

## NORTHERN NEWS

*Canada Post to Issue IPY Stamp in 2007*

In February 2007, Canada Post will issue a stamp commemorating the 125th anniversary of the First International Polar Year (1882–83). Each year Canada Post receives thousands of stamp suggestions. Members of the Stamp Advisory Committee examine them, decide on the annual stamp program, and forward it to Canada Post's Board of Directors for approval. Canada Post's recognition of the importance of the International Polar Year was very welcome news to Canada's polar research community as it prepares for the forthcoming International Polar Year 2007–08.

## AWARDS

*AINA Fellow Receives Patron's Medal*

AINA Fellow and Life Member Jack Ives was recently awarded the prestigious Patron's Medal of Britain's Royal Geographical Society (RGS) for 2006. Ives, a professor at Carleton University, was recognized by the RGS for his lifelong work in researching the ecology of mountain regions and the well-being of mountain peoples. The Patron's Medal is one of two gold medals (along with the Founder's Medal) established by the RGS in the 1830s to encourage and promote geographical science and discovery. Awarded annually, the gold medals are both approved by Her Majesty the Queen. Past recipients of the Patron's Medal include Captain Sir F.L. McClintock (1860), Dr. Fridtjof Nansen (1891), Captain Roald Amundsen (1907), RCMP Inspector Henry A. Larsen (1946), and Dr. G. Hattersley-Smith (1966).

## AINA NEWS

*AINA's Executive Director Goes North*

AINA Executive Director Benoît Beauchamp and Steve Grasby, a research scientist with the Geological Survey of Canada, were in Canada's High Arctic from late June to mid July. Along with graduate students Dahmnait Gleeson and Marie-Eve Caron, they were studying a unique glacial spring in Borup Fiord, northern Ellesmere Island. Before departing, the expedition received considerable media attention related to their report that sulphur-transforming bacteria live within and beneath the ice of the spring and to the analogy that can be drawn with potential life on other planets—especially Europa, a moon of Jupiter that has an ocean of liquid water entirely covered with ice.

Returning to the spring before the short Arctic summer settled in allowed Beauchamp and colleagues to observe the glacial spring before massive glacial meltwater diluted its discharge. Interestingly, the glacial spring had shifted to a position high on the glacier from its previously observed position at the edge, suggesting a very dynamic

system in which the sulphur-rich water uses different pathways within the ice and within the rocks beneath the ice. The large volume of the discharge on top of the glacier and the considerable area of yellow, sulphur-stained ice, both on the glacier and on the river nearby, indicate a remarkably dynamic system that may also flow in the winter. At times, the smell of rotten eggs, indicative of potentially lethal hydrogen sulphide, was almost unbearable.

The research team spent considerable time sampling both the water discharge and the mineral deposits in and around the spring, as well as studying the geology of the surrounding area in an effort to understand the complexity of the spring's "plumbing" system and to find the cause of its unique occurrence.

The project was organized by the Arctic Institute of North America and funded by the Canadian Space Agency, the Polar Continental Shelf Project, the Planetary Society, and the Geological Survey of Canada.

*Foothills Pipe Lines and Yukon Parks Branch Support the Yukon Biodiversity Database*

In 2006, the Yukon Biodiversity Database is being funded by Foothills Pipe Lines Ltd. and the Parks Branch, Yukon Department of Environment.

The database, created in 2004 for the Yukon Biodiversity Working Group by AINA's Arctic Science and Technology Information System (ASTIS), contains descriptions of more than 4800 publications and research projects on the biology of the Yukon and the Beaufort Sea.

The Yukon Biodiversity Database describes publications of all types, including grey literature, covering all aspects of all living things except humans, as well as non-human palaeontology and the environmental impacts of human activities. Its coverage of research projects is based on information from licences issued since 1982 under the Yukon-Canada Scientists and Explorers Act.

The Yukon Biodiversity Database is not yet comprehensive. Its coverage includes the publications and projects already in the ASTIS database, plus the results of efforts by the Yukon Biodiversity Working Group since the spring of 2004 to identify and fill high-priority gaps. Our goal is to continue filling gaps and make the database more comprehensive over a period of several years.

The Yukon Biodiversity Database is available at [www.aina.ucalgary.ca/yb](http://www.aina.ucalgary.ca/yb).