By Richard J. DiFrancesco, Ph.D. Acting Chair

As I write this message, I am looking back at a year marked by many changes in the Department of Geography & Program in Planning. Throughout it all, the faculty, staff and graduate students of the Department have proven to be dedicated, resilient, and creative, but most of all, friendly and collegial to one another. As Chair of the Department for the past year, I have learned many things and faced many challenges, but, I can say that managing the people of the Department has not been one of them. I would like to thank everyone for their assistance, patience and good humour over this past year. It certainly made this a very enjoyable experience for me, and I think we made a difference.

The past year has been a big one for Geographers. Firstly, Professor Meric Gertler was appointed as the 16th President of the University of Toronto. Congratulations to Meric! (See Jenny Lass’ Interview with Meric Gertler on Pg. 3). We cannot think of a better person to represent the University of Toronto at home and abroad. Second, Professor Scott Prudham was elected as the President of the University of Toronto Faculty Association (UTFA). Congratulations to Scott!

In addition, Dr. Joe Leydon, a long-time friend, colleague and dedicated and decorated teacher, moved to the University of Toronto, Mississauga (UTM) as of July 1, 2013. While Joe has been cross-appointed between UTM and St. George for some time now, he has been a very visible presence at St. George - so much so that many may not have realized that he was cross-appointed. Joe has done a tremendous job not only in teaching wildly successful (Human Geography) courses, but also in terms of working with the Toronto Undergraduate Geography Society (TUGS) to build a sense of community amongst our undergraduates. For these and many other reasons Joe will be missed on St. George, but we wish him well and take solace in knowing that he is not too far away.

Arriving on the heels of Joe’s departure is a new addition. I am happy to say that Dr. Jun Zhang accepted a tenure-track Assistant Professorship in the Department starting on July 1, 2013. Jun hails from the University of Minnesota where he completed his Ph.D. in 2007 under the supervision of noted Human Geographer, Professor Eric Sheppard. Jun has been on the Faculty at the National University of Singapore for the past six years. Jun is working at the very forefront of Economic Geography, examining (theoretically and empirically) the myriad issues surrounding notions of variegated capitalism and globalization, with a focus on China. We are very excited to have Jun join the Department, and look forward to getting to know him, and his family.

In addition to changes in our faculty complement, our staff complement has also changed over the year. Most recently, after a decade of outstanding service as our Departmental Business Officer, Marika Maslej accepted a new position as Department Manager in the Department of Economics. Economics’ gain is our loss. We wish Marika the very best in the future. We would also like to welcome Nina Duras as Marika’s successor. She has been the Business Officer at the Canadian Institute for Theoretical Astrophysics at UofT since 2004 and brings a wealth of financial and administrative experience to the position. Earlier in 2013, Dean Robson arrived as our new IT specialist, replacing long-time friend Bruce Huang, who moved to UTM. Dean took over a complex IT system and has been doing an excellent job.

Another noteworthy change that has taken place in terms of our virtual presence. The Department of Geography & Program in Planning has launched a new website. The new website offers several innovations in addition to a fresh new look. Most importantly, the website has been coded in such a way that faculty, staff and graduate students can easily add content using a web-based application called “WordPress”. The new site includes articles featuring the work of current graduate students, descriptions of upcoming recruitment needs associated with Faculty research projects, as well as profiles of individuals, groups, labs and more. The new website should make it much easier for potential students to see what is happening in the Department and to quickly become aware of any and all possible opportunities.

In closing, the Department of Geography & Program in Planning has seen some big changes this past year; changes from within and changes brought on from outside. Notwithstanding these changes, the Department of Geography & Program in Planning remains vibrant, creative, inclusive and productive. I have enjoyed my time as Acting Chair (thanks to the assistance and support of many individuals), I have learned a great deal, and I look forward to working with Virginia Maclaren who started a second five-year term as Chair on July 1, 2013.
Thank you to the Alumni who provided the following updates. Updates can be emailed to utaga@geog.utoronto.ca for inclusion in future GeoPlans

Jill Watkins, BSc ’81, was an editor (and co-author of the Introduction) of the 2012 Special Issue publication of Climatic Change: Science Results from the Canadian International Polar Year 2007-2008 (http://link.springer.com/journal/10584/115/1/page/1)

Eleanor Mohammed, MScPl ’03, became the President of the Alberta Professional Planners Institute in April of this year.

Paulo Raposo Published the following papers:

Stefan Simonyi, BA ’97, has a new job at GE Capital Real Estate sourcing commercial mortgage loans in Toronto. He says, “I am putting my economics and geography degree to good use. My wife Corinne and I have two lovely children named Hugo (4) and Anna (2)”.

Wayne Quintal writes from Trinidad, “I live in Trinidad and graduated in 1976 from Erindale but did a final year immediately afterwards to actually leave Erindale in 1977. I completed a four-year Double Major in Urban Geography and Urban Studies at Erindale and it was a most enjoyable four years :). I subsequently obtained a Masters in Planning and have been doing a range of private and public sector planning work over the years. Canada is my second home and I always visit Erindale when there.”

In 2012, Linda Starodub (UC, 1973. Honours BA Urban Geography) retired from working all over the world for 30+ years with the United Nations Development Programme, and has opted to remain in Vienna -- one of the world’s great cities -- with really terrific public transit!

Carol-Ann Lane writes, “I graduated in 1989 from the University of Toronto with a 4 yr Bachelor of Arts degree (Urban Geography and English - 2 majors). I worked for many years in finance continuing course work towards a commerce degree; however, I transitioned in careers. I completed and graduated with my Master’s in Education in May 2011. My thesis was published in the National Archives of Canada. I then took a sabbatical from my finance position and worked in a high school teaching various grades. I graduated from Western University (London, Ontario) with a Bachelor of Education degree with distinction. I was then offered a full PhD scholarship to continue my research (2012). I have now completed my first year as a research associate and completed my coursework with honors. I am now moving toward my second year (Sept 2013) when I will complete my comprehensive exams and begin collecting my research data. I’ve already attended and successfully presented papers at two international conferences (CICE - at University of Toronto - June 24-26 and ECE - Brighton, England - July 11-14). I’m hoping to publish one of these papers this year but both are being included in conference proceedings.”

