



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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Simon Fraser U's Paul Kingsbury delves into crop circle community: When Simon Fraser University professor Paul Kingsbury tells people that he spends his time studying the people who investigate aliens, ghosts, sasquatches and other paranormal activity, he doesn't get the strange looks you might expect. His latest research brought him to the south of England to attend a conference in Devizes on crop circles. You read that right — crop circles. “The crop circle was a new direction in the project,” said Kingsbury. “Like sasquatches, UFOs and ghosts, crop circles are in many ways a very controversial and mysterious phenomenon. “They are different, though, because they are very tangible.” Kingsbury said crop circles are a worldwide phenomenon, and even appeared in B.C. almost 20 years ago when 10 circles were spotted in an oat field near Vanderhoof airport in 1998. Three years later, a pilot saw six circles in another field about five kilometres from the Vanderhoof airport. Kingsbury said the conference was fantastic for his research. He found that people were less interested in the origins of the mysterious circles — theories includes aliens, aquifers, energy fields or manifestations of divine feminine energy — than they were in their beauty. At crop circle sites, people lay down in the circles, meditating and embracing. “There's a great deal of passion and desire among the crop circle enthusiasts,” Kingsbury said. “I think it's important to understand why there would be so many people spending a lot of time, energy and money on these paranormal phenomena.” When asked where he thinks the circles come from, Kingsbury said some are definitely made by humans, but there are those that defy explanation. “I'm open to possibilities,” he said, carefully. “I try to occupy a middle ground.” [The Province](#)

U Saskatchewan's Colin Laroque feels prairies would become grasslands again if abandoned: Colin Laroque, a Professor in the Department of Soil Science at The University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon feels that the prairies would become grasslands if they were to be abandoned by farmers. This is based on observations of the many millions of boreal forest species that were planted as part of a 'shelter belt' program beginning in the early 1900's. The idea of shelter belt trees was to protect the prairies from erosion, and also provide a build up of snow for soil hydration. Species such as white spruce - which were part of the program - have not done very well in the more southern prairie environments. This suggests that grasslands and not forest would take over in the absence of farming. Listen @CBC's [Quirks and Quarks](#)

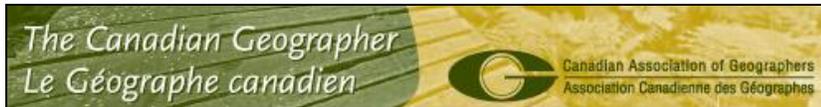
U Calgary's John Yackel says Arctic ice melting more quickly than believed: Already rapidly disappearing Arctic sea ice is melting up to 25 per cent more quickly than initially believed, according to research conducted partly by University of Calgary scientists. The salt content of snow covering the ice has tricked the European Space Agency satellite CryoSat-2 into concluding that ice is thicker than it actually is, and this likely means the first ice-free Arctic summer will come years earlier than once thought, said U of C geography professor John Yackel. "We were a little bit surprised by that number — we knew the effect was there but in our minds it was maybe five to 10 per cent," he said. There's no question the ice's retreat is a result of human-induced climate change, with the CryoSat-2 calculating a 17 per cent reduction in Arctic ice thickness per decade since 1979. That's considered a rapid retreat, but "it's probably a little bit higher than that," said Yackel. The research conducted by a pan-Canadian and international team — and led by the U of C's Cryosphere Climate Research Group — combined 10 years of snow data from across Canada's Arctic and microwave theory. It found snow salinity tended to scatter the microwaves transmitted by the satellite on the snow surface, said Yackel. "It hits higher up; it doesn't penetrate," he said. "It means this particular satellite has been overestimating the amount of sea ice which covers 75 per cent of the Arctic Ocean. ... It hasn't taken into account the salt in the snow." An ice-free summer once predicted to arrive in 2040 to 2050 could conceivably occur between 2030 and 2040, he said. Those findings should lead to a correction factor being baked into the data produced by CryoSat-2, which is considered the premier satellite measuring ice thickness, said Yackel. [Calgary Sun](#) | [IndiaTV](#)

