



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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McMaster U urban geography grad Jeremy Parsons revisits Meadowlands' tortured birth: It divided townfolk, killed political careers, drained the pockets of early developers and, after Queen's Park rejected a final appeal to stop it, ultimately transformed Ancaster. Yet no matter how people view the Meadowlands — vibrant community, soulless sprawl or somewhere in between — it's hardly new to being a hub of human activity, as Jeremy Parsons found out. The McMaster University urban geography grad, who wrote his recent master's thesis on the Meadowlands' troubled birth, says he was surprised to learn the area had been home to more than 100 separate native settlements, some dating back thousands of years. That rich history was documented by the development's required archeological assessment that uncovered some 34,000 artifacts before bulldozers arrived. Parsons' thesis details the changes set in motion by the Ontario Realty Corp.'s purchase of 480 hectares of land in the area in 1960. The provincial agency sold two years later to a Toronto group, leading to a couple of ownership changes — one forced by near bankruptcy — that saw little happen until 1969, when Alberta-based Allarco Developments Ltd. sought approval to build enough homes for 40,000 people, more than twice Ancaster's population at the time. Citizens were outraged, yet curiously, in Parson's view, the council of the day, especially then-reeve Art Bowes, bucked overwhelming opposition and championed the plan, arguing Ancaster had to absorb its share of Hamilton's growth. The massive development also promised to bring the water and sewer infrastructure Ancaster lacked, ending a reliance on well water and septic systems. "That was sort of the tradeoff," Parsons says. "Do you want the water, the sewer and the development, or neither?" [Hamilton Community News](#)

U British Columbia's Dan Hiebert on satisfying basic human needs for Syrian refugees: Satisfying basic human needs — food, shelter and health care — will be first on the docket for the 1,900 Syrian refugees expected to reach B.C. over the next three months. "Then the big question is how quickly people who are brought in from a situation like this become financially independent. Because that's the goal. Nobody is hoping we bring in large numbers who will never be able to take care of themselves," said Dan Hiebert, a University of British Columbia geography professor specializing in Canada's refugee settlement policy. English-language training and job skills conversion will be needed to get refugees well-paying jobs in the medium term and make them financially independent, according to Hiebert. The federal government will provide support for refugees for two years. If the newcomers are not financially independent by then, it falls on the province to support the refugees living in B.C. "The quality of the medium-term stuff, of course, depends on how well the short-term stuff is done," Hiebert said. [Business Vancouver](#)

Carleton U's Chris Burn and Stephan Gruber are digging into the permafrost: "Permafrost is a complete game-changer in this country," says [Stephan Gruber](#), the Canada Research Chair in Climate Change Impacts/Adaptation in Northern Canada, who came to Carleton from Switzerland in 2013. "Something of this magnitude should receive more attention." Unlike shrinking glaciers and ice caps, permafrost degradation is not easy to observe. But when Arctic and Subarctic ground thaws after remaining frozen for centuries, the infrastructure it supports — from buildings and roads to industrial installations such as pipelines — can be destabilized. The hydrology changes, affecting wildlife and vegetation. As well, methane and carbon dioxide are released into the atmosphere. "Northern engineering is based on a world where the climate and permafrost are stable," says Gruber. "We're in a different world now." Last summer, Gruber surveyed and laser scanned a number of field sites in the Northwest Territories. When permafrost thaws, the land surface often settles and deforms. Gruber's scanning method is optimized for detecting even tiny changes. Doing field work in the same location for several decades is the key to valuable climate change research, says [Chris Burn](#), one of Gruber's colleagues at Carleton's Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. Burn, the NSERC Senior Northern Research Chair from 2002 to 2012, has been investigating permafrost in the western Arctic since the early 1980s. The "active layer" that thaws and freezes above the permafrost every year appears to be getting deeper, says Burn. This has huge implications because the top of permafrost is commonly full of ice. "What we're seeing," he says, "is the continuation of a long-term trend." Burn has indispensable knowledge of northern environments, and his ecosystem of collaborators readily adopted Gruber, who considers himself a bridge between field work and the "abstracted, scaled-up" realm of modelling. And both are driven by a desire to, as Burn says, "provide really solid evidence as to how permafrost is responding to a new climatic regime." [Carleton U Research](#)

