A Time of Transition

Mike Bovis  Head, Department of Geography

Since the time of writing, I have concluded my three-year term as head of Geography and handed over the reins to my very capable successor, Graeme Wynn. Time has sped by all too quickly for me, and although much has been accomplished there is – as always – much unfinished business. The past year has been a hectic one marked by accomplishment and positive change, but also, unfortunately, by loss.

Now is a sad time for the department on account of the recent death of our colleague, Professor Emeritus Walter Hardwick. Walter served on our faculty from 1960 until his retirement in 1997. He was noted for his contributions to urban and political geography, and over a 30-year period was extremely influential in shaping both educational policy in BC and the trajectory of urban planning and development in Vancouver.

Walter thus made a lasting and positive contribution to life in this province, and to the city he loved so dearly. He also demonstrated the continuing relevance of geographical research to the solution of pressing urban problems. Details of Walter’s life and many contributions may be found at: www.library.ubc.ca/archives/u_arch/hardwick.html#bio

Three scholarships have been created – the Walter G. Hardwick Scholarships in Urban Studies – endowed by Walter’s family in his honour. Those wishing to donate to this scholarship fund should contact Mr. Dan Worsley at the UBC Development Office.

Earlier this year we were also saddened by the loss of one of our graduate students, Jared Stanley, who died on a skiing trip in the Mount Seymour Park area in January. Jared was in the first year of his PhD program, specializing in snow avalanche research. He died doing what he loved best – travelling and just being in the mountains.

In memory of Jared, the Department and Jared’s family have established the Jared Stanley Memorial Scholarship, to be awarded annually to a graduate student in Geography whose thesis involves field-based mountain research. Details may be found at: www.geog.ubc.ca/department/jared.html

Awards, Prizes, and Accolades

The past year has been yet another outstanding one, with many faculty members winning major awards and prizes for their scholastic work. Most notable is Professor Tim Oke, who has added to his already impressive list of awards an honorary degree (Doctor Honoris Causa) from the University of Łódź (pronounced “Wudż”) in Poland. Tim is also the first recipient of the Luke Howard Award from the International Association of Urban Climate, and to cap an incredible year was elected as recipient of the prestigious Massey Medal of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. The Medal is awarded to an outstanding individual who has made exemplary contributions to advancing...
our understanding of the Geography of Canada. It was Tim’s work on urban and near-surface climates that received special recognition. The citation may be found at: www.rcgs.org/rcgs/awards/awards_massey05.asp

Previous recipients of the medal from our department are Cole Harris, Ross Mackay, and J. Lewis Robinson. Congratulations, Tim, on all your outstanding awards!

We also congratulate the following: John Chapman received an honorary degree from UNBC, last fall, in recognition of his role in helping establish this new university campus … Lew Robinson, founding Head of Geography, was honoured when the Western Division of the CAG renamed its Certificate of Merit as the J. L. Robinson Award for Meritorious Service … Sally Hermansen has been awarded academic tenure and promoted to Senior Instructor … Karen Bakker and Juanita Sundberg are recipients of the Glenda Laws Award of the AAG for research on issues related to social justice and social policy … Matthew Evenden won a Clio Award from the Canadian Historical Association for his 2004 book: Fish vs. Power: An Environmental History of the Fraser River (Cambridge UP) … Brett Eaton received a Best Paper of the Year award from the British Geomorphological Research Group … Lori Daniels is recipient of the Henry C. Cowles Award from the AAG Biogeography Specialty Group … David Ley was selected for a Distinguished Scholar of Ethnic Geography Award from the AAG … Trevor Barnes is Distinguished Visiting Professor, National University of Singapore … Mike Church is Visiting Professor, 2004-07, at the University of Durham … Gerry Pratt delivered this year’s Antipode Lecture, a centrepiece at the AAG meeting in Denver … Jim Glassman and Philippe LeBillon were both recipients of Early Scholar awards from the UBC Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies (PWIAS) … Olav Slaymaker has been appointed Distinguished Scholar in Residence at PWIAS, where he is working on a book, The Cryosphere and Global Environmental Change … Mike Church and Elvin Wyly were voted Professors of the Year by our undergraduates at this year’s GeoGala … Sally Hermansen and I were listed in the Popular Profs section of the Maclean’s Guide to Canadian Universities … Derek Gregory’s latest book The Colonial Present (Blackwell, 2004) was described as: “…a ‘must read’ for all those concerned for peace and justice in our time” by Neil Smith of the Los Angeles Times … our students, won several awards at this year’s AAG Annual Meeting in Denver; Joanna Long and Charlotte Humphries (an undergraduate), both recipients of Glenda Laws student paper awards; Kathy Furlong, for a student paper award from the AAG European Specialty Group; and Pablo Mendez, for a student paper award from the AAG Latin American Specialty Group.

