

"If we build it, they will come" . . . students and professors . . .

The Tale of Our Geography Facilities

by John Ryan

How audacious for a 4-person Geography Department back in 1967 to put forward a plan for the acquisition of 1 ¾ floors of the newly proposed Lockhart Hall on the assumption that within 7 years we would become a 12-person department with students to match!

But that is exactly what Bill Bell, Tony Kuz, Jim Richtik and I proposed – from our position of having one room in the basement of Manitoba Hall assigned to us for a lab. As it turned out, most of what we put forward materialized. Instead of getting the full amount of space in Lockhart Hall, we got it later by expanding into Centennial Hall. And the extra faculty members materialized as well, along with entirely new courses and programs.

At first our proposal was met with hoots of derision by other departments and by members of the administration. Indeed, for a while we were laughingly referred to as the proponents of a would-be "Geography Empire." However, our plans were based, first, on the factual evidence of the expansion of geography courses in high schools and the subsequent need for teachers in this field, and, second, on the necessity of specialized labs and facilities for the

expanding broad range of courses in physical geography.

To help determine our space requirements for a 12-person department, we managed to obtain detailed descriptions of geography facilities at Waterloo, Carleton and York – with a comparable number of faculty members. During the fall of 1967, Bill, Tony, Jim and I spent countless hours . . . days, weeks . . . drawing up our proposal – we got along splendidly and just had continuous meetings, interrupted now and then by lectures!

On the basis of our deliberations, as the Department Chair, I drew up the blueprints for our offices, lecture rooms, seminar rooms, and all the various labs – including the exact location of desks, tables, benches and the various types of equipment. Our report which included the full rationale for our space requirements, plus 2 pages of blueprints, totalled 28 pages. When this was submitted to the administration, our proposal was then taken seriously – especially since no other department submitted anything of the kind, much to their later regret.

At this time we had advertized for a geomorphologist, and to our delight in early 1968 we received an application from Andy Lockery who was completing his Ph.D. in that field at the University of Durham. Bill Bell immediately realized our incredible good fortune and informed us, later confirmed by Andy, that Durham had the finest physical geography facilities in the world – financed with almost limitless funds from sheiks in the Middle East, in return for having their young men get degrees from Durham in physical geography.

Andy accepted our offer, with the assurance that he would get the kinds of labs that he wanted. Moreover, he sent us the Durham blueprints of the labs that he thought we would need. Bill and I then hurriedly revised our plans and incorporated the Durham designs. Unfortunately, administration

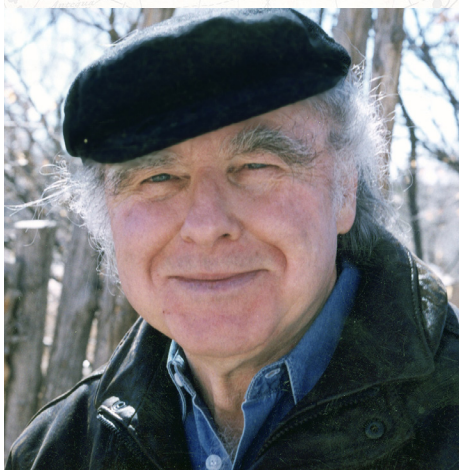
insisted on reducing the size of some rooms and meddled with our overall plan. Nevertheless, we wound up with one of the finest physical geography facilities in Canada, at least at that time. In fact, some years later, the Chair of McGill's Geography Department came to visit us to inspect our facilities, and later some of their new facilities were based on ours.

The way we acquired our map library is a little story all in itself. Initially we wanted a room 30' x 35' with a reinforced floor to withstand the weight of the map cabinets. Along with other labs, this had been delayed until the Centennial Hall expansion. After many meeting and heated debates, one of the architects provided a solution for where to locate our map library. On the 6th floor in Centennial Hall there were two long corridors between steel structural trusses that were going to be waste space . . . he wondered if we could place the map cabinets along these corridors. This was an ideal solution! Since it would have been waste space it was not charged to our space allocation. So that is how we acquired our map library.

