
Preface

The 41st annual conference and business meeting of the Prairie Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers (PCAG) was hosted by the Department of Geography and Geographic Information Science of the University of North Dakota over the weekend of September 29 to October 1, 2017. As in many previous years, the event was held off campus with a small prairie community serving as the venue. Morris, Manitoba was selected in preference to a location in North Dakota to avoid any impediments to cross-border travel caused by Executive Orders issued under the Trump presidency. Logistical support for the conference was provided by the geography departments at Brandon University and the University of Winnipeg, with financial assistance from the Association of North Dakota Geographers and the Virginia George Inheritance Fund. Meeting facilities were provided at the Morris Multiplex located in the Morris Stampede Grounds. Sixty-five attendees, including 30 students, and CAG President Dr. Dan Shrubsole of the University of Western Ontario, participated in the conference.

Friday evening was assigned to registration, an icebreaker reception, and the annual PCAG Executive Meeting. Those seeking further stimulus then ventured to one of Morris's fine hostelrys for additional refreshments and intellectual discourse. Burke's Steak Pit Lounge was the most favoured establishment, presumably on the basis of its proximity to the conference site, but possibly because everywhere else seemed closed. On Saturday morning, 25 papers were presented in a series of three concurrent sessions either side of a mid-morning break during which delegates were invited to view a display of posters and partake of refreshments. Thirteen of the aforementioned papers and five of the posters were presented by students, each of whom was awarded a Paul Simpson-Housley/CAG Student Travel Award plus a one-year annual membership of the CAG. Saturday afternoon was devoted to a field trip of the Red River Valley led by David McDowell. With field notes in hand and under fair weather skies the field trip visited the communities of St. Jean Baptiste, Letellier, and St. Joseph where a refreshment break was taken while at the Musée St. Joseph and Parent Tourism Centre. The field trip then proceeded to the National Historic Site of Fort Dufferin, which for a short period in the late 19th century played an important role in asserting the Dominion government's claim to Canadian sovereignty and political control in the West. The field trip concluded in Emerson on the east bank of the Red River where CN and CP rail lines merge and cross into the USA, and where abandoned customs and immigration posts mark the former international boundary crossing point of Highway 75. An expanded version of McDowell's field notes are included in this volume as a record of the afternoon's activities and as a guide to those who might wish to explore this part of southern Manitoba under their own reconnaissance.

The traditional Saturday night banquet was held in Crocus Hall at the Morris Multiplex. After dining, PCAG president Dr. Derrek Eberts presented Dr. Jonathan Peyton of the University of Manitoba with the PCAG Early Career Award, which “rec-

ognizes early career appointees, normally within five years of graduation from a PhD, who have made significant scholarly contributions to the discipline and/or demonstrated exceptional achievement in teaching.” Dr. Peyton's diverse research interests include energy politics and policies, the politics of environmental assessment, and environmental history. Dr. Randy Widdis of the University of Regina then delivered a keynote address titled *The Northern Plains and Prairies as Frontier, Borderland and Bordered Land*. Dr. Widdis' much appreciated presentation provided a historical geographic overview of the evolution of the interior plains both north and south of the 49th parallel. Saturday night's activities concluded with the Annual Slide Competition with Drs. Shrubsole and Widdis acting as judges of slides entered in five categories—physical geography, human geography, prairie, aesthetic, and humour. Sunday morning was devoted to the Annual General Meeting of PCAG at which the smooth running and sound financial status of the Division was confirmed. The AGM was also an occasion for celebration as Dr. Douglas Munski of the University of North Dakota and Dr. Laura Munski, Executive Director of the Science Center, Grand Forks, North Dakota were jointly awarded the PCAG President's Award in “recognition of their outstanding contribution to the Division having demonstrated exceptional dedication and commitment to Geography in the Prairie region, above and beyond the ordinary.”

Three research articles, one review essay, two viewpoints, plus the aforementioned field trip guide are presented in this volume of *Prairie Perspectives: Geographical Essays*. In the first of the research articles, Roderick McGinn transports the reader to the Riding Mountain Uplands at the time of the late Wisconsinan glaciation to explain the formation of a pronounced landscape feature, the McFadden Valley-Polonia Trench. McGinn further explains how glacial meltwaters, ponding ice and differential geology combined to produce forced meanders and a range of glaciofluvial deposits. Continuing the aquatic theme but moving westward and to warmer climes of the present day, Yulu Peng, Abdul Raouf, and Muhammad Almas argue that regularly updated and accurate maps are essential to heighten public awareness of flood risks. They demonstrate the utility of remote sensing technologies including point cloud LiDAR data in producing improved flood zone maps for Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Jamie Spinney and Suzanne Kerr then conduct the reader to the safety of the classroom where they find students expressing strong positive attitudes toward the use of clickers for engaging and motivating them. Spinney and Kerr contend that students perceive clickers as effective tools for improving academic performance in an introductory geography class. In the review essay, Dustin Roussin and Jacqueline Binyamin venture to Palliser's Triangle to examine relationships between precipitation and ENSO, PDO, and PNA teleconnections. Of these, the PDO is shown to have the greatest influence over precipitation. Their study shows that winter values of teleconnection indices have a greater influence on spring and summer precipitation than spring and summer values of the same indices. The next section contains two ‘viewpoint’ contributions—short, peer-refereed essays examining a geographical problem or perspective.

In the first of these, Kenji Kitamura, Susan Carr, John Kindrachuk, Mark Johnston, and Maureen Reed report on the success of a workshop on community-researcher collaboration in water security. They stress the importance of drawing together multiple knowledge systems, diverse actors, Indigenous customs, and face to face dialogue in collaborative planning. Last but not least, Hồng Thị Hà and Aaron Kingsbury transport the reader to Thái Nguyên University of Agriculture and Forestry, Vietnam where students use self-taken photographs to express their cultural place-ness. These images are then exhibited at Mayville State University, North Dakota to challenge North American students' perceptions of contemporary Vietnam. Despite the great physical distance between the universities, their students are shown to share social worlds in common.

The volume includes two features that are new to *Prairie Perspectives: Geographical Essays*. First, news from the member departments in the Division is presented under the banner of 'Across the Division.' The intent of this section is to record significant news from each department such as appointments, retirements, major program initiatives, awards, faculty and student achievements, and other important events and milestones. Generally, the reporting period extends from mid-June, 2017 to mid-June, 2018. This period coincides with the year ending in the annual spring convocation cycle at all institutions in the Division, and recognizes that usually relatively little departmental business takes place over summer months. The second new feature provides brief biographical notes on contributing authors under the banner 'About the Authors.' The intent of the feature is to raise the profile of authors, especially those who are new faculty members or students, and to provide readers with a means by which they might more easily recognize or collaborate with the them.

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