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## Preface

*Prairie Perspectives: Geographical Essays* is an annual peer-reviewed publication of the Prairie Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers (PCAG). The scholarly manuscripts included in each volume are a selection of those presented at the PCAG annual meetings, as well as contributions pertaining to the geography of the Western Interior solicited from, or submitted by, members of the Canadian Association of Geographers.

This volume was produced by the Department of Geography of the University of Winnipeg, which held the PCAG's 32nd Annual Meeting at the Russell Inn in Russell, Manitoba, on the weekend of September 18 to 20, 2009.

Thirty-four papers were presented in two concurrent sessions on Saturday morning, with another seven entries in the poster session. Each of the PCAG's member institutions was represented, with presentations from participants from Brandon University and the Universities of Manitoba, North Dakota, Regina, Saskatchewan, and Winnipeg, with an additional presentation from a colleague at Minot State University. As usual, and as is encouraged, many of the presentations were made by undergraduate and graduate students from the PCAG departments; each of the student presenters received a Paul Simpson-Housely/CAG Student Travel Award.

The Saturday afternoon field trip was led by Bill Rannie, John Lehr and Marc Vachon. Sites of interest to both physical and human geographers included the Inglis Grain Elevators National Historic Site, the Shellmouth Dam at Lake of the Prairies, the St. Elijah Romanian Orthodox Church and the John Paulencu Homestead and Museum.

At the Saturday evening banquet, Mr. Richard B. Humphrey was presented with the John Welsted Award for Service to Geography in the Western Interior. Mr. Humphrey received this award in recognition of his many years of teaching geography at Glenlawn Collegiate in Winnipeg. It was noted that over the years many geography majors at the University of Winnipeg studied with Mr. Humphrey at Glenlawn Collegiate, clearly indicating that he is a talented teacher and one who is able to inform and excite high school students about the value of geography as a discipline. We thank and congratulate Richard for his contributions and dedication. The keynote speaker at the banquet was Mr. Jay Anderson, a retired Environment Canada meteorologist and now occasional researcher and instructor at the University of Manitoba. Jay gave a very informative and lively presentation about the meteorology of prairie tornadoes and how to chase them without getting hurt. As is the tradition, Jay, as the keynote speaker, was the judge for the Annual Slide Competition, organized by Brian McGregor. As usual, the rivalries between the PCAG departments were fierce and the photographs were excellent.

Eight of the papers presented at the conference are included in this volume. As is typical for papers presented at a regional geography conference, a wide variety of topics and methods are represented. Drawing on historical documents and his extensive

geomorphic expertise, Bill Rannie presents a detailed discussion of the idea that the channel of the Red River might have been narrower in the early 19th Century and widened by the great floods of 1826, 1852, and 1861. Knowing whether or not this is true is of interest to those evaluating the long-term flood risk in and around Winnipeg. In another paper utilizing historical records, Beckey Hamilton evaluates why it is that relatively few French Canadians migrated to southwestern Saskatchewan in the early 1900s. She uses a systems approach to show that there were a number of institutional and individual forces, among others, influencing the choices made by potential migrants. In a paper discussing the export of a cultural lifestyle from North America to a distant land, John Lehr reports on the origin of the only Hutterite colony in Japan: the Owa Hutterite Colony. He compares the agricultural economy, practices, and prospects of this unique colony to those of the more typical colonies found in North America. Turning to a completely different kind of geography, Joey Pankiw and Joseph Piwowar evaluate the utility of summer versus winter satellite imagery for object-based image classification of shelterbelts in western Saskatchewan. They hypothesized that shelterbelts would be more easily classified using winter imagery, but found instead that the lack of leaves on the trees in the winter negatively affected the classification process. Following this, Johnny Coomansingh reports on the state of the Lesser Prairie-chicken on the High Plains of the United States, arguing that the preservation of this fascinating species requires and deserves more attention from governments, conservation agencies and local communities. Joshua Warken-tin and Marc Vachon examine the City of Winnipeg's Metro Plan of 1969 that was meant to transform the city into a 'modern metropolis'. They present a history of mid-century urban planning in Winnipeg and critically evaluate the abandonment and failure of the Plan. Geoffrey Scott describes the destruction and recovery associated with lahars triggered by Super typhoon Reming in the Philippines in November 2006. His paper is augmented by his personal observations of the situation soon after the event in question and includes many colour photographs. So, too, does the final paper in the issue, in which John Selwood and Roy Jones discuss changes and threats to the long-standing tradition of informal coastal shacks and settlements being used by vacationers in Western Australia.

The inclusion of colour in *Prairie Perspectives* is an innovation introduced with this volume, made possible by the decision to exclusively publish the series online. That is, after many years of discussion, the PCAG has decided that access to the series and the excellent research it presents will be enhanced by making it widely and freely accessible on the PCAG website. Furthermore, without the costs associated with printing, the series is now able to include longer papers and a wider variety of user-friendly and enhanced tables, figures and supplementary materials. We are excited about this new format and we look forward to seeing how younger and older scholars alike will take advantage of the possibilities it presents. Thanks are due

to Weldon Hiebert for designing and implementing the new format.

Many people contributed to the success of the meeting in Russell. The faculty and staff of the Department of Geography at the University of Winnipeg worked as a team to put it all together, but special thanks are owed to Weldon Hiebert, Marc Vachon, John Lehr, Bill Rannie, Patricia Fitzpatrick, Brad Russell, and Brian McGregor. We also thank our undergraduate students for their assistance with the conference and for demonstrating that it is possible to have a proper balance between scholarship and fun.

Finally, the editorial process for this particular volume was long but the editor thanks the authors for their patience and the reviewers for their quick turnarounds. The editor is especially grateful for the assistance provided by Weldon Hiebert, John Lehr, Bill Rannie and Marc Vachon.

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