Royal Military College's Lubomyr Luciuk, Canada has been good to refugees — including my family: Canada has been good to refugees. I should know. My late parents were both political refugees, fleeing the Soviet and Nazi occupations that eviscerated Ukraine, before, during, and after the Second World War. Like millions of others, they found themselves in Western Europe at war's end, their homeland no longer theirs. They could not return. They were known as DPs (Displaced Persons). They were fortunate because most Canadians welcomed DP immigration. If they had not, I would not be here. Canada alone took in over 35,000 Ukrainians and many more of other ethnic, national, and religious origins. Ours is a generous land. In considering the contemporary refugee crisis in Europe, we could do well by remembering how the DPs were treated. After their protection was first ensured, in refugee camps where they could rest, recuperate, and pause to think about what they should do next, their material and other needs were attended to. Meanwhile, they were thoroughly vetted. Only gradually were they directed to chosen places of resettlement. This commonsensical solution to a historic refugee crisis proved beneficial to the DPs and to the countries that accepted them. There is nothing to say it could not work again. [National Post](#)

How geography will shape my life: All my life, I have had trouble figuring out who I am and what I wish to do to make my life an admirable one. By examining the opportunities bestowed upon me by Port High since Grade 9 geography, such as preparing for the 2014 ESRI conference and the 2015 ArcGIS skills competition, it is crystal clear that these high school opportunities will directly help to drive the future that lies ahead of me. On my first day of second semester in Grade 9, I had a geography class — and WOW! Throughout that semester, we learned fascinating geographic concepts and used a program called Arc Map 10.1 to make our own maps using various types of data. As the start of my second year at Port High, with a few other classmates I was able to create a slideshow to present at the 2014 Toronto ESRI Conference. During the event, I was able to meet some of the specialists at ESRI — a tremendous experience that may also unlock some doors in my near future. This accomplishment will allow me to be known around the geography world and I may now be able to obtain a job or co-op placement during or after university with my new knowledge and experiences. [StCatharines Standard](#)

UNBC's Catherine Nolin among faculty and students challenging appointment of James Moore as chancellor: Former Minister of Industry and Conservative MP James Moore has been named the sixth chancellor of the University of Northern British Columbia—and the first alumni chancellor in the school's history—and faculty, alumni and students are calling on the school to reverse its decision. Catherine Nolin, geography chair and associate professor, was one of almost 900 to a petition launched last week after Moore's appointment was announced. The move was a surprise to Nolin and struck a chord with the community, she said. "People want to protect what we've built here: equity excellence, support of diversity," said Nolin, who has been vocal online about her disappointment with the university's sixth chancellor choice, alongside open letters from alumni and students echoing those objections. Both Nolin and the petition point to the university's description for the role of chancellor as one who "exemplifies and symbolizes the university by (his) conduct and the standards (he) sets." "In this appointment I see someone who can actually harm the reputation of our university and the long term welfare of the university," said Nolin. "He embodies the opposite the values and beliefs that are at the core of our university in terms of academic freedom, the pursuit of knowledge, through science the undermining of federal scientists...some of the poor relations with aboriginal communities in Canada and discounting the need for federal inquiry around missing and murdered women." [Business Vancouver](#)



U British Columbia features Geographer: Siobhán McPhee who relates her strangest Geography related experience. [UBC Geography News](#)

York U Professor Emeritus Conrad Heidenreich has received two awards this fall. In September the Ontario Archaeological Society recognized his "outstanding work benefitting Ontario archaeology" with its highest honour, the J. Norman Emerson Silver Medal, and in November he received the University of Toronto Association of Geography Alumni (UTAGA) Distinguished Alumnus Award for "a career of exceptional distinction." Professor Heidenreich taught historical geography at York for 34 years. [York U Department of Geography News](#)

Western U's Philip Stooke comments on 1966 moon lander. "The method was ingenious," said Philip Stooke, an associate professor at the Department of Geography. Stooke said that the spacecraft descended under rocket power, slowing down just above the moon's surface. A long rod, projecting from under the spacecraft, eventually touched the lunar terrain. That contact triggered the landing probe's thrusters to turn off, which the Luna 9 landing capsule then ejected from the descent stage. The descent stage then fell to the ground. [D News](#)

The Future of Physical Geography – Discussions at Kananaskis: In early November three UBC geographers ventured to Kananaskis, AB, to join Yvonne Martin (U Calgary) to discuss the meaning, value, and future of physical geography. [UBC Geography News](#)