Alumnus Rick Clow, BSc ’74, on Waste Solutions in Ontario

In Ontario, Quinte Waste Solutions (the operating name for the Centre and South Hastings Waste Services Board) recently introduced an “orange box” for homeowners to use to transport household hazardous wastes to collection depots and events.

The household-purpose chemicals and items become hazardous at the disposal stage, and the municipally operated collection events and depots provide a safe and managed method to divert the items from landfills, ditches and sewage treatment facilities. The ‘orange box’ is manufactured of orange plastic, including recycled plastic, using a ‘recycling blue box’ mould.

The boxes appear to be fulfilling the goal of increasing awareness and hazardous waste capture as they act as a reminder, depository and carry box. They aid in diverting used batteries and small electronics from the garbage as well.

The typical household in Ontario could now have up to 8 containers for wastes: garbage bag, green cart for organics, leaf and yard waste bag, used battery bag, blue box (containers), grey box (papers), orange box and a black box for deposit return (wine and spirit containers). Some residents may even add a pharmaceutical and sharps container.

Will Ontario’s Bill 91 – the draft waste reduction act whose purposes are to ensure that ‘eco-fees’ are included in prices, to improve end-of-life management of products by manufacturers and importers, to increase ICI (Industrial-Commercial-Institutional) recycling and to allow for individual producer responsibility, cause an increase in the number of containers for homeowners? Could it possibly result in adding a newspapers bag, a beverage containers box, a cartons sac (milk cartons, juice boxes and coffee cups) for example? Could it result in the taking of polystyrene to a community depot and used film bags back to a grocery store?

Homeowner sorting is the least expensive method (a downloading of costs so to speak) for diverting wastes but at what point will homeowners balk if an increasingly fractured stewardship model starts at their door and not at a community level sorting facility?

Hopefully the review process will be all inclusive and take all stakeholders into consideration.

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Meric Gertler joined the department in 1983 after receiving his PhD in Urban Planning from Harvard University. He is a Registered Professional Planner and holder of the Goldring Chair in Canadian Studies. He was Director of the Program in Planning from 1988-89, 1994-96 and 1998-2000, Vice-Dean for Graduate Education and Research in the Faculty of Arts & Science from 2005-08 and Dean from 2008-13. He assumed his position as President of the University of Toronto on November 1, 2013. Jenny Lass (BA ‘97, MA ‘98), recipient of the 2012 UTAGA Honorary President Award, interviewed Meric Gertler about his career as geographer, planner and administrator.

How did you develop an interest in geography and planning, and who was your greatest influence?

It was very much at the kitchen table and the dining table. My dad was an urban planner and regional planner. He started life as a practitioner and then moved into academia later on, and like my dad, I’ve always been interested in working both sides of the theory-practice divide. I have always found it important and enriching to continue to have a presence in the world of practice. I find that it grounds my academic work. It also makes it much easier for me to have taught courses in a discipline like planning. I believe that to teach about planning you have to have had some first-hand experience actually doing it. And I’ve never found it difficult to navigate moving back and forth from the academic world to the policy world.

Did you always see yourself moving into senior administration?

No. But what I discovered along the way was that academic administration can be both interesting and rewarding. When you feel as if you have brought about some kind of improvement or advancement to the institution that you represent, it’s a very satisfying feeling. You also meet the most interesting people, and in a place like this, which is large and broad and diverse, we have a lot of interesting and smart people.

What is your favourite part of the work you do?

I really love doing field work. I have to say. I really enjoy the process of going out and talking to people and in a place like this, which is large and broad and diverse, we have a lot of interesting and smart people.

What is the most interesting part of your career so far?

Helping restore the Faculty of Arts and Science to a position of financial stability. We faced a kind of perfect storm when I became Dean five years ago, where government funding was already somewhat perilous and was about to get worse. The world economy was slowing down, stock markets were crashing and both had a big impact on endowments and the capacity of donors to give. But we have turned that situation around through a lot of hard work by a lot of people across the Faculty. The point of it is not just to get rid of the red ink, but to create the resources that enable us to do fantastic things for our faculty and for our students – to enrich the learning experience for our students and to create the best possible research environment for our faculty.

How do you feel geography and planning play an important role in solving some of the societal challenges that we face?

Well, societies around the world are becoming more and more urban all the time. And so much of what happens, whether it’s social, political, economic, or environmental processes, takes place in cities or is shaped by decisions and actions that occur in cities. I can’t think of a better time to be interested in cities, to leverage one’s knowledge of how cities work in order to achieve broader social and economic and political and environmental goals. I just think that the disciplines of geography and planning are so beautifully situated right now to deepen our understanding of important social and economic issues. It’s remarkable how many other disciplines have discovered the power of geography and the geographical perspective, and have undergone a geographical turn.

What is your vision for U of T’s future?

U of T has a really interesting identity and it’s one that not many universities around the world share. We are, on the one hand, this incredibly strong research entity, a powerhouse, strong in so many fields by virtue of our breadth and size. At the same time, we are a large urban university situated in one of the most diverse metropolitan regions in the world. And with that characteristic comes an obligation or responsibility to be an open and accessible institution. We are a university that offers opportunity to many students, including those from families who have arrived in this country relatively recently. So at a very high level, my vision is that we continue to be able to do both of those well. We must continue to excel in research so that our global reputation is maintained and enhanced, at a time when competition between universities around the world is intensifying.

The other thing I would add is that I’m really interested in the relationship between the university and the city around it. We have all kinds of common interests with Toronto. The better we can make the Toronto region, the better we can make the University of Toronto. It also provides fantastic opportunities for our students and our faculty to engage in rich experiences working with community partners and working on really interesting research topics that are often directly suggested by the people that we work with outside the university. So the well-established legacy in geography and planning, one that encourages us to cross the boundary between the university and the city around it, is something that I will build on as president and use as much as possible.
INTRODUCTION WITH PROFESSOR FRANK BAR

BY AMANDA ORLANDO (INTERVIEW CONDUCTED ON AUGUST 1ST, 2013)
WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADELINE LA FOREST.