Undergraduate Programs
We are pleased to report that a substantial number of changes to both our BA and BSc curricula have been voted through successfully. Significant changes include the creation of a second-year GIS course and the creation of a Geography 250 course on Cities. Another important curricular event this year was the merger of UBC Vancouver with UBC Okanagan (AKA Martha’s Vineyard). As part of this academic merger, we successfully ‘aligned’ 21 Geography courses between the two campuses.

Bricks, Mortarboards, and other Events
December 31, 2004, saw the retirement of Dr. Ken Denike after more than 30 years of service. Ken’s many contributions to UBC, the city, and the province were honoured during a joint Bovis-Denike retirement bash on June 17. Ken – we all wish you well!

This academic year will see the return of Trevor Barnes and David Edgington from sabbatical leave, and the departure of physical geographers Ian McKendry and Dan Moore on well-earned study leave. Geraldine Pratt will be replacing Ian as our new Graduate Chair; Karen Bakker will be spending some time in 2005-‘06 developing a new program on Water Governance in the Institute for Resources, Environment, and Sustainability; and Juanita Sundberg will be Scholar in Residence at the Centre for Women’s Studies and Gender Relations.

Our building is presently undergoing a substantial and long-overdue renovation to classrooms, and we are also completing a major upgrade to our computer labs. This is very positive news. By this fall, we should have a state-of-the-art set of teaching facilities, but let’s hope they get everything back together in time for start of classes in September! If it all works out I’ll be praised, but if they don’t get it finished by September, then I’ll be The Big Goat. Oh, the joys of being head!
At the beginning of the 2004-2005 year, GSA was faced with a big membership challenge after the graduation of all but a handful of club members from the previous year. Thanks to a big recruitment drive, within a few weeks we had most of our executive in place, including the extremely important positions of social co-ordinators.

We started the season with bzzr gardens, featuring both traditional themes (Halloween, St. Patty’s Day, Easter) and some new ones, some of which went over well (Casino Night) and some of which didn’t (Wyne & Cheese).

We also splurged and bought a high-tech, state-of-the-art...hibachi, with which we hosted some ad-hoc Friday afternoon barbeques, including a highly memorable one that we held in four inches of snow (a little cold on the toes but surprisingly fun!)

We did not have as many camping and hiking trips as we would have liked, partly because as soon as we organized a trip to Mount St. Helen’s, the volcano decided to erupt! But we did organize a hike up to Lynn Creek Headwaters in the fall, the usual Silver Star weekend ski trip, as well as the annual field trip.

Sports-wise, we sent a GSA team to major events, such as the Day of the Longboat, Globefest, and Rainfest. Two of our members also made it to the finals of the Storm the Wall contest on campus.

On the academic side, thanks to David Ley we reinstated a lunchtime information series about graduate school programs in the fall. We held four sessions, covering physical and human geography, GIS, and planning.

This year, our biggest legacy was a new fridge for the lounge, which was sponsored by a SUS club grant. Another highlight was the GSA’s tsunami relief effort: a four-day bake raised $265 for Oxfam and the proceeds from this year’s Class Act graduate donation campaign are going to add to the funds available for alumni scholarships for undergraduates.

We finished off the year with the annual GeoGala on April 7, a good send-off for retiring department head Mike Bovis.

The GSA have invested in a state-of-the-art hibachi

**Geography Student Association**

*A year of sport, fundraising, beer and barbecues in the snow*

A significant project in 2004 was the development of E-Flora BC, an electronic atlas of the plants of British Columbia (http://eflora.bc.ca). Spearheaded and compiled by Brian Klinkenberg, the website is a collaborative project driven by data from Canada’s provincial and national museums, and the UBC Herbarium. It documents the distribution, biogeography and ecology of all BC plant species, and incorporates the entire textual content from the eight volume *Illustrated Flora of BC* (Doublas et al.) as dynamic E-atlas pages.

The website features extensive spatial statistical analysis of the ecology of more than 2000 provincial species, illustrated by maps synthesized from a variety of data sources. The information is based on more than 800,000 records obtained from in excess of 20,000 plot samples taken across the province over two decades.

As well as providing a window into the world of biogeography, E-Flora BC is also a substantial research platform for future projects. The maps and ecological data, for example, will inform research into the distributional changes of species in the face of climate change, including shifts in floristic zones. A subset of the information will be useful in monitoring range changes for invasive species as they sweep across the landscape.

