



GeogNews

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Memorial U's Max Liboiron reports regulations fail to keep harmful out of Canadian homes: A Memorial University geography professor has co-authored a new report detailing the failure of Canadian regulations to keep harmful flame-retardant chemicals out of Canadian homes and consumer products. Max Liboiron, assistant professor, Department of Geography, is a member of the [Endocrine Disruptions Action Group](#) (EDAction), a coalition of researchers concerned with the widespread presence of endocrine-disrupting chemicals in bodies, commodities, built environments, industrial emissions, ecologies, waters and atmospheres. The group has released [Toxic by Design](#), a report that investigates how failures in Canada's regulatory approach to industrial chemicals, including a new regulation on a class of toxic flame retardants known as PBDEs that will come into effect on Dec. 23, 2016, have a far-reaching effect on the health of Canadians. While fire safety is a serious concern, scientific research has shown that these chemicals do not significantly improve fire protection. Flame-retardant chemicals do present serious risks, however, particularly for children and during fetal development. Among other concerns, the health effects of exposure to these chemicals include enlarged livers, obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, cognitive debilities, reduced fertility in both men and women, and certain cancers. *Toxic by Design* calls on the Canadian government to address failures in governance that are impacting the health of Canadians, both those living today and future generations. [Memorial U Gazette](#)

Simon Fraser U's Nick Blomley and Eugene McCann talk about the geography department in the mid-seventies: [SFU Geography](#) became a hotbed of radical education, exploration and practice in the mid 1970s, as a creative cluster of faculty and students, drawn from Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Ireland, the US, and the UK gathered at this newly built campus. SFU Geography played a seminal role in the development of the Union of Socialist Geographers, as well as running a community-based research project, modelled on similar experiments in the US and Canada, entitled the Vancouver 'Expedition'. Students and young faculty explored the beginnings of what would become feminist geography. Marxism, anarchism, Maoism and feminism circulated and were explored, as did innovative forms of pedagogy. Blomley and Eugene McCann tell this forgotten but important story, exploring what happened at SFU, how it was distinctive, and in what ways it connected to other centres of radical geography, suggesting that SFU's Geography Department played a crucial and under-documented role in the history of North American radical geography. [SFU Geography](#) | [Listen at 98.3](#)

U Victoria's Terry Prowse practices snowpack science: Anyone remember the summer 2006 drought in Tofino? It surprised many people who wondered how a water shortage could happen in a coastal rainforest. That year, the high-elevation mountain snowpack that coastal British Columbia counts on for much of its water supply melted before the spring due to rising air temperatures, resulting in water shortages in the summer when the demand was greatest. "It was a clear example of how the temperature on distant mountains can impact the water we may—or may not—have available to use," says Terry Prowse, a [University of Victoria geographer](#) and a senior federal research scientist who studies hydrology, water resources and freshwater ecosystems. A significant amount of freshwater in western Canada and the North originates as snowpack from the Rocky Mountains. Air temperature and precipitation control the amount of snow accumulated and stored in the winter, as well as the timing of its melt. If the melt happens before the traditional spring period, as has been happening in recent years, it can affect downstream ecology, the economy and even how we live. At UVic, Prowse heads the [Water and Climate Impacts Research Centre](#) (W-CIRC), a joint initiative of the university and the federal Department of Environment and Climate Change Canada. The centre was created in 2002 to conduct hydrological and environmentally based, interdisciplinary research on the impact of climate change on Canadian water resources. Centre researchers are working with scientists across the country to study snowpacks along the western cordillera, the alpine spine of North America—essentially, the Rockies. The study is evaluating historical records, identifying trends and determining what climatic conditions have caused them. This information will be plugged into models to predict future consequences on downstream water needs—and evaluate potential long-term adaptation strategies. A key part of that science is collaboration. Prowse draws on experts from a variety of disciplines on and off campus to get a more holistic look at the situation. It's a lesson Prowse drums into his graduate students, who get hands-on experience working on scientific teams in places as far-flung as the high-elevation snow zones of the Okanagan basin, the Mackenzie River delta, and Arctic tundra lakes in northern Sweden. [UVic knowLEDGE](#)

