



**News Digest of the Canadian Association of Geographers
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U Alberta PhD student Darcy Reynard recruits Twitter users to use a stop-watch on pedestrian crossing signals in Edmonton: Darcy Reynard hates “beg buttons” so much, he created an online map and recruited Twitter users to use a stop-watch on pedestrian crossing signals across the city. The map was soon reporting waits of more than three minutes as pedestrians or cyclists shivered in the cold, missed their bus or gave up and jaywalked. “(Long waits) increase jaywalking and pedestrian injuries,” said Reynard, a PhD student in human geography and planning at the University of Alberta. He and others who walk and bike are upset with a specific style of traffic signal called beg buttons. That’s where people must push a button to trigger a “walk” signal, even if there’s a green light for vehicles travelling the same direction. Because there’s no automatic walk, beg buttons often force people to wait an entire light sequence before getting a signal to cross. It goes against city guidelines for high-pedestrian areas, but occurs even in the downtown core. For Reynard’s map, people submitted 134 timing points from across central Edmonton. The longest was 200 seconds (three minutes, 20 seconds). Many others averaged over one minute. [Edmonton Journal](#)

U Victoria’s Chris Darimont argues that to protect our social licence, we have to stop killing animals we don’t eat: Television personality and hunter Steve Ecklund recently became a target. He posted images of his smiling face lording over a cougar he had legally killed in northern Alberta. The imagery of a delighted hunter holding up his trophy – the bloodied, lifeless cougar – was grotesque to many and thousands commented online. Broader outrage also erupted, many lamenting the senseless killing of a large carnivore or questioning the ethics – indeed, legitimacy – of a wildlife-management system that normalizes the killing of animals that are not eaten. Many hunters, myself included, were among those disgusted. Though far fewer in number, other hunters fired back with fervent support. Such fiery debate, increasingly common, suggests that change is coming. But it will not come easy for either side. Understanding this conflict requires acknowledging that wildlife can mean not only populations but also individuals that comprise them. And here’s the important part: most people can accept the idea of suffering and death if the hunter kills to fulfill a basic life requisite, such as feeding one’s family; in contrast, most people oppose killing inedible animals for trivial reasons, such as feeding one’s ego. [Globe and Mail](#)

Queen’s U’s Warren Mabee on how online shopping is impeding Canada’s emissions targets: To battle climate change, 171 nations, including Canada, ratified the Paris Agreement in 2015. This agreement obligates Canada to reduce greenhouse gas emissions dramatically — by as much as 80 per cent below 2005 levels by 2050. Taken together, it means each Canadian must reduce their emissions from 20.2 to 3.1 tonnes per person per year. This is difficult — but not impossible. In fact, just switching from incandescent to LED lightbulbs achieves this level of reduction. The challenge is replicating this reduction across all aspects of our lives. [The Conversation](#)

Ottawa U's Department of Geography, Environment and Geomatics has a new Major in Physical Geography and Geomatics: Starting September 2018, students in the BSc Major in Physical Geography and Geomatics will learn to use the full range of geospatial technologies. Geographic Information Systems and Remote Sensing are core components of the program, which will provide students with skills that are in high demand in the work force and are essential for present-day geography and other disciplines. Field work is a critical component of physical geography, thus there are a two mandatory field courses, as well as several optional ones in Canada's north or abroad. Areas of focus for this program include northern environments, climate change and spatial analysis. Information and course sequence. Course details at [Honours Honours BSc in Physical Geography and Geomatics](#)

Hot Papers by Canadian Geographers

Sébastien Breau, Michael Shin and Nick Burkhart. 2018. [Pulling apart: new perspectives on the spatial dimensions of neighbourhood income disparities in Canadian cities](#). Journal of Geographical Systems.

Susan J. Elliott. 2018. [50 years of medical health geography\(ies\) of health and wellbeing](#). Social Science & Medicine 196:206-208.

Kellina Leslie Higgins and Marie-Ève Garon-Labrecque. 2018. [Fine-scale influences on thaw depth in a forested peat plateau landscape in the Northwest Territories, Canada: Vegetation trumps microtopography](#). Permafrost and Periglacial Processes. DOI:10.1002/ppp.1961

Bin Wang, Mingze Li, Wenyi Fan, Ying Yu and Jing M. Chen. 2018. [Relationship between net primary productivity and forest stand age under different site conditions and its implications for regional carbon cycle study](#). Forests. DOI:10.3390/f9010005

Robert G. Way, Antoni G. Lewkowicz and Yu Zhang. 2018. [Characteristics and fate of isolated permafrost patches in coastal Labrador, Canada](#). The Cryosphere Discussion.



