

Victims are the only real losers in war

Peace. It's simple to say, yet difficult to achieve.

Canadians have enjoyed as close to peace as one can get in its 125 year history, but there are blemishes on our record. The FLQ crisis in 1970 and the Oka standoff are two of the more recent blotches on our record.

The FLQ crisis occurred when Quebec separatists went to extreme measures to try and solve their problems. They wanted Quebec to gain its independence from English Canada.

They did not succeed.

In 1990, natives on the Oka reserve forced a confrontation between the first nation community and the Surite de Quebec. That event marked another important chapter in our rather quiet history.

Canadians did not have to fight for our independence from Britain. We were rewarded for our loyalty to the Queen with the BNA Act of 1867. It wasn't until 1982 that the Constitution was repatriated.

Although we may not have had to fight a bloody war for our independence, Canadians know how important freedom is. It is this knowledge that led us into battle in both World Wars, in Korea, and in the Persian Gulf.

In each conflict, Canadians fought for freedom—ours as well as those in other countries.

Freedom does not always lead to peace. Sometimes peace may need a push in the right direction and the United Nations have set up a peace keeping force with international members to do exactly that.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, peace-keeping troops are now becoming targets of the warring factions. The ethnic factions are at war with one another and the only true losers in that conflict are the mothers, wives and children left behind. It is they that need the aid of the peace-keeping forces who are being shot at all in the name of peace.

In Somalia, thousands are starving to death while powerful warlords continue to use the aid for the people as a bargaining tool in a futile action.

Peacekeeping troupes have now been sent into Somalia. The UN forces are welcomed by warlords who are hoping the peace-keeping forces can make the difference in a futile war. Only time will tell if an ever-elusive peace can be restored.

Cindy Laundry



The Earth to go out with a Swift-Tuttle, not a big bang

Here's a sober little factoid to make you spray your morning coffee all over the breakfast table: life on earth has 134 years to go.

If you want to be absolutely precise—it has 133 years, seven months and two weeks as of New Years Day.

The official word is that on August 14, 2126, the orbit of Periodic Asteroid Swift-Tuttle will intersect with Earth's orbit. That's the way astronomers explain it. More bluntly, the experts are saying that on August 14, 2126 a ball of rock and ice three miles across is going to smash into our planet.

Three miles wide—heck, that's not very big. Will we even notice?

We'll notice.

"It will create an impact force of 20 million megatons" says Duncan Steel, an astronomer at an observatory in Sydney, Australia.

Twenty million megatons is kind of abstract for we non-astronomers. To get an idea of the impact, think of the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima.

Now multiply that one point six million times.

Even if Swift-Tuttle was half the size it is now, we'd be toast if it hit our planet. "a one to two-kilometre object hitting the Earth would wipe out at least 75

per cent of mankind" says Steel "and an impact in the ocean is no less dangerous than an impact on land."

If it's any consolation, we've been through this doomsday scenario before. Several times, as a matter of fact.

That's the good news. The bad news is that, each time it's happened most life on earth has been destroyed. Astronomers believe that the Earth gets pestered with an asteroid this large about once every million years.

Many experts assert that it was an asteroid about the size of Swift-Tuttle that wiped out the dinosaurs. Back in 1908 an asteroid streaked through the atmosphere and slammed into

Siberia, levelling every tree for hundreds of miles.

They reckon that asteroid was about the size of a largish bungalow.

So we're in trouble, folks—or rather our children's children's children are in trouble.

Of course 134 years is a long time. A hundred and thirty-four years ago we didn't have automobiles, electric lights or telephones, much less lunar landings, space shuttles and Canadarm.

We're a brainy bunch of bipeds here on earth. We can probably come up with something.

Maybe we ought to dust off dopey old Ronald Reagan's Star Wars plan—you know, where he was going to fight the evil Russian Empire in outer space?

Where's Obi Ben Kenobi when you really need him?

Maybe NASA can come up with some fancy technological fly swatter—a RoboDesignated Hitter that can stroke Swift-Tuttle over the galaxy centrefield wall.

Maybe their calculations are wrong. Maybe tomorrow, astronomer Duncan Steel will appear on Prime Time news all red-faced to announce that he'd forgotten to "carry the

seven" in his addition and that actually Swift-Tuttle will miss the earth by several billion light years.

Maybe...Maybe...