Concordia U grad student Daniel Horen Greenford's carbon-leak solution involves n which he's attempting to calculate national contributions to climate change using formalizations of emissions accounting. Horen Greenford is developing a new accounting method that effectively captures the effects of trade and allocates emissions embodied in goods to trading partners in a fair way. The model weighs emissions according to their economic benefit, using a definition of utility rooted in ethical considerations of necessity, while respecting geographical circumstances and cultural plurality. [Concordia U News](#)

Recent Theses and Dissertations

Megan MacCallum. 2015. The economic effects of renewable and sustainable energy production in the Kingston Region. MA thesis. Department of Geography & Planning, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario. Supervisor: Dr. Warren Mabee

David S. Morimoto. 2015. [Dendroclimatic studies of white spruce in the Yukon Territory, Canada](#). Ph.D. Thesis. Department of Geography, Western University, London, Ontario. 310p. Supervisor: Brian H. Luckman.

Rosalie Thibeault. 2015. [Au lendemain de la gentrification : l'appartenance des francophones de la Basse-Ville d'Ottawa](#). MA thesis. Department of Geography, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ontario. Supervisor: Anne Gilbert.

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Ryan C.L. Bullock, E. Carina H. Kesitalo, Terhi Vuojala-Magga and Emmeline Laszlo Ambjörnsson. 2015. [Forestry administrator framings of responses to socioeconomic disturbance: Examples from northern regions in Canada, Sweden, and Finland](#). Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy . DOI:10.1177/0263774X15614697

James D. Ford, Graham McDowell and Tristan Pearce. 2015. [The adaptation challenge in the Arctic](#). Nature Climate Change 5:1046–1053.

Samantha Hajna, Nancy A Ross, Lawrence Joseph, Sam Harper and Kaberi Dasgupta. [Neighbourhood walkability, daily steps and utilitarian walking in Canadian adults](#). BMJ Open 5(11): e008964
DOI:10.1136/bmjopen-2015-008964

Kersty Hobson and Nicholas Lynch. 2015. [Ecological modernization, techno-politics and social life cycle assessment: a view from human geography](#). The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment. DOI:10.1007/s11367-015-1005-5.

Andrew H. MacDougall, Kirsten Zickfeld, Reto Knutti and H. Damon Matthews. 2015. [Sensitivity of carbon budgets to permafrost carbon feedbacks and non-CO2 forcings](#). Environmental Research Letters 10. No. 12.

Lydia Osei, Jonathan Amoyaw, Godfred Odei Boateng, Sheila Boamah and Isaac Luginaah. 2015. [The paradox of water accessibility: understanding the temporal and spatial dimensions of access to improved water sources in Rwanda](#). Journal of Water Sanitation and Hygiene for Development. DOI:10.2166/washdev.2015.029

Saman Razavi, Amin Elshorbagy, Howard Wheeler and David Sauchyn. 2015. [Time scale effect and uncertainty in reconstruction of Paleo-hydrology](#). Hydrological Processes. DOI:10.1002/hyp.10754

David B. Richardson and L.D. Danny Harvey. 2015. [Optimizing renewable energy, demand response and energy storage to replace conventional fuels in Ontario, Canada](#). Energy 93(Part 2):1447-1455.

Other “Geographical” News

Parks Canada CIO maps out the agency’s long-term data management strategy: By this time of year, going to one of Canada’s countless parks is an exercise in admiring the beauty leaves scattering everywhere, but behind the scenes at Parks Canada, the real beauty is in how data is being more effectively brought together to map out its diverse terrain. A few weeks ago, Esri Canada gave Parks Canada an Award of Excellence in Geographic Information Systems (GIS), following a project that involved its ArcGIS platform. The product has allowed Parks Canada to integrate various other systems and create several new applications for its staff. These include Parks Canada Atlas, which provide basemaps of the Agency’s parks, historic sites, waterways and marine conservation areas that range from a Canada-wide scale down to 1:36,000. A National Integrated Realty System (NIRS), meanwhile, is designed to let the Agency’s 50-member Realty team to link their documents (property ownership documents, leases and licences) to land parcels, and the Incident and Event Management System helps National Park Wardens document and manage law enforcement incidents and planned events. Work on the enterprise GIS project started about four years ago, before Thompson had joined Parks Canada as CIO. Although Esri’s products have been used at all levels of the Canadian government for years, Esri Canada president Alex Miller said the agency’s use of ArcGIS means staff will have ready-to-use content and templates to quickly build and deploy Web maps and applications accessible via multiple devices. [ITWorldCanada](#)

Some not so “Geographical” News



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