Professor Frank Barrett attended Victoria College of the University of Toronto and was one of four members of the Honours Geography graduating class in 1958. He received his MA from the University of Minnesota in 1964, became a high school teacher, travelled in Africa as a Canadian Technical Advisor for two years and accepted an appointment at Atkinson College, York University, in 1969 where he taught for 32 years. While teaching at Atkinson, he was also completing his PhD (1973) at Michigan State University.

The fundamental position of medical geography and this applies to all geography is that if phenomena are equally distributed there is no geography. That is, if diseases are equally distributed then geography cannot make a contribution. However diseases are not evenly distributed so geography can help to understand the patterns of some but not all medical geographical phenomena. I think of medical geography as the study of the spatial interrelationships among disease, nutrition and diet, and medical care. I became interested in it for two reasons. First, living in the high tropical forest of Ghana with my wife and four young children, we experienced several afflictions including malaria. Secondly my PhD advisor at MSU, John Hunter, was Dean of medical geographers in the United States. At an AAG (Association of American Geographers) meeting in New York City, he urged me to study medical geography so I devised a four point plan: 1. teach a course - that being the best way to learn a topic; 2. study epidemiology so I would have knowledge of a related field in medicine; 3. study the origins and development of the field; and 4. do applied research. At Atkinson College, I developed three courses in medical geography. At the time, there was no university in North America that offered such a wide range of courses focussing on medical geography. For point 2, I attended the famous Mayo Clinic School of Epidemiology in Minneapolis for two summers. I was the only non-physician permitted to enrol. For point three, I crossed the Atlantic to study at the world famous Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine in London. It was there that I discovered a vast store of literature in several languages which led to my major research. Unilingual English speaking researchers were almost totally unaware of this literature.

With regard to Disease and Geography: The History of an Idea, what prompted you to undertake such a huge undertaking? How many years did this take you?

Continued on page 13

Thank you to our Alumni

In this issue of GeoPlan we would like to thank all alumni who contributed to the Department’s classes and workshops over the past year. To all who are on the list below, and any who may have been missed, your contribution has helped better the student experience, and for this we thank you.

PAC Module Speakers:
David McKay (MScPl, 2007)
Renee Gomes (MScPl, 2004)
Heather Inglis Baron (MUDS, 2009)
Carla Klasson (MScPl, ’2004)
Michael Noble (MScPl, 2008)
Geoffrey McGrath (MScPl, 2008)
Adam Molson, (MScPl, 2008)
Dawn Seetaram (MScPl, 2004)
Bryan Sherwood (MScPl, 2010)
Eldon Theodore (MUDS, 2009)

And a big thanks to all the alumni who participated in the PAC Mentor program!

JPG1507 Speaker:
Phil Brown (MScPl, 1976)
CITCO3 Speaker
Limin Fang (MScPl, 2005)

Undergraduate Networking Night Speakers
Stephanie Silver-Lubin (BA, 2009)
Kimberley Wilmot (MScPl, 2011)
Damian Dupay (PhD, 1999)
Rita Mezei (MScPl, 1993)
Kirsten Stein (MScPl, 2010)
Tony Oloet (MA, 1995)
Peter Naperstok (MScPl, 1992)
Andrew Brown (MScPl, 1991)
Mark Baker (BSc, 1986)
Ricardo Gomez-Insausti (PhD, 1996)
From September 2nd to the 13th, 2013, five UTAGA members and ten retired professors from Senior College at U of T completed a 2000 km GeoTrip around Iceland, an island of just over 100,000 sq. km., which is about the same size as Newfoundland without Labrador. The trip, which was organized by Jackie Peers, BA ’72, with assistance from Joe Whitney, had been discussed as a UTAGA project for a couple of years.

Prior to the trip, our group of latter-day Vikings was briefed by Tony Davis on the physical geography of the country and its many manifestations of tectonic activity and Jackie instructed us in the rigours we might experience near the Arctic Circle in September.

After arrival at Keflavik, Iceland’s international airport, we immediately took a short trip to two of the island’s most iconic geological features. First was the Blue Lagoon, where we luxuriated in the warm, healing waters of geothermal springs. Next was the small rift valley that marks one of the fracture lines where the North American Plate separates from the Eurasian Plate along the mid-Atlantic ridge by a process of tectonic convection that was first hypothesised by former U of T professor, Tuzo Wilson of Erindale College (now UTM).

After about an hour’s bus trip, we arrived in Reykjavik, Iceland’s capital. With a population of 270,000 and some 78% of the island’s total population, we saw a very modern city and the usual plethora of cars and expressways. On that first evening, we were fortunate to have an informal chat with Professor Martin Regal, Head of the English Department at the University of Iceland and translator of a recent Penguin edition of the Icelandic sagas. Martin talked not only about the sagas but also about many aspects of Icelandic culture including the way in which the sagas written from the 10th to the 13th century were still an important anchor of Icelandic identity for a very literate and literary population.

The following morning we walked to the city’s municipal office where we met with Senior Planner Haraldur Sigurdsson (MScPl ’93) for an informative talk about planning Reykjavik and its region. We then walked across the street to Hofi House, where Reagan and Gorbachev met in 1986 to negotiate an end to the Cold War. Some of us shook hands in the spot that the two presidents had occupied for media shots of this historic rapprochement.

The next morning our small group was joined by a larger, diverse and delightful group of 22 tourists from Europe, Australia and the US who accompanied us for most of the rest of our journey and added a great deal of zest to long bus rides!

Our journey proceeded around the island from Reykjavik in an anti-clockwise direction, returning to that city after eight days. Among the many waterfalls, volcanoes, hot springs and glaciers we visited, the most memorable were perhaps Geypir, where boiling water spouts some 30 metres into the air, and Vatnajökull, Europe’s largest ice-sheet, where we had an impromptu snowball fight on ice over a kilometer thick. We passed the now peaceful Eyjafjallajökull whose eruption under the ice cap in 2010 disrupted air traffic in Europe.