Since all this took place more than 40 years ago, in all likelihood most of the present faculty members would be unaware of how the structure and the facilities of the Geography Department came into being . . . so for the sake of the record it's time the tale was told.

In January 1968 John Ryan, along with departmental colleagues Bill Bell, Tony Kuz and Jim Richtik, submitted their proposal to the administration outlining the space requirements for the Department of Geography. The proposal, titled "Brief on Departmental Development and Space Requirements", is available on the Department's web site. Anyone interested in viewing the proposal can access it at:

geography.uwinnipeg.ca/geo-proposal.pdf



John Ryan taught Geography at the University of Winnipeg from 1964-1995. He lives in Winnipeg with his three compañeros: Pantera, Leo and El Tigre.

Faculty Profile: Bill Buhay

by Rebecca Wilks

Bill Buhay entered McMaster University with the intent of becoming a biologist, but after being assigned thirty pages of reading in his first Biology lecture he quickly discovered that the discipline wasn't for him.

Instead, he decided to major in Geology, his favorite course at the time. About halfway through his undergrad Bill realized he wanted to become a full-fledged academic and pursue grad school, claiming he was "too lazy to do anything else". After receiving his Masters in Geophysics, Bill worked for two years as a research associate at McMaster University before going back to school to obtain his PhD in Geochemistry at the University of Waterloo.

As a post doc Bill moved around, heading from the GSF Institute for Hydrology in Munich to the Godwin Lab at Cambridge to finally the Ruhr-Universität in Bochum, Germany. He says he looks back fondly on these times, referring to himself as an "isotopes for hire kind of guy".

Bill has done a number of different projects using isotope analysis, including reconstructing paleoclimatic events, such as southern Manitoba's 1000-year drought history, West Hawk Lake's detachment from Lake Agassiz, paleo lakewater thermometry in Minnesota, and spruce bud worm disease in Quebec's northern boreal forest.

Currently, Bill has a few ongoing projects. One of them right here in Manitoba is looking at the effects of sewage effluent on the water chemistry and quality of Dead Horse Creek in Winkler, Manitoba. Another project Bill has been working on is the reconstruction of paleo diets from three ancient burial sites in western Cuba.

Bill's been "enlightening minds" at the University of Winnipeg for the past twelve years, but I urge readers to take this assessment with a grain of salt seeing as when asked how his treasured Toronto Maple Leafs will fair this year he replied, "I'm thinking cup."



Message from the Chair

This year, The Department of Geography was highly active and involved in many new challenges. We welcomed two new faculty members, Gina Sylvestre



and Matt Dyce, who have invigorated our teaching and research in health and historical geography. In the fall, the Churchill Field Course was a huge success and dominated the semester with many presentations and good press coverage. The Department has also upgraded some of its lab equipment, licensing and software for the computer lab, Geology lab and GeoLEAD. We continue to grow in terms of the Geography program with the Department in the process of developing a Minor; finalizing a five (5) year strategic plan that has a vision for the future; develop more online courses and short geo-podcasts; and planning more fieldtrips. In the last two years, the Department has also established a stronger presence in social media with Facebook, Twitter, and new material on the Departmental television (main lobby).

Last but not least, Geography is proud to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Department. Over the last 60 years, the Department of Geography was and continues to be one of the major contributors to the instruction, education, formation, research and diffusion of geographical knowledge for local, regional and global issues. The Department research, by faculty members and students, ranges from flood, soil and vegetation applications to city planning, ethnic and migration studies. Over the last 60 years, the Department has instructed thousands of students and we are very proud of all their achievements. We hope that you feel the same and are proud to be part of this wonderful Department.

Marc Vachon, Chair
Department of Geography

In 1953...