Detailed biogeographic overlay maps, GIS internet mapping, and spatial statistics provide comprehensive illustration for students in GIS, ecology, and conservation biology. A user can learn about species distribution in Washington State and elsewhere, and determine the genetics of the species.

Most importantly, E-Flora BC is an excellent example of collaborative work by provincial and federal governments, UBC scientists, and botanists throughout this province and beyond. It is a successful UBC Geography outreach project that has facilitated the development of a virtual botanical community in BC.
Geography Student Association Annual Field Trip

Sunshine Coast Weekend (March 5-6, 2005)

This eventful excursion began in the early hours of March 5 with twelve students packing into the Geography van (plus two extra vehicles) and setting off to catch the 9:20 AM ferry from Horseshoe Bay bound for Langdale. After taking note of the various topographical area maps on the ferry, we disembarked and meandered along the scenic waterfront of Gibsons, including a stop at Bonniebrook Beach.

At Cliff Gilker Regional Park we spent an hour walking through the exemplary old-growth temperate rainforest. The multitude of creeks in the area provided an archetypical example of Mt. Elphinstone ‘cloud’ forest, of which Cliff Gilker Park forms a small part.

We ate lunch at the historic Gumboot Garden Café in Roberts Creek, the first European structure in the area. We continued on to Pender Harbour, where we undertook the short but steep climb of Mt. Daniel to take in the expansive vistas of Pender Harbor. We discussed the importance of the site to the Native Shishal Nation before making our way back down.

We then drove to our accommodation at Lowe’s Resort, where we cooked and ate dinner. The evening activities included campfire singing, card games, and attending the local pub to watch an 80’s cover band pump out various favorites. Fun was had by all, and perhaps too much fun by some.

The next morning those of us in proper condition undertook the sister hike to Mt. Daniel: Pender Hill. Although not as high as Mt. Daniel, Pender Hill offers unobstructed 360 degree views of the Pender area, Georgia Strait, and Texada and Lasqueti Islands. Those in attendance made excellent use of their cameras to capture the beautiful morning in the Pender Harbour landscape.

Later on, the group scrambled to get to the Skookumchuk Narrows to view the rapids in their maximum flood state. After a 20-minute walk through more spectacular old-growth forest, we arrived at the rapids and watched them at their most tumultuous. We noted the amazing array of sea life in the adjacent tidal pools and discussed the magnitude of the transformation we where witnessing before making our way back to the vehicles. We rushed to catch the 6:30 pm ferry, and returned once more to our lives in Vancouver!
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Donations
Since the last newsletter, we’ve received $795 in donations towards production and mailing costs. The last issue cost $3,443 (the difference comes from Department’s operating budget). Donations to the Newsletter Operating Account are now tax deductible, and donors will receive tax receipts. We also received $440 towards the Endowment Fund and $10,595 towards the Scholarship Fund. Thanks so very much to all of you who supported these Funds and the Geogramme.

News from the Field

Trevor Barnes’ Study Leave
I feel that much of my sabbatical so far has been spent in planes, trains, and cars. I was in residence (well, sort of) at the National University of Singapore from the beginning of September to the end of December (2004). I was writing up my research on the Office of Strategic Services (forerunner of the CIA) and its relation to geography’s quantitative revolution. We made lots of trips while we were there, however, including Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, China, and India. As a result, all the stereotypes I held, especially about China, fell by the wayside. I felt I had been so naive. Since the New Year, I was also in New Zealand and Australia, comparing their forest industries with BC’s. We have some things to learn – especially from New Zealand.

Derek Gregory’s travels and research
Since the summer publication of The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, I’ve continued to work on Arab cities under military occupation. In the fall of 2004 I gave the Gordon Manley Lecture on this theme at Royal Holloway College, University of London, and then continued on to Israel and occupied Palestine for a series of meetings and presentations.

The main event was a joint Israeli-Palestinian conference, Cities in Collision, which took place in East Jerusalem, but this was preceded by an installation at an art gallery in Tel Aviv organised by a group of radical German and Israeli architects. The object was to bring the reality of the occupation of Gaza and the West Bank into the very centre of the Israeli capital. It took the form of a giant installation of photographs, maps, and video clips, together with a series of public events - which involved making several presentations and having an extraordinary debate with an IDF general in charge of urban warfare.

From East Jerusalem we toured the Green Line, a number of illegal Israeli settlements built in the West Bank, and the monstrous “wall” that snakes its way across the landscape, dividing Palestinians from Palestinians. Looking out over this landscape, with its illegal settlements perched on the hilltops; an Israeli-only bypass road cutting across the countryside and disappearing into a tunnel beneath a Palestinian village; with olive groves uprooted by Israeli bulldozers below me; and ever-present on the horizon, the shimmering concrete and steel line of the advancing wall, I was struck by the way in which the landscape was saturated with violence long before I saw a tank or a soldier or a checkpoint.

