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## The dust of one volcano travels a long, long way

Mt. Pinatubo is a volcano in the Philippines who's eruption earlier this year has had a direct—and negative—effect on this summer's weather. The volcanic eruption spewed tons of hot ash into the atmosphere, encircling the earth in dust and blocking out much of the sun's warmth. It's basically the greenhouse effect in reverse, but instead of locking in heat, the dust keeps it out, giving us a chilly summer.

That theory is the contention of scientists who also say that, because of another Pinatubo eruption expected in 1993, next summer may be already skewered too. And it's not even September yet.

So if you buy this theory, a volcanic eruption on the other side of the earth has ruined our summer, and is threatening next year as well.

Interesting, you might say, but who cares? So I'm a bit whiter, and my peas and carrots are a bit smaller. Big deal.

Well, big deal indeed. Another consequence of Pinatubo's hiccuping is our starving black bears. The poor animals have to eat an enormous quantity of food so they can sleep through the winter. But the retarded growing season has meant that the few berries that are in the bush are just starting to ripen now. So into town they come, risking life and limb and a night in the bear equivalent of the drunk tank, all in the hope of nabbing some table scraps.

The point is, actions and events that occur in far away places have a way of impacting on us in ways we can't easily see. It's difficult to say what something will mean down the road, or what the result of any action or decision will be.

And, in the current state of constitutional fatigue our country is experiencing, we're in danger of allowing some selfish people to get what they want on the basis of regional and ideological wish lists rather than on the basis of genuine nation building.

Items on this wish list include: an equal senate; native self-government; distinct society for Quebec; the North American Free Trade deal; decentralization of power away from Ottawa to the provinces; Quebec independence; and labour and environmental law reforms here in Ontario. Each of these issues are potential Pinatubos, each capable of setting the bears on us while we're not looking.

Change and reform are not only a necessary part of life, but in many cases, are good things. But in the political arena, where principles are routinely compromised to make a deal, we need leaders who we can trust to act in the long-term interests of the country, not in the short-term interest of their own political careers and parties.

And do you trust your leaders?

### Make your voice heard

The Terrace Bay Schreiber News welcomes letters to the editor on any subject.

Letters must be signed and have the phone number and address of the author for verification. We will not knowingly print false libelous or anonymous comments. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

Letters to the Editor are important to community newspapers. They serve to reflect opinions of members of the community we serve. However, we must insist on these rules to ensure that this very important forum is used responsibly.

Letters can be mailed to the News, Box 579, Terrace Bay, P0T 2W0, or dropped off at the News office, Hwy. 17 at the Mill Road in Terrace Bay.



## Arthur's a person of colour too

There was a time when you could make a joke about just about anybody—thrifty Scots, sleazy lawyers, dumb Jocks, absent-minded professors, libidinous priests—and get a laugh.

Those days are gone. We live in the Age of Sensitivity. Of Political Correctness. Never has the Importance of Being Earnest been more manifest.

I read in my newspaper that psychiatrists are objecting to the movie *Silence of the Lambs*.

They don't like the fact that the villain, Hannibal Lector, is a cannibal. They want the public to know that psychiatrists, by and large, do not consume their clientele.

Similarly, veterinary surgeons are raising a hue and cry about the movie *Beethoven*, because it features a vet who kidnaps dogs for research.

It's a familiar story. Nowadays, any movie featuring mafiosi is sure to be picketed by Italians outraged at the "stereotyping" of their people. Any new book that portrays Iroquois or Apaches, Blackfoot or Inuit, as anything less than noble and oppressed buckskin-clad saints is bound to draw howls of outrage.

As topics for light-hearted banter, women, gays and, all minorities (save WASPS) are now off-limits. Verboten. Taboo.

Nobody will mourn the passing of racist and sexist stereotypes—they're ugly and moronic. But there is a danger of over-sterilization too. We could become so hyper-censorious as to render everything we talk about meaningless.

Take the term 'people of colour'. Peel off its veneer of political rectitude and you find a profoundly racist 'us' versus 'them' term. It puts white people on one side and everyone else—black, brown, yellow and copper-skinned people—on the other.

Well, damnit, I'm a person of colour too. Off-pink as it happens, but definitely coloured. Yet

the term people of colour excludes me.

It's not the only example of linguistic goofiness making the rounds these days. Are you fat, like me? Never fear. Once the New World Word Police get finished, no one will ever dare call you tubby, fatso or Mister Four-by-Four again. The National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance advises that the officially approved terminology for lardbuckets like us will henceforth be "people of size."

Even the traditionally down-to-earth world of agriculture is not immune to Newspeak. Remember shepherds and milkmaids? Well, forget 'em. In Britain, at last, they've been transformed into the Professional Herdpersons Society. Before you laugh too loudly at the silly Brits, I should tell you about our own John Efford. His business card describes him as the Chairperson of the United Fisherpersons of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Where does all this dopey stuff come from? From our schools, I fear. Mealy-mouth, meaningless loopy lingo flourishes in the Groves of Academe.

Arthur Black

Consider these recently harvested nuggets of educational jargon:

Learning facilitator—teacher

Negative attention-getter—class troublemaker

Deficit at grading period—failed

Where will the madness end? Beats me. British botanists are the latest target. They're being accused of "biological racism" for their habit of classifying plants as 'native' or 'alien'.

Here at home, Mark Meisner of Pollution Probe is going after opportunistic corporate tycoons claiming their products are "environmentally friendly".

Meisner's recommendation? He says almost anything labelled "green" should be blacklisted.

Poor Mark. He has much to learn. I'm sure he meant to say List of Colourlisted.