

From our first day of life, to our last, everyone we meet, know, and interact with will have an effect on our lives. While some of these influences may have been greater than others and some may have been positive while others were negative, they have all left their mark on our world.

Think about the last four years and all the people we have met. 20 years from now, will we distinctly remember their names, what they looked like, and what they sounded like? Probably not. However, the semantic memory of the Ephrata High School class of 2009 will stay with each one of us forever. We will all remember the principal who told stories of her childhood in Nigeria. We will all remember stories of the economics teacher who drove the dirtiest car in the parking lot because he didn't want to pay to have it washed. We will all remember "Senior Suspender Thursday" and "Senior Moustache Monday". We will all remember Ephrata High School. Each of these smaller memories comprises what we perceive as our high school class, and each person has influenced this semantic memory that we will carry with us forever.

Science, a subject that I have dabbled with on occasion during my years at Ephrata, includes a concept called chaos theory. Chaos theory is embodied in the butterfly effect, which states, "A butterfly flaps its wings and causes a tornado 1000 miles away." This doesn't seem very probable, but what if the air molecules were moved to just the right spot that they started a chain reaction that ended with a tornado? That is chaos theory-the utterly unpredictable nature of our world. We cannot measure how each individual person has affected each of us, because chaos theory implies that every person has influenced everyone else in an almost infinite number of ways. That is precisely why we should think of ourselves not as a collection of separate beings, but rather as a web of

interactions. If one person were to be removed, the outcome would be completely different.

As scientist Niels Bohr said, "Prediction is very difficult, especially of the future." Chaos theory and Dr. Bohr have it exactly right-we cannot predict the future. Therefore we have to make it ourselves. As we create the future, we will use our perceptions and life lessons learned right here at 803 Oak Blvd. to evaluate our decisions-life lessons influenced by the fabric composed of every student, faculty member, and administrator. In other words, our future is not solely determined by ourselves, or by our friends and family, but rather by every individual who has ever passed through the doors of Ephrata High School.

The future is unpredictable, but regardless of where we go and what we do, everyone we will meet influences us, in some way, forever.