Population (1951 census):

Winnipeg.....	410,000
Manitoba.....	780,000
Canada.....	14,000,000

Winnipeg Mayor.....	Garnet Coulter
Manitoba Premier	Douglas Campbell
Prime Minister.....	Louis St. Laurent

Average Salary	\$3,139
Average house price.....	\$19,368
Colour TV.....	\$1,175
Average car price	\$1,700
Gasoline	7.5¢/litre
Milk.....	25¢/litre

Bread.....	16¢/loaf
20 oz T-bone steak	\$3.00
Spaghetti and Meatballs	\$1.50

Grey Cup:

Hamilton Tiger Cats (12-6 over Winnipeg)

Stanley Cup:

Montreal Canadiens (4-1 games over Boston)

Notable Inventions:

Heart-lung Machine, Marker Pen, Apgar Scale, Wiffle Ball, Carbonless Carbon Paper

Alumni Profile: Ray Pedersen

Name: Ray Pedersen

Current Job Title: CEO, Slate Executive Search Group, Tokyo; Chairman, Slate Research Center, Manila; Chairman, Slate Executive Search Group, Manila; Chairman, Bulbous Cell Media Group (BC Media), Tokyo; Chairman, Recruitment Software Solutions Corp., Singapore.

Graduation year:
BA, 1993 Human Geography



Ray (right) celebrates the Department's 60th Anniversary with a friend (just kidding, he is at a rugby game).

After Ray graduated, he went on the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET), a Japanese government-run program that sends several thousand youngish foreigners to different places in Japan to teach or practice "civil service". While Ray was on the JET program, he had the opportunity to attend a building materials trade show and was motivated to start his first business, which was an export company selling Canadian building materials to Japanese builders. As Ray put it, "It was a great lesson on how to not run a business and lasted about 2 years".

Ray's next start-up was a web-learning business that allowed teachers in Canada to provide on-line lessons to Japanese students. This was followed by working as a headhunter; a job that he loved so much that he started his own headhunting company, Slate. As Slate grew, Ray also set up a research center in Manila and stumbled into publishing with the purchase of Tokyo's oldest running English language free magazine. Most recently, Ray is refurbishing a hotel in one of the popular ski areas in Japan, and in March he also was involved in the development of a brewery in Terrace, BC.

When asked to describe what he does, Ray says "I am always baffled by that question, because I'm not really sure". He spends a lot of time recruiting people for his companies, and then training them to make sure they hit their stride, and then taking them to task if they don't. Ray works on multiple projects over long periods of time and says that "success generally comes at the end of multi-year process, in my opinion." Ray contributes to communities by providing employment and livelihoods to many families in his companies.

When asked about geography, Ray says he is "an avid reader of the international news and geography pertains to this." We also asked Ray what geography skills does he still apply today. "The skills that I use most often are the only skills that you actually remember after graduating, that is; organization, discipline and hard work to get things done prior to deadlines". Geography at UofWinnipeg meant that Ray "got to hang out with other people who liked talking about rocks and weather systems as much as I did".

Finally, we asked Ray what advice would you offer Geography students today, and he says "Try a lot of things when you are young and don't be afraid to fail. The most successful people plan their work and work their plans. Start with the end in mind."

Winnipeg is how many smoots to Brandon ?

As geographers most of us have used Google Earth for research, assignments or just to view other parts of the world. One of the handiest tools available to us on Google Earth is the ruler. With the ruler one can measure the distance between any two places on the surface of the Earth using any unit of distance, from kilometers to miles to smoots. Smoots?

What is a smoot? A smoot is a non-standard unit of length devised as a prank by a group of MIT students in Boston. It is named for Oliver R. Smoot whose body (head to toe) was used to measure the length of the Harvard Bridge between Boston and Cambridge. A smoot is equal Oliver's height of 1.7 metres and the bridge's length was measured to be 364.4 smoots (620.1 m).

Smoot graduated in 1962, became a lawyer and eventually became chair of the American National Standards Institute and president of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

People crossing the bridge today can see markings indicating the length of the bridge measured in smoots. In October 2008 the prank's 50th anniversary was commemorated with Smoot Celebration Day at MIT. In 2011 "smoot" was one of 10,000 words added to the fifth edition of the American Heritage Dictionary.