U Calgary's Geoffrey Hay's MyHEAT start up business has been nominated as a finalist in the Energy & Sustainability category at the Seventh Annual Canadian Innovation Awards. Cast your vote to help him win. Visit the [@myheatinc](#) website <https://myheat.ca>

Memorial U's Charlie Mather and Cecile Badenhorst explore the fascinating and beautiful country of South Africa, Learn how geography and history influences South African wine as the folks from Tastings NL guides everyone through a three-wine tasting in February at the Manuels River Hibernia Interpretation Centre. For information see: [Travel and Wine: South Africa](#)

U Toronto Mississauga MSc student Stephanie Varty won 2nd place in the graduate student poster competition at the international Arctic Change conference, which had over 5000 participants and 370 posters. [@utmggrenv](#)



Siobhán McPhee and Sarah Przedpelska. 2018. [Experiential learning, community engagement, and student experience: Undergraduate field school course in rural British Columbia](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI:10.1111/cag.12436

Experiential learning enables students to bridge their learned skills and their professional life after university. Emphasizing the value of a social science degree, we argue that undergraduate students do not lack transferable skills, but rather they lack the realization of and confidence in applying these skills. Through a community-based field course, students not only build skills—they use them in a real-world context. This paper reflects on a geography field course located in a town in British Columbia. The course encourages students to manage community partner relationships and exposes them to new approaches to learning, including forms of assessment. The impact of the field course was assessed through an online survey and a focus group. Although students find aspects of a field course challenging, the overall experience of this course was very positive. The success of the field school course was, and is, in enabling students to realize the value of their transferable skills.

Jim E. Thatcher and Laura Beltz Imaoka. 2018. [The poverty of GIS theory: Continuing the debates around the political economy of GISystems](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI:10.1111/cag.12437

Over the past several decades, GISystems and GIScience have become established and valorized within the field of geography and geographic education. With the recent explosion in daily use of devices producing spatial data, such as smartphones, has come a renewed call to broaden the purview of Critical GIS beyond the desktop and towards these new systems of capitalist accumulation. In this viewpoint, we argue that any re-examination of the role of Critical GIS must also consider the political economy of geography and geographic education in which GISystems are used for research and taught. We explicate three registers at which GISystems function within geography: that of the individual educator, that of the GIS user, and that of the military-industrial complex in which GISystems were and are developed.

Marianna Pavlovskaya. 2018. [Critical GIS as a tool for social transformation](#). The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien. DOI:10.1111/cag.12438

When Critical GIS emerged in the 1990s and gained momentum in the 2000s, its potential for enabling progressive social change generated considerable excitement. By combining the powers of mapping, information technologies, and critical social theory, it promised new possibilities for acting upon the growing social contradictions of the neoliberal era. Critical GIS seemed to open a pragmatic plane of action by fusing progressive geographic imaginations with concrete and tangible maps. As I reflect on the state of critical GIS in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century, new configurations of class power, patriarchy, and racism are rapidly reshaping our social and geopolitical worlds and are precipitating environmental destruction. Yet, I attempt to develop the idea that GIS is a tool for social transformation because it can produce new cartographies and spaces of possibility and build and expand geographies of hope and care that change social imaginaries in favour of non-hierarchical class, gender, and race relations. In short, critical GIS scholarship both engages ongoing progressive politics and can create new possibilities for change. In particular, I examine two interventions of critical GIS: creating cartographies of solidarity and teaching.



Mount Allison U's Geography and Environment Department is hosting this year's Science Atlantic Environment Conference. This conference is open to undergraduate, graduate students, faculty, and staff working and interested in the interdisciplinary area of the environment. Conference details at [SAEC 2018](#)

U Toronto's Matti Siemiatycki spoke to about some of the practical ways to make the areas around school zones safer. [Watch at CTV News](#)

Simon Fraser U's Geoff Mann featured in Slate Magazine as one of the 'new thinkers who will stimulate our brain'. [SFU Geography](#)

Other "Geographical" News

'Inevitable' 9.0 earthquake, tsunami will hit Canada's West Coast: The threat of the "big one" hitting Western Canada has been looming for years. Experts say a powerful magnitude 9.0 earthquake could rip through the Pacific Coast, killings thousands and causing tsunami waves up to 20 metres high. "Further inland and into the Strait of Georgia, it would take a longer period of time. Victoria would have about an hour warning and Vancouver would have quite a bit more time," Clague said. "Once the tsunami moves up the Strait it would tend to weaken. So it would not be as devastating like in Tofino." "It's difficult to predict when it will happen again. We do know it's occurred about 20 times in the past 10,000 years," Dr. John Clague, an earth sciences professor at Simon Fraser University, said. And according to Clague, we are not completely ready for the "big one." [Global News](#)

Some Not So "Geographical" News



An 80 year old man was pulled over in Ontario today for driving a "moving snowbank."



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