I eventually passed through the checkpoints to give a lecture in Ramallah at a roundtable on Urbanism and Occupation, organised by the Palestinian Diaspora and Refugee Centre. It was an extraordinary experience, and since my return to Vancouver I’ve thrown myself into writing and public speaking about this (and other!) occupations with renewed energy.

Dr. Ian McKendry Brings Lidar to UBC
As part of his ongoing research on the transport of dust and pollutants from Asia to North America, Dr. Ian McKendry is hosting a mobile Lidar facility at Totem

Geography Alumni Group
The department is committed to providing stronger ties with geography alumni and this year will be sponsoring activities such as field trips, speaker events, and wine & Cheese evenings.

If you are interested in attending these sessions or becoming more involved, please send a note to Graeme Wynn: head@geog.ubc.ca or Sally Hermansen: sallyh@geog.ubc.ca

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Professional Development Seminars. Although the seminars are aimed at doctoral students, the range of topics – from publications and the job market to mentoring, supervision and teaching strategies – ensured that there was something for everyone. Many thanks to Ian McKendry for organizing the programme and to the faculty who gave up their time to take part.

It has also been a year of hellos and goodbyes. Over the summer we said goodbye to our Graduate Secretary, Mary Luk, who is now happily ensconced in the awards department at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and hello to her replacement, Junnie Cheung. In June we said goodbye to Mike Bovis, who is retiring. With Mike’s departure, not only do we lose a wonderful advocate of graduate student issues, but also our source of seemingly endless trivia.

Our saddest goodbye, however, was to Jared Stanley, a fellow graduate student in Geography and Ocean Sciences, who died during a back-country skiing accident in January. Although he had only been with us for a term, Jared had already made his mark in the department and in our lives. He is greatly missed. More than $450 was raised at Jared’s memorial, held in Thea’s Lounge on January 24, and this has been donated to the North Shore Mountain Rescue.
Field, UBC (in collaboration with Dr. Kevin Strawbridge of Environment Canada). The Lidar (light detection and ranging) is an expensive instrument that, much like a radar, is housed in a large recreational vehicle and operates on the principle that a laser beam interacts with particles in the atmosphere. Some of the laser light is scattered back to the instrument by layers of particles in the atmosphere. This backscattered light is captured and measured. As with a sonar on the ocean, a profile of backscatter is built up that shows the elevation and intensity of layers of pollution.

This state-of-the-art system is operated by Environment Canada’s Centre for Atmospheric Research Experiments (CARE) in Ontario and is currently on a cross-country research trip involving measurements at Golden, UBC, Saturna Island and Whistler. The instrument can “see” up to 12km above the surface, and its visit coincides with the season of peak dust and pollutant transport from Asia. On its first day of operation, the instrument captured a moderate event in which dust emanating from the Gobi desert was transported over BC at a height of about 2-3km above sea level.

Study on the Profile of Absolute and Relative Homelessness Among Immigrants, Refugees, and Refugee Claimants in the GVRD.

This research is a collaboration between MOSAIC and the Department. The team consists of UBC’s Dr. Daniel Hiebert and grad students Kathy Sherrell and Silvia d’Addario, and Sherman Chan who is Director of Settlement Services Department for MOSAIC.

The purpose is to develop a better understanding of the position of immigrants, refugees, and refugee claimants in Greater Vancouver’s housing system.

Research Highlights

Three research goals have been identified: i) Providing a basic estimate of the number of immigrants, refugees, and refugee claimants experiencing relative or absolute homelessness in GVRD. ii) Understanding the degree to which these communities provide in-group assistance to homeless individuals and families. iii) Understanding the ways that service organizations (NGOs) provide assistance to homeless individuals and families.

The research is an evidence-based, multiple points of contact study that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Where are They Now?

1950’s Mary Lou Crear, BA’50, published Sketchbook of the Rocky Mountains and Westcoast Sketchbook.

