

Cosmicalibur

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WORLD ENDS: BILLIONS HOMELESS

By FRANKLIN SIFTON

In one of the most savage imolations seen in centuries, the world exploded today at 11:03 sidereal time.

Billions were injured.

"I never even saw it happen," sobbed Theresa Cribbins, a schoolteacher in Fenlon Falls, Ontario, "although I peeked a bit through my fingers."

Hellfire and flame ravaged the planet Earth, leaving behind billions of frightened, homeless humans. Most of the population perished in the holocaust, many seriously.

No toads were affected.

The end of the world follows a number of similar blasts throughout the universe. The planet Pluto imploded last week, sucking thousands of cosmic shards into its core; several molecules escaped to Neptune, infecting it with an alien virus which caused all life on the planet to wither and decay.

"It hasn't been a good week," admitted the Lord yesterday. "I've been run ragged trying to keep up with the destruction. Only last night I was sitting up with a sick Saturn."

That planet had contracted an unfortunate case of ringwort, and is recuperating in another galaxy.

While the armageddon enveloped the earth, hundreds of political leaders converged on Baffin Island to discuss the havoc. Before a decision could be reached, however, the island sunk.

No toads are believed to have been involved in the incident.

The precise nature of the end of the world was at first only suspected by the majority of the terrestrial newspapers.

In Toronto, the Globe and Mail carried a banner headline reading "Holocaust may be skeleton in Tory closet", while the Star's headline



Timo photos

ran, "Metro rocked by explosions: girl, 12, injured."

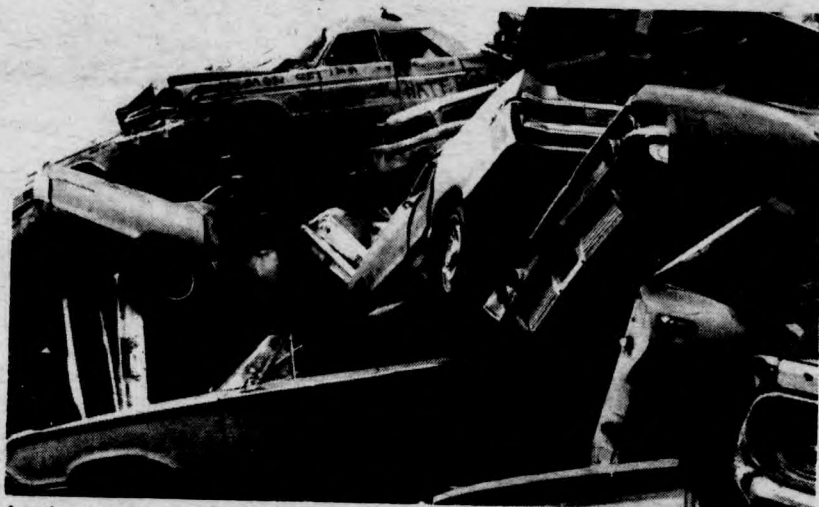
The Toronto Sun completely remade its front page with pictures of local disasters, but decided to save the colour shots for the Sunday paper.

"There's nothing like the end of the world to boost circulation," said

the Sun's publisher.

Across the world, citizens fearing an imminent snuffing of their lives prayed vigorously to their respective gods.

"I promised them only that I wouldn't send any more floods," the Lord laughed. "I didn't say anything about spontaneous combustion."



As the world ends, hundreds of drivers decide simultaneously to pull off the road and mull the situation over. Before the Big Heat swept away the firmament, the ensuing gaggle of cars was purchased by the Museum of Modern Art.

Wrenching nostalgia deluges eye-witness

While other papers scrambled to publish garbled wire service reports of the planet Earth's recent demise, Cosmicalibur quickly dispatched its seasoned pundit and newshawk, Nat Hawthorne, to the scene of the accident.

He files this first-hand, eye-witness account:

As the sun, scarcely recognizable in its blazing nova form, burst across the horizon, I could hear the final throbbing notes of what could only be the horn of Gabriel.

The end had come.

Forced to shield my eyes in the radiant light, I peered out to see an earth barely recognizable. Parched soil, smoldering flames; off in the distance, dragons began to rear their jagged heads as swirls of lava filled the hollow valleys which, only yesterday, had been lakes.

Slowly, methodically, the dragons set about consuming the barren earth.

The last traces of the atmosphere disappeared hours ago, and yet, there was a darkening in the western sky. Off in the distance, there was a sound. Faint at first — so faint I could barely hear it.

Before long, I could hear voices. Human voices. Straining my eyes, I could just make out a procession of darkly clad figures advancing slowly in my direction.

The heat was almost unbearable, and yet a shiver ran up my spine. The agonized moans of the company reached a wailing crescendo as they

passed by me, not a dozen feet away.

The day of judgment was at hand.