As we travelled from the south to the north side of the island, we crossed a vast and desolate volcanic plateau. In the late 19th century, the Canadian government encouraged impoverished farmers from the plateau to come to various parts of Canada, including the Kinmount area in Southern Ontario, where they were to be employed building a railway. Conditions found there on the edge of the Canadian Shield were little better than those they had left in Iceland and these immigrants were eventually resettled in Gimli, Manitoba.

One of the most interesting sites we visited on our way to Myvatn in northern Iceland was the Krafla power station, one of the oldest geothermal plants in the country. It receives superheated steam from some 33 boreholes, many of which are over 2 km deep. The steam is used both to generate electricity and is also piped through insulated pipelines to a number of local communities. At Krafla we learned that geothermal energy generates 75% of the electricity produced in Iceland and that it heats nearly 90% of all buildings in the country. We also learned that there are negative impacts...
of geothermal energy production. Borehole drilling may trigger earthquakes and the leakage and/or disposal of toxic wastewater into aquifers may pollute groundwater resources.

Continuing our travel along the northern coast, we passed through Akureyri, the northern capital and the country’s second largest city. Some of us went whale-watching while others visited the Botanic Gardens, which claims to be the world’s northernmost garden of its kind. En route from Akureyri to Reykjavik we stopped near Borganes, the home of the famed five-gait Icelandic horse whose fifth gait enables it to traverse the country’s mossy-covered, boulder-strewn landscape in a smooth ride. This steady gait was demonstrated to us at a horse farm where a rider held an unspilled glass of beer as he rode around the course. The beer was finally given to and downed by our former RALUT (Retired Academics and Librarians at U of T) president, Doug Creelman. We also visited an historic traditional village with houses constructed of peat and turf. Since they have a short life-span they have now been replaced throughout the country by concrete and other building materials except wood, which is in short supply. Nearby, we saw the site of Iceland’s first parliament, the Althing, founded in 960 A.D. and the oldest extant parliamentary system in the world.

On the penultimate day of our visit we were to have travelled to the Westman Islands but much to Jackie Peers’ disappointment, we were unable to do so because the near-hurricane force winds had forced cancellation of all ferries to the islands. Instead some of our group took a trip to the western extremity of Iceland where we saw fjords that had been Anglo-American navy bases during World War II and a glacier that had been the setting of Iceland’s Nobel Laureate Halidur Laxness’ novel, “Under the Glacier”.

On our return to Toronto, we reflected on how much we had learned about this remote and largely unknown country that had given the world its first parliamentary form of government and was home to a literary culture that had flourished for over a thousand years in a harsh and unforgiving environment.
The GeoTrip to Lake Erie’s North Shore was timed perfectly; the weather was beautiful, the trees were bursting with a spring bloom, and Long Point was alive with birds in the middle of their annual migration to the Boreal Forests. A full school bus of alumni eagerly left Toronto to explore what is often a forgotten part of Southern Ontario. Professor Emeritus Tony Davis led the trip, sharing his expertise and enthusiasm for the physical geography and ecology of South Western Ontario.

Davis made the journey as much a part of the trip as the destination, explaining the physical geography that led to the formation of the escarpment, the historical shoreline of Lake Iroquois, and the changing agriculture as we drove from clay based soils to sand based soils. As wind turbines came into view, he explained the changing energy industry in South Western Ontario, and the possibilities for fracking, a controversial method of removing natural gas from the crust that is used in the US but not currently practiced in Ontario. Our first stop was the Long Point Bird Observatory, the oldest organization of its type in North America. The observatory is run entirely by volunteers, and two of these volunteers gave the group a tour of the nets and cages that are the traps for birds, and the lab where the birds are banded and released. The volunteers skillfully handled the birds with a bander’s hold, where the bird is restrained by the legs, allowing them to move, but still without harming themselves. Although time was taken to allow the group to observe each bird and learn a little about the scientific methods, data collection, and data analysis, typically this is a speedy process; the birds are transported from the nets in cloth bags to the lab, where volunteers spend as little as 12 seconds identifying, measuring, weighing, and banding them before they are released, and the observatory can band up to 500 birds in a day.

After eating a lunch on the beach of Long Point, the bus drove the group to Backus Woods, one of the finest examples of Carolinian forests in Southern Ontario. Davis drew our attention to skunk cabbage, growing in swamps with giant, prehistoric-like leaves; tulip trees, which had large trunks that grew straight up for 30 meters, and only at this height extended branches into the canopy; stumps of chestnut trees, long ago wiped out in the wild by chestnut blight, a disease inadvertently introduced in 1904; the echo of a pileated woodpecker, the largest in North America; and a number of other specimens in the very diverse forest.

UTAGA organizes GeoTrips to help alumni stay engaged with the department and each other. There are many ways to stay in touch with the department and learn about future Alumni events, including our listserv, GeoPlan, and the website. Alumni of this group were very grateful to Tony Davis for volunteering to lead this trip—it would be hard to find a more knowledgeable or entertaining speaker for a journey through South Western Ontario.
Awards Night this past year took place on November 8, 2012, at Victoria College, Alumni Hall, and was well-attended by faculty, students, alumni, and friends of the Department, alike. This year, we had two winners of the Honorary President Award: Jenny Lass and Jane Macijauskas. Jenny Lass was actively volunteering with TUGS and GGAPSS even before joining UTAGA in 1999, co-ordinating social events and career presentations for undergraduates. Since then, she helped draft the new UTAGA constitution, produced the first recent graduate survey, and even served as UTAGA’s president from 2004 to 2005. Jane Macijauskas was also a very active volunteer in the Department while she was an undergraduate student. She organized many social and academic events for students and served as UTAGA’s Vice-President from 2002 to 2004, then President between 2004-2008.

The Distinguished Alumnus Award was presented to Douglas MacLeod, for his many years of teaching geography in both Canada and the United States. Along with his long list of awards which he had already won, he is best known for his continuous endeavours to improve the quality of education and learning experience for students.