Western U's Chantelle Richmond explores the connection between wellness and environment: Richmond discovered health geography during her undergraduate degree in geography at McMaster University in Hamilton. As her classes explored environmental effects on marginalized communities in the United States, much of what Richmond had witnessed in her own backyard was being ignored. "As an Indigenous person, I was intimately familiar with environmental contamination because of my own community's experience," she says. "But this was something Canadians were only just beginning to talk about and realize the terrible injustice." As part of her thesis in her final year, Richmond reviewed Health Canada reports looking at mercury contamination in the northern Ontario community of Grassy Narrows. Richmond took the data and mapped it out over time, looking for patterns. While the reports said contamination was decreasing, her mapping demonstrated persistence at the individual level: mercury contamination was still affecting the health of community members. She realized that when a food source is taken away—in this case, clean water—the health and social structure of the community changes. Understanding that connection hooked Richmond, now an associate professor with the department of geography at Western University, on the field of health geography. It's a relatively new field, dating back to the 1980s. Previously, researchers were considered medical geographers, focusing on quantitative methods and mapping the spread of diseases. Health geography expanded with the World Health Organization's 1984 definition of health, which came to include the environment. Courses now look at how space, place and environment affect health and well-being. Health geography is usually paired with the burgeoning field of geomatics, which merges maps with statistical analysis and database technology. The skills acquired in a geomatics program can be applied to work in business, government, environmental agencies and urban planning. While you can find health geography in most universities, subdivisions, such as Indigenous health geography, aren't common. Richmond is part of a small group of researchers specializing in that area. Her work explores how environmental and political events have dislocated Indigenous people from their traditional territories—for instance, through water contamination or construction of a pipeline. [Maclean's Magazine](#)

Memorial U's Trevor Bell and the danger of methylmercury released by Muskrat Falls hydro project: A Harvard University has warned that the Muskrat Falls project could poison Inuit food sources if the government didn't take steps to prevent methylmercury from being released. Methylmercury forms in nature when bacteria reacts with mercury in water, soil or plants, in a process called methylation. Its levels increase as it moves up the food chain — for example, from algae to plankton to fish to people. Eating food from water with even low levels of methylmercury can be dangerous. "You could drink a swimming pool of this water every day and it would not affect your health," Trevor Bell, a Memorial University of Newfoundland geographer and project leader on a study of methylmercury risks with the Muskrat Falls project. "When you get to the top of [the food chain], the fish and the seals, that's 10 million times the concentration as in the water." Studies led by Bell and conducted in conjunction with the University Manitoba and scientists from Harvard University found the flooding could elevate methylmercury in Lake Melville far beyond what naturally occurs. In 2011, a joint review panel recommended the best way to deal with the effects would be full vegetation clearing. It also recommended Nalcor and the federal government launch a study to determine the feasibility of clearing reservoirs in general of both vegetation and topsoil. "If you remove that fuel, then you very much slow or eliminate the conversion to methylmercury," Bell said. [CBCNews](#)

Programme de géographie-UQTR: Plusieurs étudiants ont réalisé leur stage cet été. Cette activité de fin d'études est généralement l'occasion pour eux de mettre en valeur leurs compétences à travers des applications pratiques et théoriques chez l'employeur. Les stages furent une fois de plus diversifiés cette année et nos étudiants ont été embauchés par : La ville de Trois-Rivières, la municipalité de Cantley, la ville de Shawinigan, la ZIP les 2 rives, le port de Trois-Rivières, le Ministère de l'Agriculture des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ), L'Organisme de bassin versant de la rivière Bayonne, l'Institut de Recherche pour le Développement de la Nouvelle Calédonie, Patrimoine Bécancour, Environnement CA, la commune de Harhoura au Maroc, et finalement par un professeur ayant des activités de recherche en lien avec la pollution industrielle en Estrie et le déversement accidentel d'hydrocarbure dans les cours d'eau à Lac Mégantic. [géographie-UQTR](#)

U Waterloo Department of Geography and Environmental Management hosts record-breaking conference. More than 200 geographers and interdisciplinary scholars converged at the University of Waterloo this past weekend for the 2016 Canadian Association of Geographers - Ontario Division Annual Meeting. This year's event breaks records as the largest CAGONT conference in the history of the organization, with participants from 19 universities. The conference included 126 presentations and 50 posters with topics ranging from global health to geochemistry. [CAGONT 2016](#)



Simon Fraser U's Geoff Mann recently gave a talk at the Karl Polanyi Institute of Political Economy at Concordia. The talk was entitled "*Robespierre's Ghost: Political Economy & Revolution*". [Concordia Events](#)

Memorial U's Max Liboiron is a roller derby 'crash collector': Not long after she came to Newfoundland, geography professor Max Liboiron went looking for a "not-related-to-work" endeavour to replace the stand-up she used to do. "There's not much of a comedy scene here, so I bodycheck women instead." Twice a week she becomes the "Crash Collector" on her team, the "Neversweets". She has taken a few punches in the face and cracked her tailbone, but still has all her teeth. "I'm not a glutton for punishment, even if it kind of looks that way," she laughs. [Maclean's Magazine](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Dean W Bond. 2016. [Plagiarists, enthusiasts and periodical geography: A.F. Büsching and the making of geographical print culture in the German Enlightenment, c.1750–1800](#). Transaction of the Institute of British Geographers. DOI:10.1111/tran.12153

Daniel G Cockayne. 2016. [Sharing and neoliberal discourse: The economic function of sharing in the digital on-demand economy](#). Geoforum 77:73–82.