Memorial U's Trevor Bell leads SmartICE project honoured by the United Nations: A team from Memorial University of Newfoundland has been honoured by the United Nations for its research into climate change, and its sea ice monitoring system. Of the 19 groups awarded the UN's 2017 Climate Solutions Awards, SmartICE — led by Memorial University geography professor Trevor Bell — was the only group to hail from Canada. Bell's SmartICE project studies ways of predicting the conditions of sea ice to make it safer for northern people to travel on it. "People who live on the land, and are closely connected with the land really have observed the changes that have been going on in the north for decades now," Bell said. "Climate change is not something that's going to happen. It is happening." According to Bell, higher sea levels, more intense storms and decreasing amounts of sea ice are examples of changing processes in the natural environment that are having real impacts on northern communities. Bell's research is helping to find solutions. "We're always hearing about the polar ice cap and how it's shrinking, but for Canadian communities in the north, the 50 or 60 of them, what's really important is what's happening on their front step — on that coastline," Bell said. "And it's changing dramatically." "I think a lot of these communities are suffering badly from lack of access to their natural lands, to food that feeds their families, to declining opportunities for the economy," he said. Bell is working on tools to help northern residents adapt to unpredictable conditions. [CBCNews | Newfoundland & Labrador](#)

Carleton U's Patricia Ballamingie secured SSHRC Connections Grant to support Bring Food Home Conference in Ottawa: Carleton University's Patricia Ballamingie, professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, and Research Associate, Phil Mount, with support from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) will sponsor students and Indigenous peoples from across Ontario to attend Bring Food Home, a sustainable food systems conference in Ottawa. Local and regional partners are coming together to present this dynamic conference, where food and farming actors share experience and expertise, build capacity for upstream collaboration and reconciliation within Ontario's local food networks, and co-ordinate actions that will lead to sustainable transformations of food systems in Ontario and beyond. Ballamingie, board chair of Just Food, the local host of the Bring Food Home conference, is using her SSHRC Connections Grant to support Indigenous participants and students from across Ontario involved in policy work to attend the conference. FASS will also contribute, to sponsor Carleton students who wish to attend the conference. About Bring Food Home. [Bring Food Home](#) was born in 2010 and, in Sudbury 2015, was attended by

more than 250 individuals, including farmers, academics, municipal staff and anti-poverty activists. It featured over 35 workshops and presentations on rebuilding the food system through sector-specific initiatives. The fifth biennial conference, in eastern Ontario for the first time, promises to build on that success, with a focus on increasing Indigenous participation in all aspects of the conference. Sustain Ontario, a province-wide, cross-sectoral alliance that promotes healthy food and farming, serves as the co-lead organization, along with Just Food, Ottawa's regional, community-based food systems organization. [Carleton Newsroom](#)

New in [The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien](#)



Greg Suttor. 2017. [Basement suites: Demand, supply, space, and technology](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI: 10.1111/cag.12423

Basement suites emerged as a distinct sector of secondary rental in Canada by the 1970s, in a context of historical changes in rental demand and supply, the expanding scale of urban regions, and changing technology of the home. As the post-war rental apartment production regime ended in the 1970s, secondary rental, including basement suites, partly took its place in meeting high demand. By the 1990s, a shift within the rental sector to lower incomes, and minimal social housing production, reinforced demand for low-rent market options. Meanwhile the expanding scale of Canadian urban areas, and gentrification, pushed secondary rental outward in urban space. In the 1940s to 1960s, the shift from coal to natural gas furnaces, insulation, cheap electric appliances, drywall and panelling, as well as the new recreation room, created habitable basements rarely possible before then. By the 1970s such spaces could be converted to secondary rental suites.



Algoma U remembers Ken McLarty: Ken McLarty was a long-time Algoma University professor whose education career spanned nearly 40 years. McLarty joined Algoma in the early 1970s when classes were offered at Cambrian College, now Sault College “He would have come here when the (Shingwauk Indian Residential School) had just closed,” said acting president Celia Ross. “With other faculty, she adds, they would have decided the Queen Street East site was “a pretty good place for a university.” Algoma University moved to the former residential school site in 1971. McLarty taught geography and helped develop a Canadian studies program. “He was just very active at building up the capacity of the university in its early days,” said Ross. McLarty earned his bachelor of arts degree and master of arts degree from University of Western Ontario. He completed his doctorate in administration and higher education from Michigan State University in 1979. “I graduated from university with a degree in geography, and geography is a way of thinking,” wrote Sault Star outdoors writer Peter Denley in 1999. “That’s how my professor, Ken McLarty, defined geography on our very first day in classes, and I still can’t come up with a better description. He told us if we understood why geography was “a way of thinking” when we finished that first-year course then he had succeeded in his task. I apply a geographer’s mind constantly when I examine life and issues in the outdoors. The life of organisms big and small is predicated by the topography of the land they have colonized.” [SaultStar](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Krystyna Adams, Jeremy Snyder and Valorie A. Crooks. 2017. [The perfect storm: What's pushing Canadians abroad for dental care?](#) Journal of the Canadian Dental Association. 83:h10