This year’s Outstanding Service Awards winners were Kirsten Stein, Matt Armstrong, and Heather Inglis Baron, each of whom have consistently contributed their time and effort in promoting and co-ordinating the Planning Alumni Committee’s many events every year.

You can view a list of the students who won awards in the award winner’s page of the Alumni section of our new website.

UTAGA Awards 2012
Names of awards, and how winners are chosen

UTAGA Distinguished Alumni Award: This award is given to alumni of the Department and its programs, who have led a career of exceptional distinction in any field, in any industry (not necessarily in geography) and brought honour to the Department.

UTAGA Honorary President Award: This award is given to an individual who has made exceptional contributions to the development of the Department of Geography or its programs, and its alumni. He or she need not be a graduate of the Department or of the University, and can hold, or have held, a career in any field, such as business, education, politics, research, and self-employment.

Outstanding Service Awards: This award is presented annually to up to five individuals who have made outstanding voluntary contributions to the Department of Geography, its programs, its students or its alumni. Nominees could be alumni or friends, but NOT students currently enrolled with the Department. There may be multiple recipients in one year.

By Fenton Chin
All awards photos by Stefanie Steele
Previous Winners


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**Donating to the Department of Geography and Program in Planning Online**

Would you like to help create a better educational experience for our undergraduate and graduate students in geography and planning? Donations to the Department contribute to the establishment of awards and scholarships, but that's not all. Last year your donations supported field research costs for students, awards for students to present their research at conferences, and funding for networking events. Use the following link to donate online:

**https://donate.utoronto.ca/geography**

You can also donate by cheque, payable to the University of Toronto. Please indicate whether you would like to donate to the Friends of Geography or Friends of Planning, and send to:

**Cheque payable to the University of Toronto**

**Annual Fund Office, University of Toronto, 21 King’s College Circle, Toronto, ON M5S 3G3**

Contributions totaling $1,827 or more per calendar year qualify for recognition in the Presidents’ Circle. As part of U of T’s leadership giving recognition society, President’s Circle members enjoy attending a variety of special events. For more information, please visit www.giving.utoronto.ca/prescircle or call 416-978-3810. A tax receipt will be issued for all donations. Solicitation Code: 0570049474. Charitable Reg. BN 108162330-RR0001

A tax receipt will be issued for all donations.
PLANNING PROGRAM AWARDS

Matthew Hanson Scholarship in Planning
Lauren English
Beent Fairbairn
Stephanie Ireland
Robert Brandon Law
Sean Major
Harleen Panesar
Alan Tonks Planning Scholarship
Emma Cohlmeier
Lauren English
Sean Lee
Jielan Xa
Benjamin Sonshine Urban Planning Scholarship
Sarah Hubbs
CIP Student Award in Academic Excellence
Emily Wàll
Cities Centre Urban Planning Research Award
Inger Jenset
Mercedes Madani
Edie Yolles Award in Urban Planning
Anna Iannucci
Friends of Planning Graduate Scholarship for Innovation
Amy Bath
Melissa Behee
Harleen Panesar
Ian D. Macpherson Award
Natalie Langlois
LEA Consulting Ltd. Award in Planning and Transportation
Edwin (Wang Kei) Li
Mitchell Goldhar Award for Excellent Achievement in the Planning Program
Sean Lemon
Peter R. Walker Planning Fellowship
Sarah Corey
Michael Dean
Lisa Drury
Daniel Girard
John Grove-White
Sean Lee
Adriano Libaneco
Evan Roberts
Peter Walker Planning Scholarship
Noreen Khimani
Brittany O’Hagan
Harleen Panesar
Planning Alumni Graduate Scholarship
Joshua Mitchell
Alexander B Leman Memorial Award
Harleen Panesar
Thomas Luther Panton Scholarship
Zubairah Hussaini
Harleen Panesar

UNDERGRADUATE GEOGRAPHY AWARDS

Alpar Undergraduate Scholarship
Maria Velichko
Ben Shindman Scholarship in Geography
Sarah Oldenburger
Canadian Association of Geographers Award
Ian Frank
F. Kenneth Hare Undergraduate Scholarship in the Environment
Maria Bianchi
Edward Blake Scholarship in Earth Sciences
Tiang Ye Hui
Outstanding Performance Awards
GGR 201/203/205/206: Elli Papangelakis, Larissa Sage
GGR 222: Justyna Fabisiewicz
GGR 240: Nishi Kumar
Outstanding Undergraduate Research Award
Beata Opaliniska
The Sidney and Lucille Silver Scholarship
Nicholas Smith
Undergraduate Computer Applications Award
Sarah Oldenburger
The Geography Toronto Award
Nikki Ng
William G. Dean Scholarship in Geography
Field Research
Elli Papangelakis
Natalia Zdaniuk
John Horner Undergraduate Scholarship in Geography
Grace Arabian
Joyce Arabian
Stephanie Mah
Evelyn O’Rourke

GRADUATE GEOGRAPHY AWARDS

Graduate Anne McMaster Grant
Lia Frederiksen
Graduate Anne McMaster Award
Martin Danyluk
Donald F. Putnam Graduate Scholarship
Jennifer Shiller
Joseph A. May Scholarship
Michelle Berquist
Lara Pirkane
Brett Story
Yajun Sun
J.E.R. Ross Scholarship
Evan Castel
Yajun Sun
John Horner Graduate Scholarship in Geography
Nicole Latulippe
David Richardson
David Seitz
George Tatham / Geography Alumni Graduate Scholarship
Maria Mukhtar

Graduate Alpar Grant
Bryan Dale
Noreen Khimani
Katherine Perrott
Graduate Alpar Scholarship
Sarah Corey
Graduate Geography and Planning Student Society Endowed Bursary
Sheraz Khan
John D. Barnes Geodetic Sciences Fellowship
Vincent Cheng
Oscar J. Marshall Graduate Fellowship
Amy Mui
Maara Packalen
Cameron Proctor

