

## Undergrad kicks PhD ass Mt. A student places first at regional conference

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News Writer

A Mount Allison geography student, Nigel Selig, brought home a prestigious award last month for "best student paper presentation" at the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Atlantic Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers (ACAG) conference.

Selig presented a paper at the conference in St. John's, Newfoundland, in October on his dendroarchaeological study of Dorchester House located in Dorchester, NB.

"The current owners of the house wanted to figure out when the house was built so that they could then discover who built the house," said Selig.

Using dendroarchaeological methods to examine samples of the historical structure collected by he and the other members of the Mount Allison Dendrochronology (MAD) Lab, Selig was able to determine both when the house was originally constructed and who built it. "As it turns out, I figured out that the house was built in the spring of 1821 by a man named Cyprian Killam," explained Selig.

Selig was among a number of students presenting at the conference, including three others from Mt. A: Lanna Campbell, who presented on a coarse woody debris study in Newfoundland and the Cape Breton Highlands; Ben Phillips, who discussed the ancient red spruce tree he discovered, and Christine Robichaud, who presented research on the growth rings of

wood turtles.

The competition for the award was open to students at the undergraduate, Master's and PhD levels. Dr. Colin Laroque, assistant professor in the Geography Department and a member of the MAD Lab team, was not entirely surprised that a Mt. A student won for best student presentation.

"I think that the four students that went have been working at a Master's level for some time now. I had the feeling that the judges would have a difficult time deciding which of the four from Mt. A were the best. I think I was too involved with their projects to decide if they were better than the other students, but I know that they all did well," said Laroque. "Their projects were all Master's level, and I was very confident in their abilities."

Selig said the award was "a nice surprise" for him and the members of the MAD Lab team.

"Everybody at the conference,

notably those from Mt. A, did a great job. I was happy to receive the award because it backed up my other related award that I received in February at the Atlantic Geoscience Conference.

It is important to note, however, that this accomplishment at the conference would not have been possible without the help from my team-mates in the MAD Lab, as they were a great help throughout the entire process of the project, which ranged from data collection to the design of the presentation itself. The award was only part of the fun and success we all experienced," said Selig.

Laroque noted the success of the MAD Lab team at this conference and others where they have presented. "Through these specific conference presentations, Mt. A is now seen as a force in dendrochronology in Atlantic Canada and in Canada as a whole," said Laroque. "This attention all filters back to Mt. A."



**Nigel Selig won first place at the conference for the Atlantic Division of the Canadian Association of Geographics.**

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