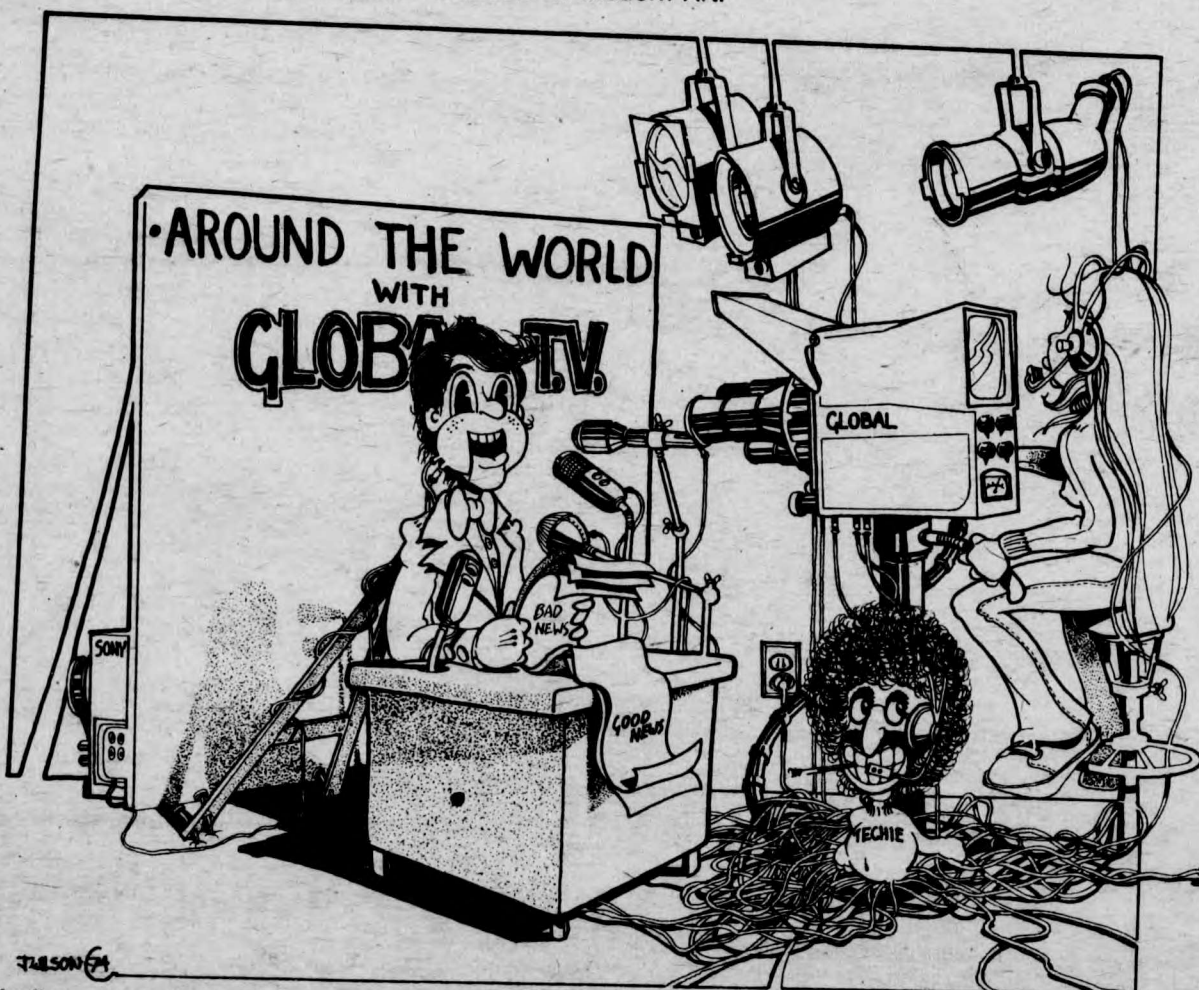
Suddenly, with a fearsome quaking, the earth opened up before my very eyes and swallowed them all. For a moment there was no sound, save the gnashing of teeth.

And as quickly, the rift closed. Soon, from an empty sky, rain began to fall. In torrents.

C'est la guerre.



One politician recommends that people try to sleep in their refrigerators during the fiery onslaught. There is a run on frozen daiquiris, iced lollies and chilled Dubonnet.



TALSON

As fires sweep the earth, television networks report news of the inferno, pausing only for commercial breaks. (Fried chicken and baked Alaska score a big hit.) Charcoal-broiled homes make a come-

back, followed by charcoal-broiled home-owners. In the late news, the sun is eclipsed by a great horned furry thing, and doesn't return. Some citizens express surprise.

Jim Wilson graphics



Since few people know that tires exhale oxygen, colonies of toads live safely and undetected in abandoned junkyards such as this one.