EXTERNAL AWARDS

Donald F. Putnam/George Tatham/Ontario Graduate Scholarship in Geography
Jake Munroe
J.M. Tomczak/Ontario Graduate Scholarship in Geography
Lia Frederiksen
Michael Ralph Walsh/Ontario Graduate Scholarship in Geography
Eleanor Rae
Neptis Foundation/Ontario Graduate Scholarship in Geography
Nicole Latulippe
Ruth E. and Harry E. Carter Memorial Endowment Fund for Ontario Graduate Scholarships at the University of Toronto
Charles Levkoe
Urban Strategies / Ontario Graduate Scholarship in Planning
Natalie Langlois
Edward Sorbara—Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) / Ontario Graduate Scholarship
Joshua Mitchell
Neptis Foundation/Ontario Graduate Scholarship in Planning
Noreen Khimani
University of Toronto Planning Alumni / Ontario Graduate Scholarship
Sean Lemon
Ontario Graduate Scholarship
Taylor Binnington; Amy Buitenhuys
Vincent Cheng; Nathan Fidler
Leah Fusco; Daniel Girard
Kristine Haynes; Caitlin Henry
Lauren Kepiewicz; Elizabeth Lord
Rebecca Osolen; Mirej Vasic
Christopher Wellen; Leqian Yu
William G Dean Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarship in Science & Technology
Roger Phillips
ESRI Canada Queen Elizabeth II Graduate Scholarship in Science & Technology
Alexander Tong
PLANNING SIN CITY
Reflections from our Second Year Planning Field Trip to Las Vegas

By Lauren English
Photography by Lauren English, Michelle Berquist and Sean Lee

On September 4th, 2012 fourteen students of the MScPl Class of 2013 embarked on a four-day field trip to Las Vegas, Nevada accompanied by a very brave Dr. Paul Hess. This year’s field trip was student led. In Spring 2012 a group of students proposed Las Vegas to the Department after conducting a survey amongst their colleagues. With the Department’s approval and Dr. Paul Hess’ support a field trip committee of eight students was formed. Four months later we found ourselves on a plane destined for the bright lights of the Nevada desert excited for the journey and stories to unfold.

Truly a city that never sleeps, we arrived late at night to an abundance of cabs, slot machines, and palm trees. Groups of students found their way to the Flamingo Hotel, our home for the next five days. An historic landmark in itself, the Flamingo was the first casino-hotel resort to open in Las Vegas. With financing from the mob, the hotel opened in 1946. Changing hands a number of times this art deco hotel has remained a landmark with many infamous guests, most notably Hunter S. Thompson.

Everyone was up bright and early on day one for a whistle-stop tour of the Regional Transit Commission (RTC), and Zappos, a major employer in the retail and logistics sector. First we learned about the advanced technology at FAST (Freeway and Arterial System of Transportation), an arm of the RTC that monitors, tracks, and analyzes the flow of traffic through the Southern Nevada Region. Equipped with live traffic cameras displayed on a floor to ceiling screen, employees watch for accidents and delays on the Region’s robust highway system. Citizens can sign up for FAST’s notification system that will email and text drivers to notify them of any delays minimizing congestion. Next, we headed to the RTC’s brand new LEED platinum transit headquarters. We were pleasantly surprised to learn about the RTC’s sustainable transportation and transit initiatives. The RTC has a comprehensive cycling strategy that includes a network of bike lanes. As a pilot, they have a bike service centre, offering storage, repairs and showers, located in their building for use by anyone with a membership. In an attempt to battle the transit stigma suffered by Las Vegas residents the RTC
has made a tremendous effort to glamourize transit usage. It has invested in new buses and branding. The most memorable of all its transit brands was the introduction of the ‘Deuce’ bus, which runs along major tourist routes whisking visitors from the hotels of the Las Vegas Strip to outlet malls on the outskirts of the City to historic Fremont street, 24 hours a day. At $5 one-way, the Deuce recovers 150% of its costs, subsidizing much of the Region’s citizen-oriented transit. Every Deuce bus is a double-decker; RTC staff explained that it makes transit a memorable part of the tourist experience.

Near the downtown bus terminal one can find the Old City Hall, also known as the soon-to-be headquarters of Zappos, the multi-billion dollar online shoe and clothing retailer. In addition to City Hall, the owners of Zappos have purchased large tracts of land in Las Vegas’ currently derelict downtown core. We visited Zappos’ current headquarters in Henderson, NV to learn about their corporate culture, before heading downtown for a tour of their new development initiative near Fremont Street in Downtown Las Vegas. Embodying a similar culture to what I imagine Google or Apple would have, staff are encouraged to be as expressive and creative as possible; walls are covered in fake ivy, there’s a giant fish tank in the nap room, a cafeteria provides free meals, and no one (even the CEO) has their own office.

The high-octane, rainbow bright offices that will soon house Zappos make their surrounding neighborhood pale by comparison. The heart of Downtown is Fremont Street, the original Las Vegas tourist strip. Worn-down hotels, smoked filled casinos, pawnshops, strip clubs, and wedding chapels populate this once glitzy part of the City. As the new Vegas, the ‘Strip’, grew with more modern hotels and giant resorts in the late 80s, Fremont Street suffered. It is here, in the badly cracked asphalt, that Zappos will plant its creative seed. We spoke with the Downtown Project staff and learned how they plan to revitalize the neighborhood with their new corporate campus. Following their ‘think outside the box’ philosophy, Downtown Project team members explained that they felt no need to involve planners in their design of the area. Rather, staff opted to read a few key pieces of planning literature to inform their design decisions. Following our discussion we were taken on a brief tour of some initial signs of gentrification in the area; a record store that doubles as an indie coffee shop, underneath which a maze of creative entrepreneurial studios and communal libraries lie.

