

Nuclear conflict not war but suicide

By Gord Murray
Free Press editor

A nuclear conflict won't be a war, it will be suicide according to Eldon Comfort, RR 4 Acton.

Comfort is a member of a small group in Halton Hills which will be campaigning for a yes vote in a municipal referendum on nuclear disarmament this November. (See story on council's approval of the referendum inside today's paper) Edith Hillman is the other Acton area resident involved in the campaign.

Over the years Eldon has become something of an expert on the issue of nuclear war.

In an interview this week Comfort said his concern about nuclear proliferation didn't "come as any sudden burst of light. It's been eating away inside me since World War II."

During the war he saw action in Europe as a signaller and the "futility of war stuck in my heart and my mind." The war seemed a "necessary evil" at the time, though he realized he had no great "quarrel" with the German men he was fighting.

"But this is a different ball game. This nuclear bomb business makes it not a war, but suicide."

For decades now people have lived with the threat of the "bomb," and both sides keeping up with each other in their stock of armaments and types of weapons. The arms race made sense to a lot of people, never to Comfort, but while he had "misgivings" he never thought there was anything which could be done.

What has spurred himself and thousands and thousands of others around the world to speak out and protest for peace is that the so-called deterrent of both sides having "bombs" is a "myth today."

"Each side can overkill 20 to 50 times. To kill me even once is more than enough," he declared.

"The present stalemate is like two men standing in gasoline up to their waists and arguing about who has the most matches."

"The nuclear arms race no longer has any relevance to security. Every added bomb makes me less secure. Polls say people feel less secure today than at any time before."

This growing fear has sparked the world-wide anti-nuke movement which is even alive in Russia and other East Block nations.

Eldon became involved in the movement a few years ago when he realized the dollars spent on war and weapons could solve most of the world's problems. He learned more and more about the threat of nuclear war while researching his pre-determined position for a staged debate with another member of Trinity United Church for a program there. His debate opponent worked in the nuclear industry and in fact left Acton to work on the Canadian reactor in Argentina. Since then Comfort has maintained his interest in the issue and continued his research.

He has also joined a number of organizations, including Canadian World Federalists, Ploughshares, Operation Dismantle over the past 10 years and sat on the International Affairs Committee of the United Church of Canada. He's attended seminars, conferences, etc. on nuclear disarmament in Kitchener, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa and New York City, adding to his knowledge.

The picture he paints of what will happen to Acton in the event of a nuclear bomb hitting Toronto is truly frightening. He relates the scenario to the devastation at Hiroshima, something most people can

relate to. One Trident submarine MX missile hitting the Toronto city hall area will result in the same kind of death and destruction as there was from the Hiroshima bomb. However, the difference is the Hiroshima bomb's ground zero, the area of most destruction, covered three square miles. One bomb detonated over downtown Toronto will result in 290 square miles of complete devastation. An MX missile is 200 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb.

So roughly 18 miles out around city hall will be gone, Comfort explains.

Beyond that, though not as far out as Acton, there will be tremendous heat, 2,000 to 3,000 degrees. This heat will produce a fire storm, igniting everything in its path, and there will be violent windstorms flattening everything in their paths too.

As the mushroom goes up it will suck up everything, creating a vacuum, and the radiation dust will fill the clouds. This poison will be spread over thousands and thousands of miles.

In Acton the winds won't be as strong, nor will the heat be as intense.

But being here isn't really a blessing. People here will die much more slowly and not as mercifully. There will be radiation burns and poisoning from fallout. If we look at the flash of the bomb we may be blinded, even this far away. There will certainly be genetic damage for those who do survive.

"We're sitting ducks in Acton." And our medical and emergency services just won't be geared to help the survivors, so our misery will be even worse.

If a person, by chance, happens to be in their basement and has food down there and it's deep, they may escape some of the pain from the "bomb." For instance

Comfort's basement is pretty safe if the bomb goes off over Kitchener, but he's a pickle if it hits Toronto. And who spends all their time in their basement anyway. He knows of no bomb shelters in the area.

