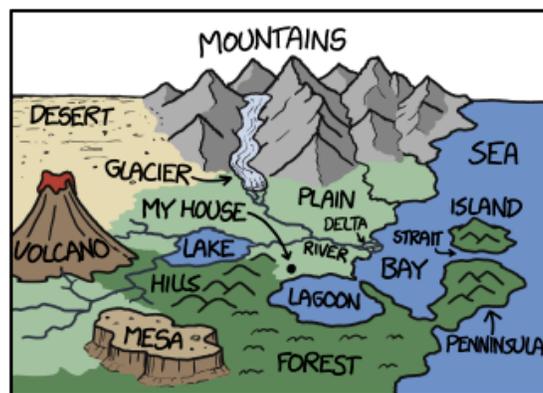
the North. The population is relatively small and scattered across a vast region far from the major transportation hubs. Shipping costs are exorbitant — particularly in Nunavut, where there aren't any roads to connect the territory's communities to the rest of Canada. The high cost of shipping food to the North put some items beyond the reach of many people. [CBCNews | North](#)

Finding farmland: New maps offer a clearer view of global agriculture: A new global cropland map combines multiple satellite data sources, reconciled using crowdsourced accuracy checks, to provide an improved record of total cropland extent as well as field size around the world. [ScienceDaily](#)

Arctic ice cap slides into the ocean: Satellite images have revealed that a remote Arctic ice cap has thinned by more than 50 metres since 2012 -- about one sixth of its original thickness -- and that it is now flowing 25 times faster. The findings show that over the last two decades, ice loss from the south-east region of Austfonna, located in the Svalbard archipelago, has increased significantly. In this time, ice flow has accelerated to speeds of several kilometres per year, and ice thinning has spread more than 50km inland -- to within 10km of the summit. [ScienceDaily](#)

Can Calgary rebrand itself with cycling? Calgary's petroleum-driven economy has earned the province's largest city the nickname "the Houston of Canada," but the streets of this city of one million feel far more welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists thanks to a proactive city government. [Price Tags](#)

Some not so "Geographical" News



IF I COULD LIVE ANYWHERE, I WOULD CHOOSE
THE EXAMPLE MAP FROM GEOGRAPHY BOOKS
THAT EXPLAINS WHAT EVERYTHING IS CALLED



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