One cannot visit Vegas without talking about water. Thursday morning took us to the South Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) Treatment Facility on the edge of the Nevada-Arizona border, bounding the Lake Mead National Recreational Area. The view alone was worth the drive. Sitting on the foothills overlooking the Las Vegas Valley we could really take in the beauty of the desert and could conceptualize how out-of-place the Las Vegas strip is. We spent the entire morning with enthusiastic SNWA staff. We learned that the Las Vegas Valley shares its water source, Lake Mead, with the entire state of California. Identifying their thirsty neighbor as the culprit, SNWA staff informed us that Lake Mead’s water level lowers by as much as 2 feet a week. SNWA staff explained the many programs that have been initiated to encourage residents to use less water; including a strict no lawn policy and encouraging native desert garden planning. They’ve worked closely with the mega-resorts and golf courses to implement waste-water-recycling programs.

After a tour of the SNWA’s water treatment facility in the hot desert...
sun, we welcomed the cool air-conditioned environment of Las Vegas’ Planning Department. There, we spent the afternoon with the City’s Director of Planning, Flin Fagg. Fagg shared with us his department’s difficulties and successes in establishing a sense of community in such a boom and bust economy. The City has put a lot of effort into revitalizing the old Downtown core and creating more citizen-oriented spaces. By easing the bylaw application process for live music bars and restricting any gambling establishments on Fremont St. East, the City has created an attractive strip of cabarets, piano bars, and restaurants in an area once bordered up.

A group of us had the pleasure of spending our Saturday evening at ‘Don’t Tell Mama’s’, a local hot spot for live piano and one of the first establishments to take advantage of the new bylaw process on Fremont St. East. This was probably one of the highlights of my trip. It is said that Don’t Tell Mama’s is where Vegas entertainers go to be entertained – was it ever! For a City that prides itself on entertainment and service, this small off-strip establishment of singers just waiting to be ‘found’ was exponentially better than any Celine Dion-esque talent happening on the Strip.

We spent our last day of Field Trip activities with our most candid presenters. Friday morning we met Randi Reed, a wonderfully outspoken woman who managed the leasing of small retail spaces on the Las Vegas Strip. Reed gave us her insights into the Las Vegas development industry. Joking that hotels and shopping complexes are only built to be torn down again, Reed pointed out a number of structures yet to be completed after the 2008 economic downturn. Standing tall in the desert half clad with glazing, these abandoned construction projects are a physical testament of the vulnerability of the real estate market. As a Vegas resident herself, Reed gave us a taste of the community off the strip. Residents of the Las Vegas Valley make up 80% of the total population of Nevada. Most of the individuals are employed in tourism-based industries. Unlike many places in America, service jobs in Las Vegas are both highly respected and very well paid. Hotel valets can make as much as $80,000 a year. Casino dealers are heavily unionized, and in turn they benefit from substantial salaries and benefits. Reed remarked that the mob has largely left Las Vegas and the City is run more by off-shore global resort giants located in Dubai and Hong Kong than by anything else. Leaving us with a valuable piece of advice and the most memorable saying of our trip, Reed said, “Remember, Las Vegas was built on losers and risk takers, not winners”.

Las Vegas can be seen as the metaphoric epicenter of the American economy. When times were good, Las Vegas was the fastest growing city in America. Construction continued 24-hours a day just so the hotel industry could keep up with demand. The housing industry was built at a similar rate in response to the mass migration of workers moving to the area. Today, whole neighbourhoods stand empty and others are full only because their owners are trapped, waiting for their house to be worth at least enough to pay off the mortgage. For this reason, our decision to go to Las Vegas as our planning field trip destination was rather timely. We’ve seen firsthand how a community can come back after such a damaging economic blow. We’ve learned how planners can use their regulatory powers to build community-oriented spaces in a tourist driven town. The SNWA taught us how to manage a community water supply under drought conditions. We’ll be able to draw on lessons learned from the Deuce tourist bus line when planning for the City of Toronto’s LRT airport connection. Many of us headed home appreciating the ambition and drive of this young City, bringing back planning lessons and hopefully, a bit of luck.

The second year planning class would like to thank the generous donation from the Planning Alumni Committee that made this field trip possible. Your commitment to our educational, professional, and social development is much appreciated. Last but certainly not least; we would like to thank Dr. Paul Hess for joining us on journey to Las Vegas and supporting the student led field trip commitment. We are very thankful for your time and company.
GGR390: Student Field Trip to Sutton Quebec
BY KAJA MACDONALD

The department’s undergraduate course Field Methods in Physical Geography (GGR390) gave students the experience to apply their knowledge in a unique learning environment—the Appalachian Mountains of Sutton, Quebec. Professors Joe Desloges, and TAs Maara Packalen, Roger Phillips, and Jennifer Henshaw led the small group of budding geographers on a week-long excursion to the ‘Green Mountains’. The week unfolded with orientation activities that saw our weather stations put up on-site, the geology, geomorphology, hydrology, and ecology of our surrounding environment explored, and the tallest local peak—Round Top—tackled. The field campsite was located in the watershed of the Sutton River (a tributary of the Mississquoi River), and the site treated us to spectacular views and sunsets.

After spending a few days learning about the rich and complex geographical history of the Sutton area, students had the opportunity to break apart into groups and create their own research projects. They tested research questions and hypotheses out in the field, and cross-examined the collected data with the wealth of information and literature on this geographically complex region. Through hydrological projects they explored watershed features like steppe pools, stream discharge, and water chemistry; through projects of an ecologic perspective they observed vegetation edge effects along disturbed pathways on Round Top, as well as succession patterns of vegetation in canopy gaps; and through projects that looked at vegetation and soils they explored soil-forming factors along elevational gradients and soil catenas.

Students—complete with field gear, hiking shoes, notebooks, and walkie-talkies—executed these research projects throughout the week. They followed rivers, cored trees, measured and recorded samples, and tackled Round Top a few more times. They spent early mornings and late evenings making weather station observations, and eating hearty home-cooked meals at the base camp’s dining hall. Projects ran smoothly and successfully, despite the soggy weather (and a minor encounter with a bear!), and were continued into the weeks of the fall semester with lab work back on campus.

The course provided a great opportunity to explore the fundamentals of field methods and research skills, all in a beautiful setting. Students from a variety of backgrounds, but with a shared interest in physical geography, had the chance to learn from each other and broaden their skill sets and understanding of the environments that surround them. Many students considered GGR390 their favourite course and the most enriching experience they have had as an undergraduate at U of T, and would greatly recommend it for broadening and rounding out one’s educational experience.