What has alarmed so many now after years of living with the threat of the "bomb" is that there really is no deterrent anymore.

Comfort notes the weapons are so sophisticated now that the accuracy allows one side to wipe the other side's weapons out. So it is "tempting" to launch a first strike. Now one side could win a nuclear war. However, the winner would eventually suffer to some degree as fallout came back to haunt them.

And the proliferation of nuclear capability is also frightening. Now there are five full-fledged nuclear powers. However, another 10 to 12 nations may have the capability or are close to it, because their nuclear reactors will produce fissionable material! By the end of the century every nation could have nuclear weapons. With so many unstable governments and leaders running the world these days it's "inevitable" someone who has the "bomb" will eventually use it. "And once it (nuclear war) starts who can stop it."

Just think of the costs of nuclear weapons too, Comfort suggests. Some \$500 billion annually is spent on nuclear and conventional arms. That's enough money to abolish world hunger and solve all the medical, education and housing woes around the globe. "We could remove all the disparities between nations which cause wars."

He notes half of America's scientists and half of the budget devoted to research is involved in arms. The arms industries create jobs it's true, but it takes twice as much money to create a job in the arms field as it does in a service industry.



This is the way the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper

Eldon Comfort of RR4 Acton, the bottom person in this nuclear bomb mushroom, is speaking out a lot these days on the dangers of nuclear war and campaigning for the November elections referendum. For more on this issue see story beside this photo and also turn to page 3.

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Kellar to trial in Oates' murder

Eric Howard Kellar was committed to trial Thursday on the charge of first degree murder in connection with the stabbing death of Colleen Oates last October 22.

Judge J.E.C. Robinson bound Kellar over for trial after hearing evidence for the third day of the preliminary hearing and then considering presentations from Crown Attorney John Ayre and defence counsel Thomas Ounapuu.

Afterward Ayre said Kellar's trial will likely begin September 7, at the fall assize, in Supreme

Court in a County courtroom in Milton. There will be a number of Supreme Court cases coming up that date, but the Kellar case is expected to be tried first since the accused remains in custody at Hamilton-Wentworth Detention Centre.

Ounapuu said he is considering filing an appeal of the preliminary hearing judge's decision to commit to trial.

There is a ban on publication of any evidence from the hearings. Preliminary hearings are held to determine if there is sufficient evidence to

warrant a trial.

The first preliminary hearing session was held April 14, with a second on June 8 and the wrap up on Thursday. In total 15 witnesses testified. The preliminary was heard in Milton Provincial Court.

Around 4 a.m. October 22 Colleen Oates' husband Kevin came home to their Bower Ave. residence to find his wife dead from multiple stab wounds. Within a few hours police had a warrant out for the arrest of Kellar and a province-wide manhunt culminated with his apprehension on October 26 in a warehouse in Pickering.

Famed educator and citizen M. Z. Bennett dies at 102



M.Z. Bennett 1889-1982

One of Acton's best known and most beloved citizens, Miss Minnie Z. Bennett, died Thursday, the day of her 102nd birthday.

M.Z. Bennett, a former citizen of the year, was one of the first women school principals in Halton and left an indelible mark on Acton's education scene.

Miss Bennett passed away at Central Park Lodge in Kitchener where she had been in residence for some years.

When the board of education opened the new public school in 1957 it was named in honor of Miss Bennett as a lasting memorial to the dedicated teacher.

Acton's Chamber of Commerce selected Miss Bennett as citizen of the year in 1964.

Miss Bennett retired as principal of Acton public school, where Robert Little School now stands, in 1939.

Miss Bennett's career as an educator started in 1901, when Queen Victoria was on the throne, at S.S. 10 in Erin Township (Woodside School). She later graduated from the Toronto Normal School (Ryerson) and went on to teach at Clay Hill School for \$325 per year.

The reputation as an able teacher and a skilled disciplinarian, which was to mark Miss Bennett's career, soon spread as far away as Hornby. Trustees of that school invited her to instruct their 36 pupils in 1905.