Isabel Lemus-Lauzon, Najat Bhiry and James Woollett. 2016. [Assessing the effects of climate change and land use on northern Labrador forest stands based on paleoecological data](#). Quaternary Research. DOI.org/10.1016/j.yqres.2016.09.001

Lindsay Matthews, Jennifer Lynes, Manuel Riemer, Tania Del Matto and Nicholas Cloet. 2017. [Do we have a car for you? Encouraging the uptake of electric vehicles at point of sale](#). Energy Policy 100:79–88.

Pamela Moss. 2016. [Traveling heavy. A memoir in between journeys](#). Gender, Place & Culture. DOI.org/10.1080/0966369X.2016.1251738

Hanson Nyantakyi-Frimpong, Joseph Kangmennaangb, Rachel Bezner Kerrc, Isaac Luginaahd, Laifolo Dakishonie, Esther Lupafyae, Lizzie Shumbae and Mangani Katunduf. 2016. [Agroecology and healthy food systems in semi-humid tropical Africa: Participatory research with vulnerable farming households in Malawi](#). Acta Tropica. DOI.org/10.1016/j.actatropica.2016.10.022

D Leong and S Donner. 2016. [Future water supply and demand management options in the Athabasca Oil Sands](#). River Research and Applications. DOI:10.1002/rra.3033

Shezhou Luo, Cheng Wang, Xiaohuan Xi, Feifei Pan, Dailiang Peng, Jie Zou, Sheng Nie and Haiming Qin. 2017. [Fusion of airborne LiDAR data and hyperspectral imagery for aboveground and belowground forest biomass estimation](#). Ecological Indicators 73:378–387.

HCL O'Neil, TD Prowse, BR Bonsal and YD Dibike. 2016. [Spatial and temporal characteristics in streamflow-related hydroclimatic variables over western Canada: Part 1: 1950–2010](#). Hydrology Research. DOI:10.2166/nh.2016.057

Benjamin Rigby, Reade Davis, Dean Bavington and Christopher Baird. 2016. [Industrial aquaculture and the politics of resignation](#). Marine Policy. DOI.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2016.10.016

J Taylor Perron and Jeremy G. Venditti. 2016. [Earth science: Megafloods downsized](#). Nature 538:174–175.

Daniel Schleith, Michael Widener and Changjoo Kim. 2016. [An examination of the jobs-housing balance of different categories of workers across 26 metropolitan regions](#). Journal of Transport Geography 57:145–160.

Matt Tenney and Renee Sieber. 2016. [Data-driven participation: Algorithms, cities, citizens, and corporate control](#). Urban Planning 1(2).

Other “Geographical” News

Microplastics in agricultural soils: A reason to worry? Microplastics are increasingly seen as an environmental problem of global proportions. While the focus to date has been on microplastics in the ocean and their effects on marine life, microplastics in soils have largely been overlooked. Researchers are concerned about the lack of knowledge regarding potential consequences of microplastics in agricultural landscapes from application of sewage sludge. [ScienceDaily](#)

This wacky world map just won Japan's biggest design award: The centuries-old Mercator projection is a notoriously inaccurate world map. For one thing, Greenland isn't the massive land mass as shown on the map. But a new map by artist and architect Hajime Narukawa offers what's possibly the most proportional map we've ever seen. You can print out and fold the map, so you can have your own hyper proportional paper globe. The thing that makes this map truly innovative is that when you transfer it from a 3D globe to a 2D map, the land and water proportions stay the same. That, as well as the fact that the map can be folded and fits perfectly together helped Narukawa's map design win the coveted Japanese Good Design Award. “The map can be tessellated without visible seams,” the Good Design Award description reads. “Thus the [Narukawa] world map provides an advanced precise perspective of our planet.” The map isn't totally perfect, but it's pretty damn close. [Gizmodo](#)

Global hot spot maps link consumers with impacts: A new model creates global hot spot maps to illuminate how what we buy pollutes the planet and where. The idea is to help governments, industries and individuals target areas for cleanup. [ScienceDaily](#)

Some Not So “Geographical” News



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