Jaison Thomas Ambadan, Aaron A. Berg, William J. Merryfield and Woo-Sung Lee. 2017. [Influence of snowmelt on soil moisture and on near surface air temperature during winter–spring transition season.](#) Climate Dynamics. doi.org/10.1007/s00382-017-3955-8

Stephanie Avery-Gomm, Jennifer F. Provencher, Max Liboiron, Florence E. Poon and Paul A. Smith. 2017. [Plastic pollution in the Labrador Sea: An assessment using the seabird northern fulmar Fulmarus glacialis as a biological monitoring species.](#) Marine Pollution Bulletin. doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2017.10.001

Dana L. Church, Julie E. Friddell, Ellsworth F. LeDrew, Gabrielle Alix and Garret Reid. 2017. [The Northern Voice: Listening to Indigenous and northern perspectives on management of data in Canada.](#) Data Science Journal 16. doi.org/10.5334/dsj-2017-048

Suzana Dragičević and Kristofer Hatch. 2017. [Urban geosimulations with the Logic Scoring of Preference method for agent-based decision-making.](#) Habitat International. doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2017.09.006

Scott F. Lamoureux and Melissa J. Lafrenière. 2017. [More than just snowmelt: integrated watershed science for changing climate and permafrost at the Cape Bounty Arctic Watershed Observatory.](#) Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Water. DOI:10.1002/wat2.1255

Brian H. Luckman, M.H. Masiokas and K. Nicolussic. 2017. [Neoglacial history of Robson Glacier, British Columbia.](#) Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences. doi.org/10.1139/cjes-2016-0187

Raja Sengupta, Colin C. Chapman, Dipto Sarkar and Sarah Bortolamiol. [Automated extraction of movement rationales for building agent-based models: Example of a Red Colobus Monkey Group.](#) In: Perez L., Kim EK., Sengupta R. (eds) Agent-Based Models and Complexity Science in the Age of Geospatial Big Data. Advances in Geographic Information Science. Springer, Cham

Dawei Zai, Jonathan Li, Yulan Guo, Ming Cheng, Pengdi Huang, Xiaofei Cao and Cheng Wang. 2017. [Pairwise registration of TLS point clouds using covariance descriptors and a non-cooperative game.](#) ISPRS Journal of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing 134:15–29.

Other “Geographical” News

Study published in *The Canadian Geographer* sheds light on how secondary suites are used in Calgary: Approximately one in four applicants who want to develop a secondary suite in Calgary do so to house family members, according to a new study. Haskayne’s Westman Centre for Real Estate Studies conducted an analysis of 294 publicly available applications for a secondary suite to better understand why people apply for a legal suite in their homes. Not surprisingly, 63 per cent of applicants indicated they wanted the suite for rental purposes, but 26 per cent cited family reasons. The other 11 per cent said the parcel of land was ideal for rezoning. The study was recently published in *The Canadian Geographer*. [UToday](#)

Ranking Canada's top party universities for 2018: *Maclean's* surveyed more than 23,000 undergraduates across Canada in 2017 and asked them to estimate how much time they spend partying each week. We tallied the total party hours for each school and divided it by the number of respondents to arrive at our scores. The average number of hours Canadian students party per week? Just 3.4 hours. Further, 28.4% of respondents said they don't drink at all. But if partying were an endurance sport St. Francis Xavier would take the prize (Click [here](#) for an account of one fun night at the school). Students at this school don't just party more often, their parties last longer. [Maclean's](#)

Greenhouse gas concentrations surge to new record: Concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere surged at a record-breaking speed in 2016 to the highest level in 800,000 years, according to a new report. The abrupt changes in the atmosphere witnessed in the past 70 years are without precedent. [ScienceDaily](#)

At least 70 homeless people have died in Toronto in the first 9 months of the year: At least 70 homeless people have died in Toronto in the first nine months of this year, the city's medical officer of health said. Dr. Eileen de Villa told a Toronto Board of Health meeting on Monday that 57 were men, or 81 per cent, while 13 were women. The median of age of those who died is 48. "Based on these numbers ... being homeless is absolutely a significant risk factor for early death," she said. Forty-six homeless people died indoors, four died outdoors, and the location of 20 deaths was unknown. Indoor locations included hospitals and city shelters. [CBCNews | Toronto](#)

Some Not So "Geographical" News



Are you ready for winter?



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