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Mount Allison student wins Rupert H. MacNeill Award

Feb 15, 2005

SACKVILLE, NB — Mount Allison geography student Nigel Selig from Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, has won the Rupert H. MacNeill Award for best student paper at the 31st annual Atlantic Geoscience Conference in Saint John. His win is particularly significant because, according to the judges, Selig is the first undergraduate student to win the award since its inception in 1984. The Atlantic Geoscience Society (AGS), which sponsors the competition, has given this prize predominantly to students working on their doctorates or master's degrees.

AGS members include earth scientists from universities, government, and the mining, petroleum, and offshore exploration industries in Atlantic Canada. The organization shares current research and information about the earth and earth sciences with both specialists and the public.

Selig presented work that he carried out with Dr. Colin Laroque and Dr. André Robichaud of the geography department on a dendroarchaeological investigation at the Campbell Carriage Factory in Sackville, New Brunswick. Dendroarchaeology is the science of using tree rings to determine the age of wood in an archaeology study. In this case, Selig was trying to determine more information about when the local historical museum was built. In his presentation he explained the basic methods of dendroarchaeology and how he and his colleagues are trying to solve the mystery of when the museum was originally constructed.

Selig was very surprised by his award. "This was the first time I have presented in front of scientists and academics. I had no expectations of getting an award, but I thought it would be an excellent experience. I was there to represent Mount Allison and the MAD Lab and present our joint work. It was great because I feel we all won." Selig, who graduates next year, is not sure what he wants to do in the future. He is thinking about continuing his studies by doing a master's in geography or a bachelor of education.

Dr. Laroque said, "Nigel did an exceptional job. He represented the University very well and this special recognition is well deserved." Three other students from the MAD Lab (Mount Allison Dendrochronology Lab) also presented papers at the conference.

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