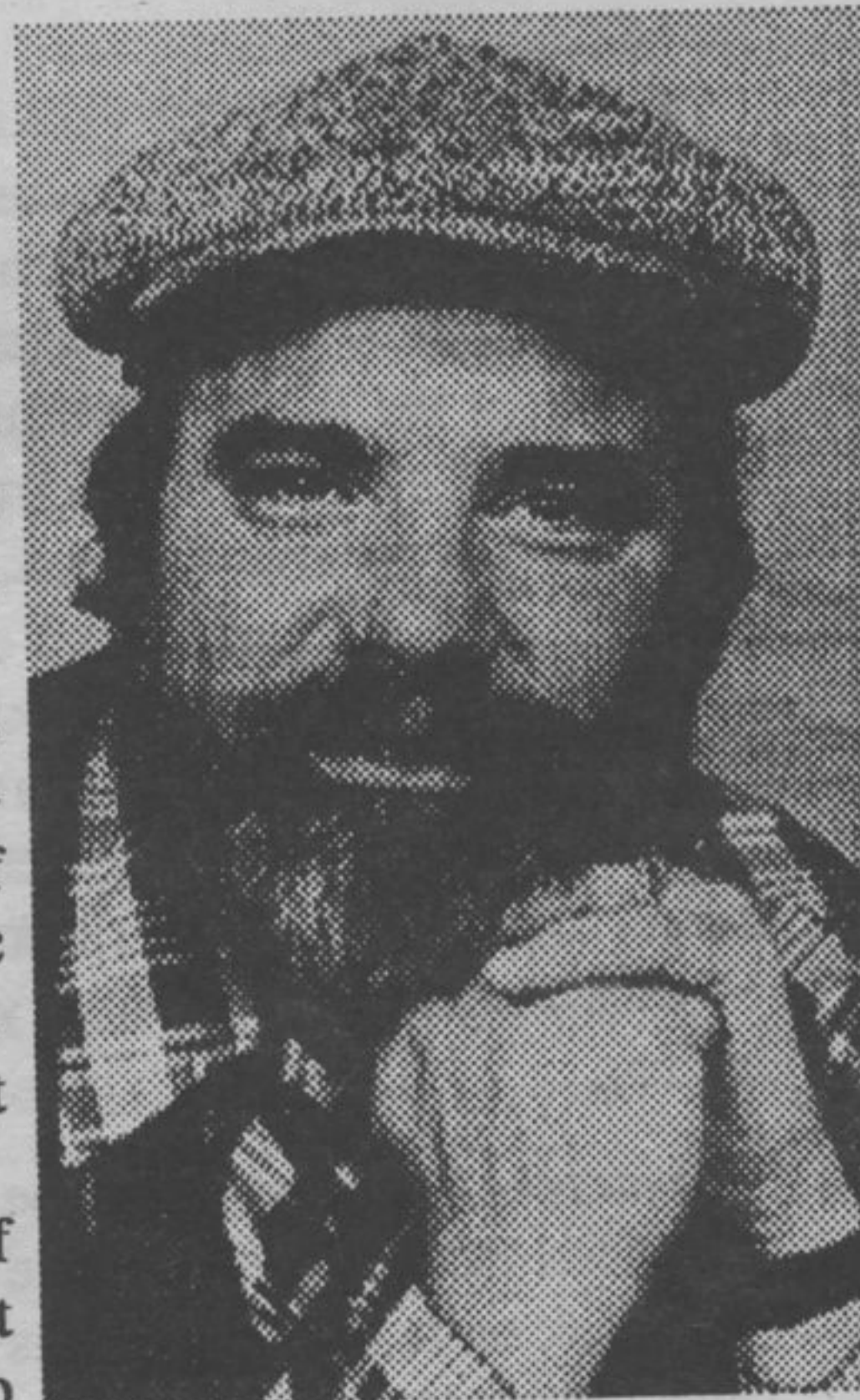
But on the other hand, maybe not.

Maybe they're right. And maybe there's nothing anyone can do. Maybe that's how this particular chapter of eternity gets written.

How's that old T.S. Eliot poem go?

*This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang But a...
Swift-Tuttle.*

They've got to do something about that dumb name.



Arthur Black

The Nipigon-Red Rock Gazette and the Terrace Bay-Schreiber News are members of Laurentian Newspapers Limited, 158 Elgin Street, Sudbury, Ontario P7E 3N5 (705) 673-5667 John Thompson, Vice President



Members of the Canadian Community Newspapers Association and the Ontario Community Newspapers Association

EDITORS

Cindy Laundry
Darren MacDonald
OFFICE/ADMIN.
Clara Dupuis

ADVERTISING

Ad. Manager
Linda Harbinson
Ad. Consultant
Cheryl Kostecki

PRODUCTION

Production Manager
Heather Michon

GEN. MANAGER...Linda Harbinson **PUBLISHER...**A. Sandy Harbinson
Local offices are located at 145 Railway Street, Nipigon, Ontario P0T 2J0, (807) 887-3583, fax 887-3720 and Highway 17 & Mill Road, Terrace Bay, Ontario P0T 2W0, (807) 825-3747, fax 825-9233
2nd. class mailing permit 0867

One year subscriptions are available by contacting your local newspaper at one of the addresses listed above. Rates are: Local Seniors \$12, Other local \$18, Outside 40 mile radius \$29, USA \$38. GST must be added to all subscription purchases.