1960’s Greg Halsey-Brandt BA’65, MA’69 became an urban planner, Mayor of Richmond and until this May was the MLA for Richmond Centre … Wayne Kilvert BA’61, BEd ’65 is a grade 5 teacher in Nanaimo … Hart Pförtmüller BA’67 has begun a new career as a partner with Creative Training Solutions after spending three decades in the financial services field. He and wife Kirsten have four children and three grandchildren. Both are avid gardeners and outdoor lovers, and enjoy living in Beach Grove (Tsawwassen) as well as their cottage in Halfmoon Bay on the Sunshine Coast …

Robert Spooner BA’69, is a research and development consultant for Peter Archer and Associates in Barrie, Ontario … Brett McGillivray BA’67, MA’73 ilives in Roberts Creek on the Sunshine Coast and commutes to Capilano College where he is head of the Department of Geography. He has also been writing books on the Geography of BC and Canada: The Geography of British Columbia: People and Landscapes in Transition, and Canada: A Nation of Regions will likely be published this year.

1970’s Nelson Riis MA’70, formally Head of Geography at Cariboo University College, then MP for Kamloops for 20 years, is living in Ottawa. He founded Canadian Rockport Homes, and builds affordable social housing in Chile, Mexico, E. Europe, Africa and soon in China and India … Richard Lyle BA’72 is with the BC Golf Assoc … Michael Throne BA’75 is a chartered financial planner in Vancouver … Dennis Watson MA’71 retired from the federal government in 1994 where he was with Indian and Northern Affairs, spending four years in the Yukon as Director General, Northern Affairs.

1980’s Colleen (Hardwick) Nystedt BA’83 produced her first independent feature film in 1992, and founded New City Group, a Vancouver based film company (“everything relates to Geography…” …) …George Yu BA’85 has an architectural practice in LA and teaches at the Southern California Institute of Architecture; his firm has been working in China and he recently gave a lecture at UBC’s Green College.

1990’s Jennifer Aldrick BA’94 is a writer and exhibit developer for native centres, museums and interpretative centres (Aldrich Pears Associates) … Carrie Brown BSc’93, PGeo is an Environmental Coordinator with the Vancou-
Tarek Haji, BA’92, MBA’01, has moved back to Vancouver with his family (he has a 17-month old son) as Western Canada Development Manager for Kumon. Shawn McMahon, BA’91 is International Sales Account Manager for CN Rail (Intermodal), based in Halifax. Victoria (Misevich) Parhar, BA’93 is a Japanese-speaking flight attendant currently on maternity leave with twin girls. Nam Phan, BA’96 is a software engineer for Enterra Systems in N. Vancouver. Chelsea McPeake, BA’96 is Artistic Coordinator of the Playhouse Theatre Company, where she works with another alumnus, Harry Hertscheg, who is Manager of the Playhouse International Wine Festival. Vivien Lee, BA’99, a human resources assistant for the Canada Revenue Agency, is on educational leave to learn French; she will move to Quebec for a one year assignment and can’t wait to explore and experience Quebec’s physical Geography. Nadim Kara, BA’99 is a social planner in the City of Vancouver’s Social Planning Department working with Vancouver’s youth community to strengthen support available to youth from diverse backgrounds.

2000’s Dan Lerer, BA’00 works for a GIS company, Tetrad, in business development, sales and account management. He helps clients solve their geographical problems with mapping and demographics using Tetrad software. After graduating Matt Ward, BA’00 worked for Goldman Sachs in NYC, then worked in Japan as a high school teacher teaching ESL and social studies in English. Anglea Lucas, BA’01 is currently working on her Masters in Environmental Design at the University of Calgary. Julia MacKenzie, BA’01 is working at SFU on her MA in Geography on sustainability and the Olympics. Karen Lund, BSc’02 completed an MSc at York University and is now an environmental consultant. Kyle MacDonald, BA’03 is a writer living in Montreal and working on a project called Going Postal 3000, which involves taking as many postcards as possible to the Galapagos Islands in Ecuador where he will “set them free” in a message-in-a-bottle-like project. (It was easy to find Ecuador on a map with all his map-reading skills.) Lilina Lysenko, BA’03 is completing her second year of the Andrew R. Thompson Natural Resource Law program at UBC (so geography-related). Tiffany Gieselman, BA’03 graduated from the UBC Elem. Ed. program in August and is teaching on Bowen Island. Taryn Eyton, BA’04 will be attending law school in the fall. Sonia Sizto, BA’04 is working for the Pharmacoeconomics Department of the Canadian HIV Trials Network at St. Paul’s Hospital where she is maintaining the AIDS ward database. Tejas Ewing, BA’04 was featured with Dr. Graeme Wynn in College Days, College Nights, a documentary on student university life. Maija Heimo, PhD’05 teaches introductory human geography and cultural geography at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops where she is thrilled by the landscapes and air as they are reminiscent of those in Finnish Lapland, where she lived before moving to Canada. This summer she will travel to Lapland to start a new study with the indigenous Sami, and to create student exchange with the University of Oulu.