

Ecologic

- the green hornet

Recycle This!

As mentioned last month, this was supposed to have been a piece on recycling, but with the recent, record breaking (15 year low I think) cold snap, I couldn't resist poking fun at everyone's favorite subject; how come Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise couldn't have kids together, but they could separately? - So, on to recycling next month...

Global warming is never far from my mind even as I bundle up against 10° temperatures; and that's inside, I don't think they've even invented a number to represent the outside temp. Although we're in the midst of a cold wave, I'm to understand that parts of California are experiencing temperatures that are 5 degrees above normal. So I guess that it balances out to some degree and actually that's part of the program. These different parts of the world are collectively registering increasing average temperatures; just not specifically here and now.

Actually this intuitive contradiction just reinforces the case for the theory of global warming and the fact that it will be with us forever for the mere fact that it can't be disproved. Needless to say (so I'll certainly say it), this planet is highly complex and every single weather pattern, climate trend, or gas expulsion can be explained in terms of anthropogenic global warming. It really is fascinating to try to follow the attempts to track all of the pertinent variables that comprise this intricate web of cause and effect situations that explain existing conditions and the assumptions that predict others. A couple of books that I would recommend to give you a taste of this are:

[The Weather Makers](#) by Tim Flannery and
[Earth in the Balance](#) by Al Gore

It appears that everyone is onboard with this stuff, but due to that 'butterfly effect' (a catch phrase from a 1972 paper written by physicist Edward Lorenz entitled "Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil Set Off a Tornado in Texas" that actually casts huge doubts on the predictability of complex systems), it doesn't seem like it would take much to throw everything off with respect to climate models and predictions but really, what do butterflies know? Admittedly, the current accuracy of weather forecasts is impressive and it would seem that there would be some correlation between the understanding of localized weather forecasts and the understanding of longer term climate trends, but still, those butterflies...they haunt me.

Too bad that conventional wisdom dictates that no single weather-related event should be directly attributed to global warming, because I'm prepared to blame everything on global warming; from bad TV shows to root canals brought on by an inconvenient tooth. However, Global warming is supposed to be responsible for an overall increase in the

frequency and intensity of weather events such as hurricanes, thunderstorms and tornados but that may be difficult to measure.

Also, with respect to weather extremes, record breaking anything can only go as far back as records are kept; otherwise they would be pre-record breaking events which are really hard to verify. Further, how accurate were the thermometers in pre-record time and were all areas of the globe appropriately represented? And in order to judge mans' influence on the environment, is there a consensus as to when the anthropocene really began? I'll have to stop here only because I must admit that I don't have any kind of grip on all of the variables that are defining our current interglacial period and it's best to leave the serious analysis to those who purport that they do.

In conclusion, along with everyone else, the green hornet is chilled to the core, more blue than green and in a particularly foul mood today. He is also teetering on the brink of environmental heresy - but the bottom line is this: verifiable or not, let's get this global warming thing under control before we freeze to death. BTW, I wonder what is done with an environmental heretic; burning at the stake seems unlikely but composting might work. Anyway recycle onward and maybe that'll generate a little heat.