Two years later Miss Bennett gave up forever having to teach alone. She was appointed to a graded school in Acton where she was able to enjoy the company of other teachers. One of her pupils was William R. Stewart, who became a deputy minister of education for the provincial government.

In 1913 the school board engaged Miss Bennett as principal of the public school, a post she would hold for 26 years.

Miss Bennett encouraged students to do their best. Her efforts bore fruit indeed. In 1919 the highest marks in the county for Entrance Examinations were earned by one of Miss Bennett's students.

"No other principal or teacher has had such a lasting and uplifting influence on graduates," wrote one school inspector.

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WWI vet Fred Wright dies

Fred Wright, a World War I veteran and highly respected Actonian died last week at the age of 89-years-old.

Mr. Wright was Acton's ninth citizen of the year, in 1966, and was a charter member of the Acton Legion, Branch 197, and the Local Rotary Club. He was also active on the Fall Fair Board, the YMCA, the Acton and Guelph Pipe Bands and the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Wright was born in Kendall, Westmoreland, England, and came to Canada when he was eight years old with his brothers and sisters after the deaths of his parents. He was 21-years-old when World War I broke out and he joined the Lorne Scots, 11187 Fourth Infantry Battalion. He received the distinguished service citation for the battle of Ypres when only 22 years of age.

During World War II, Mr. Wright sold Victory Bonds, and sold more than anyone in Halton, amassing 80 per cent of total sales in the county.

Upon his arrival in Acton, over 70 years ago, he found employment as a hired hand on a farm. He then apprenticed at carpentry with J.B. Mackenzie and later became an estimator and appraiser. In later years he became a real estate agent and insurance broker.

Among his many credits in the town, Mr. Wright was also vice-president of the Farm Brokers of Ontario, and the Toronto chapter of the Appraisal Institute of Canada; and president of the Guelph Real Estate Board. He was the justice of the peace in Acton and signed many documents for service-



Fred Wright 1893-1982

As service officer with the Acton Legion, Mr. Wright's duties ranged from helping pension applicants to voluntary commitments such as meeting homecoming Acton servicemen after World War II. He greeted 165 men from Toronto, Hamilton and London.

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inside

A microfilm made an emergency landing here. See story and photo page 2.

13 Acton streets want overnight parking. Details on page 2.

Rockwood's barber also sends singing telegrams. Turn to page 6.

Water use restrictions haven't been needed so far. More on page 7.

The mayor says town staff must try and buy locally. See page 7.

There's a look at the go-kart track in Limehouse on page B1.

There's more on the Yugoslav Centre controversy on page C4.

28 people have won Blue Jay tickets in the BIA draws so far. Story and photo on page C3.

Is the economy recovering? A region report says it might be. More on page B1.



Halton Hills Aquatics staff are kept busy working on lifesaving techniques even when they aren't at poolside Robyn Maybee of Georgetown and Bev Baker of Acton here practise Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) last Friday with St. John

Ambulance's Rusuci-Annie. The 15 hour course was handled by St. John staffer Elizabeth Bradburn. Eight members of the aquatics staff take the program at one time working on full size models as well as infant dummies.

Photo by ROBIN INSCOPE

Town hall hearing Sept. 16

The town hall hearing has been set for September 16 in the council chambers at the Halton Hills municipal building on Trafalgar Rd.

Shirley Milligan of the province's Conservation Review Board said one member of the board, perhaps more, will be at the hearing.

The hearing begins at 10 a.m. and one day has been allowed for the proceedings.

Any citizen can go to the hearing and testify. Those who sent letters to the town objecting to the lifting of the historical designation on the building

so it can be demolished will be notified and invited to testify. It is hoped groups will send spokespersons to the hearing she said.

She said this is the first Conservation Review Board hearing she is aware of at which the subject will be the lifting of an historical designation. Usually it is the owner of a property objecting to it being designated who wants a hearing.

About a month after the hearing the board will make non-binding recommendations to the municipality.