For trivia buffs, Oliver Smoot is the cousin of George Smoot, a Nobel Prize winning physicist. George Smoot made an appearance in "The Big Bang Theory" as the featured speaker at a physics symposium where Sheldon frantically tries to collaborate with him on his research paper (even allowing George top-billing!). George rejects the offer with line, "excuse me Dr. Cooper, but are you on crack?"

For the record, it is 119,278 smoots from Winnipeg to Brandon.

Reflections on the Churchill Field Course

by **Cameron Hunter**

This summer I had the opportunity to be one of fourteen students to travel to Churchill, Manitoba and explore the physical and culture environments of the “polar bear capital of the world” through the Geography Field Course.

Now most students you question would be loath to give up the last 2 weeks of their summer to start school early, but it turned out to be one of the coolest (pun intended) experiences of my academic career.

We spent ten days in and around Churchill. Through activities and projects we got to explore the diverse physical environment, and study the remote northern community of Churchill.

Although most of our time in Churchill was dedicated to fieldwork, seminars and other scholarly activities, it would be a lie to say our experience was entirely academic. Friendships were made, games of pool were played and some beverages might have been consumed. As I look back on my time in Churchill it is these social experiences that have stuck with me the most. Playing Geo-Trivia our final night, having to count off students every time we

got back on the school bus to insure that no one was eaten by a polar bear, going on a beluga whale tour of the Churchill river, and of course the excitement/ terror of seeing polar bears up close and personal.

A word of caution for those of you considering taking this course, it is a lot of work both in the classroom and outside of it. But with that being said, it was well worth the work to make amazing friends, drink under the northern lights, and have this once in a lifetime experience.



Field course participants defending their positions at Fort Prince of Wales

2012 Geography Award Winners

The Department of Geography has a number of bright and talented students and we like to recognize these students every year. The winners of this years' Susan L Rogers Scholarship in Geography is **Morrissa Boerchers**; Victor Dolmage Memorial Scholarship in Geography is **Cam Hunter**; Brian Evans Memorial Scholarships in Geography are **Megan Dooley, Andrew Curtis, Ruth Ann Dickinson, Meaghan Sawka, Matthew Cuddy, Rebecca Wilks, Cam Hunter, Alexis Pearn, Patrick Beech, Heather Reeves, Joel Edye-Rowntree, Matt Metcalf, Charles Enns**; Marcia Anne Fauer/Peter Bennet Memorial Scholarship in Geography is **Adrian Werner**; Humbolt Scholarship in Geography - **Meaghan Sawka**; and Anna Rikkelman Scholarship in Geography is **Lena Yusim**. Good job everyone!

Front row (left to right): Ruth Dickinson, Rebecca Wilks, Morrissa Boerchers

Middle row (left to right): Cameron Hunter, Lena Yusim, Matt Metcalf

Back row (left to right): Patrick Beech, Matt Cuddy, Adrian Werner, Drew Curtis, Charles Enns



GESA Trivia Night

Where is the Driest Place on the Planet?

The driest place on the planet? It certainly wasn't Garbanzo's Pizzeria and Pub on Thursday March 14th when GESA hosted their annual Trivia Night fundraiser. About one hundred students, faculty and staff knocked heads to see who would be named Masters of Useless Facts. In the end, The Graticules, consisting of Jacqueline Binyamin, Brian MacGregor, Ina Vincent, Weldon Hiebert and students Nathan and Jill (sorry never got their last names) took top honours and bragging rights until the next Trivia Night.

Along with warm-hearted socializing and ice-cold beer, participants had a chance to win one of several prizes in a

silent auction. Some of the prizes included Joni's delicious home baking, a chocolate basket courtesy of Re-Max and a slab of banded jasper hematite (from Bill Buhay). A 50-50 draw was also held with a pot of \$100.00!

In the end GESA raised \$1000, money used for their operations and local charities. Well done GESA! As for the driest place on the planet: the Atacama Desert in Chile, South America, which averages about 1 mm precipitation per year.

Thanks to GESA for successful and fun evening. And thanks also to Joni Storie for photographing the event.