TUGS Student Research Exhibit Shows the Creative Side of Academic Research
ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY ERIN KANG

University students often need some guidance in understanding how their studies may extend to life outside of school. The Toronto Undergraduate Geography Society (TUGS) recognizes this struggle and strives to provide events that help bridge the gap between what we learn in school and what we do afterwards. On March 20th and March 21st, students of Geography at the U of T St. George campus gathered in the Geography Lounge to examine the variety of works produced by their peers. Submissions ranged from GIS projects documenting the effects of the Tar Sands over time, to Vision Plans for Toronto’s transportation system, to cartography projects displaying the spatial effects of happiness and crime in cities.

“It’s these kind of events that give students the opportunity to learn about the different career paths you can follow with background in Geography and Planning. I like the social element that TUGS brings to academic events like field course seminars and workshops. And you guys always have candy!” one student energetically remarked.

“The visual element of this exhibit was key in organizing this exhibit,” said a TUGS representative. “We wanted to move away from the traditional idea that undergraduate life at U of T is defined by academic papers and research reports. Showcasing the ability to express creativity within academic life is important to students.”

Grad students, undergrad students, professors, and lecturers were welcome to this Exhibit, now in its 2nd year and due to continue in the 2013/2014 academic year. The Toronto Undergraduate Geography Students Society’s Exhibit continues to represent the University of Toronto’s geography student body, providing a valuable element to student life.

Demosthenis (Demos) Antonopoulos.

Emily Krause, VP of TUGS for 2012, and Marc Acton Fillion, President of TUGS for 2012/2013
I spent 21 years studying the origins and development of medical geography and geographical medicine. The difference between the two is in the noun. They are closely related but medical geography is geography and geographical medicine is medicine. I began with the premise that the oldest and best known work in medical geography is Hippocrates’ Air, Waters and Places. The scope of Disease and Geography is from the mid-6th century B.C. to the mid-20th century A.D. i.e. 2400 years. Since I studied documents in eight languages over such a long period that is the reason my study took so long. A key event in my evolution occurred at the Third International Symposium on Medical Geography hosted by Queen’s University, Kingston, in 1983. I presented a paper on my findings on early sources written in Chinese, Sanskrit, Greek and Latin. At the luncheon that followed I was seated with a famous American medical geographer noted for his work on the geography of cancer. I told him about my four point plan and that I hoped to start soon on the applied research. He stunned me by saying “Why? Stay with the historical studies you are doing. No one is doing this type of research. You are making a huge contribution.” So with this encouragement from such an eminent man, I spent the next twenty years studying and analysing the forgotten historical record. I just loved what I was doing. How fortunate can a professor be?

I notice that both Disease and Geography: The History of an Idea and Ernest Ilborton Military Artist and Adventure Story Illustrator, are the first of that topic in each respective field. Is that something you keep in mind when you are writing or brainstorming ideas?

Not really. The basis for my interest in the history of medical geography can be traced directly backed to my undergraduate days at the U of T and the influence of Professor George Tatham. He enthralled me with his course on Geographical Thought. I have always had an interest in history and in fact, as a freshman, I planned to focus on that subject. However in my first year I took an introduction to geography course by Professor J. H. Richards and that changed my life. I was enraptured by what he taught and have been a disciple of geography ever since. Now you will be surprised by my interest in Ilborton. I make and paint model soldiers as a hobby so I am always searching for information about uniforms. There is a wonderful collection of postcards, most of which were painted by Ernest Ibbetson. When I went to military museums in London to find information about him, I discovered they knew almost nothing about Ibbetson and his great contributions. I can’t get into how I found out about him in this article but my book received the British Desmond Chamberlain Cup for the best research in 2009.

Your newest book (One Family’s Africa) is obviously a passion project of yours, detailing your family’s experiences in Africa. Did your family have an integral role in writing the book or was this a solo project?

Based on our experiences of living in Ghana, I hoped that someday I would write a book about our life in the tropics. Initially I thought I would write a chapter and then my wife, Kathleen, would write about her experiences and perspective. However that was easier said than done. She wanted me to do the writing because she knew I loved to write books. But Kathleen played a major role because she is a great proofreader and her knowledge of grammar far surpasses mine. Some of your readers will wonder how we could write a book in 2012 about events that took place from 1965 to 1967. From the beginning, we realized that it would be a life-changing experience so we asked our parents to keep the letters that we regularly wrote to them. I have always been a photographer so I took many black and white photos, hundreds of colour 35 mm slides and sent audio tapes back to Canada. In addition, we had our own vivid memories of our experiences. In the course of our two years I was able to travel widely: Libya and the Sahara; French-speaking West Africa on the road to Timbuktu; photo safaris in East Africa; travels in Rhodesia and the Republic of South Africa. In all in 665 days I circled the great continent. It was a geographer’s dream.

What are some of the memories that you will always keep with you from that life experience? Do you now view Canada or the world differently?

Living and travelling in Africa for two years fundamentally changed our lives. It is unlikely that I would have a PhD or would have become a university professor if we had not gone to Ghana. When we returned home I had an insatiable desire to learn more about Africa so I searched for a North American university that had strong Geography and African Studies programs. The closest institution was Michigan State in East Lansing. As fortune would have it, University Professor John Hunter was there and as I have already told you, he had a great impact on me becoming interested in medical geography. We had both had experience in Ghana.

Unexpectedly, when we returned home we had cultural shock at the amount of goods in the stores and realized how fortunate we are in Canada. We expected to have cultural shock going to Africa but there was also physical shock. We had four very young children and had to protect them from poisonous snakes, of which there were many types, as well as pythons. Of course malaria and other tropical diseases were a concern and we were afflicted with them as I outline in our book. When we first arrived, the climate was hard on our bodies. Teaching at the College presented problems but the most significant thing was how grateful the students were. Teaching at the College presented problems but the most significant thing was how grateful the students were. Teaching at the College presented problems but the most significant thing was how grateful the students were.

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