

# MUGWUMP

## When did autumn arrive? Where was I?

Ah well, with autumn come the pennant races, and this has been a good season with exciting finishes in both NL divisions and the AL east. As I put paper to pen on Wednesday morning the Toronto Blue Jays' hopes remain alive. If they lose tonight, however, or if the Boston Red Sox win (I sense the beginning of a beautiful rivalry), they will sit out another post-season. Last night's games were crucial: the Red Sox lost in the 11th to the White Sox and the Jays won in Baltimore. This puts the Red Sox in a pressure situation to win, a situation they haven't been able to master since they traded Babe Ruth to the Yankees and fell under a curse. This is good news for the Blue Jay fan; should the Jays be in a race with any other team they wouldn't have a prayer.

Speaking of no-win situations, I chanced upon an interview with Arch Pafford, illustrious leader of the COR party, on CBC radio's Information Morning, and I ask this question: how does an intellectual flea get to lead a political party? Well it's the COR party, of course. Interviews with Pafford are hilarious. The man contradicts himself with each sentence, then denies his statements are confusing. Kudos to Pafford for providing comic relief in a boring provincial political scene!

I remain puzzled by the lack of controversy in this year's Brunswickan. It ain't for lack of controversial subject; the past summer was ripe with political fodder for muck-rakers of all stripes to sink their sharpened teeth into. No letters to the editor even: is UNB sinking back into a quagmire of apathy? Oka, GST and the Great Canadian Senate Debacle, Meech Lake fallout, German unification and its ramifications, Iraq and Kuwait; these are but a few topics that would make fascinating Friday morning reading.

I urge students to treat themselves to a tour of the "new look" CHSR-FM. Apart from cosmetic changes, CHSR is fast becoming a "conscious" campus alternative. It is a campus leader in feminist thinking, and thanks to the direction of, among others, Jeff Whipple and Steve Staples, CHSR has taken some bold political stances and stirred up some much-needed thinking on ideas that have been taken for granted on this campus for far too long. (Can I have my show back now Steve?)

I shall now borrow a comic form made popular by a late night television personality:

### Top Ten Reasons Why It's Fun to be a Canadian Senator

10. You can change government policy by faking a cold.
9. Good way to get the fuzz (cops) off your tail.
8. Free medical advice
7. Your political rating goes from "extinguished" to "distinguished" in a hurry.
6. You get to play "air orchestra" along with the bells.
5. Brenda Robertson.
4. Smoke breaks with Hatfield.
3. You get to go to Bob Coates' house for "video parties"
2. Geritol buzz!
1. Knowing what "Triple E" really means - "Elderly, Eccentric, and easy money."

Peace.

Luis Cardoso.

# OPINION

The opinions found in Opinion are not necessarily the views of the Brunswickan

## "We are but grains of sands in the river of time"

*Perspectives on existence by William M. Stewart*

Most of us believe that any one individual has little or no effect on the long-term outcome of human history -- excepting those rare people like Alexander the Great and Nelson Mandela. A revolutionary new branch of mathematics called "chaos theory" tells us that this idea is wrong. Believe it or not, even the flicker of a baby's eyelash has an enormous long-term impact on the world's future!

The idea is simple but deep, like a river. It seems appropriate therefore to begin with an analogy of a grain of sand, and a river.

Consider a river, say about ten meters wide and two meters deep, with many curves, and littered with various size rocks and boulders creating lots of turbulence. From moment to moment the river will change dramatically, as rivers do, with whirlpools appearing and disappearing, waves cresting and subsiding, eddies swirling and dying, and so on and so forth.

Say that a friend throws a single grain of sand into the middle of the river a mile upstream from our position, and the river travels a mile in twenty minutes. The question is this: will the turbulence in the river as it passes by our observation point (twenty minutes later) be significantly affected by that grain of sand? Will the configuration of the waves, whirlpools, and eddies be any different from what they would've been had the grain of sand not been thrown?

Up until very recently mathematics would have said that the initial splash of the grain of sand would be absorbed and dissipated, and that the river turbulence twenty minutes later would be exactly the same as it would have been otherwise. Most of us probably would've gone even farther, and said that even the splash of a good sized boulder would be completely absorbed well within a mile. It seemed so sensible to believe that relatively small inputs could be largely ignored.

Chaos theory tells us that this reasonable view is absolutely wrong. We now know that the extremely tiny ripples and eddies produced by the splash of a single grain of sand are not absorbed, are not dissipated, but are instead multiplied, magnified, and propagated throughout the river, so that the configuration of the waves, whirlpools, and eddies will have been entirely and irrevocably changed a mile later.

You don't need to know the mathematics. Just remember that in real systems (especially fluid systems with turbulence) tiny changes end up producing great changes. Consider now the application of this new understanding, in the simplest of ways, to the actions of individual human beings: it immediately follows that the smallest body movements of human beings have, over time, an enormous impact on global weather systems!

For example, say you waved at a friend across the street today, causing small eddies and whirlpools to form behind your hand and arm as it swept through the air. By exactly the same principle described earlier, this small turbulence will be slowly propagated throughout the atmosphere, and eventually around the entire planet, so that in a year's time the entire global weather system will have been affected and be completely different from what it would've been had you not waved to your friend a year earlier. Our every wave, every breath, every flicker of an eyelash propagates through the atmosphere to eventually affect the weather of the entire planet.

In this very simple way then, we can see that each of us is of profound importance to our world and its future, for our smallest actions affect the weather, and the weather affects plane crashes and car crashes, the outcome of elections, battles and wars, when we eat, sleep, and make love, and therefore eventually human history itself.

We may be no more than grains of sand in the river of time, but oh what effect on that river we have!