

'Talky-talky stuff' won't solve arms race

by Doug Schmidt

"I was ecstatic. I didn't believe it. I was slightly incoherent" says Dr. Jan B. Van Stolk describing his reaction when the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) won the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize.

Dr. Van Stolk, an Edmonton psychiatrist, is President of Physicians for Social Responsibility/Edmonton and Canadian Councillor of IPPNW.

PSR Canada is also known as Canadian Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

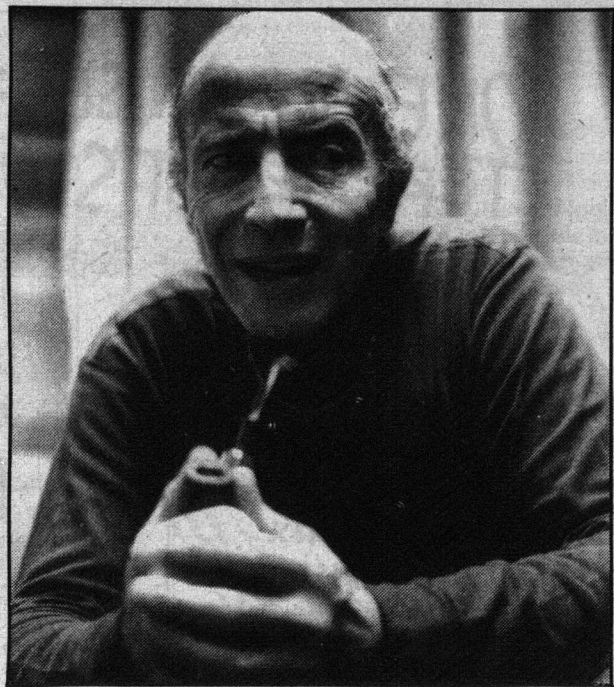
Dr. Van Stolk and his wife Diana will be at the Nobel ceremony Dec. 10.

Since 1955 when working with Albert Schweitzer (who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952), Dr. Van Stolk has been involved in disarmament issues. "Albert Schweitzer was very concerned about fallout at the time and also believed that unless we changed our ways of looking at the world, if we really felt the only way we could be more secure would be more bombs, then we would not survive.

"I had never really thought about it. On the contrary I had thought more like 'we need to keep those Russians at bay.' I never really thought that we live on one planet and our whole concern needs to embrace the whole planet."

In 1959, while still a medical school resident, Dr. Van Stolk and his first wife set up the Edmonton Committee Against Radiation Hazards which included several doctors, a geneticist and the U of A's Dean of Physics and Agriculture.

Dr. Van Stolk's work with PSR Canada began a few years ago when "Mr. Reagan started saying things like 'Americans can prevail' and we can have a nuclear theatre in Europe. . . and that you can win a nuclear war



"We need to do whatever we can to prevent global suicide."

Dr. Jan Van Stolk, left, president of Edmonton Physicians for Social Change, on behalf of 1985 Nobel Prize winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War.

Photo Rob Schmidt

or you can limit it.

"PSR's goal is to prevent nuclear war. To do it we need to educate ourselves; students, colleagues, public. We need to do research on the consequences of nuclear war — medical consequences and psychological consequences, right now, of the nuclear arms races. We need to find ways of conflict resolution in a non-violent way."

Van Stolk also feels that the arms buildup is wasteful. "All those billions of dollars we spend on weapons, 800 billion dollars a year in the world, 100 billion on nuclear weapons alone. By doing that we deprive the next

generations and people right now of health care and food."

Ignorance and apathy are still rampant, Dr. Van Stolk thinks, and though he is thankful for the Nobel Prize he is wary. "I am afraid that now we have become somewhat successful we are middle-class now, we are going to Oslo. I think that's dangerous, we might become smug. We might forget that it is only going to move if we move at a personal level as well. All this talky-talky stuff is not going to work unless there's a personal change as well.

"Unless there is a deep involvement of the

physicians themselves, unless they become a really eloquent and powerful and committed group they won't really reflect the real group of people. Statistically we have about 10 per cent of the physicians in Alberta. If we get up to 20 per cent we can swing it. I don't think there's ever been a peace movement of this proportion in the world.

"We believe it is important to make bridges and I believe that one of the most important things about this whole organization is the contact we have made with professionals in the Soviet Union and in Bulgaria, Hungary, China and in Czechoslovakia. This kind of human, professional bridge is a beginning I hope. That may be why PSR got the Nobel Prize."

There are other reasons why Dr. Van Stolk thinks PSR got the Nobel Prize. "Maybe the message of PSR is becoming accepted by a larger percentage of the population and the basic message of PSR is that we need to prevent nuclear war. I mean we cannot carry on the way we are going and we need to do whatever we can to prevent a drifting toward planetary and global suicide. And it seems to me that when the Nobel Peace Prize Committee gave that prize to the group of physicians who wouldn't really be there unless there was a ground-swell worldwide, they gave that prize to the thousands and millions of people who have been concerned with this issue and I find that's extremely heartening."

When asked if he thought the Geneva Summit was a concrete step towards peace, Dr. Van Stolk replied "Yes. I think it is a good step because of the very fact that the Americans have seen Mr. Gorbachev on TV smiling or shaking hands with their president. I think it's the human element. I think if we can go back to our common humanity we might save this world."

Crisp & Schnappy.



After your favourite activity here's a cool blast of freshness. Peppermint Schnapps and Spearmint Schnapps. So what are you waiting for? Schnapp to it.

HIRAM WALKER SCHNAPPS
TASTE THE DIFFERENCE

The Gateway

Heap Big Staff Meeting we're talkin'

- ‡ Editorial policies
- ‡ CUPMania
- ‡ Getting loaded and lots of other neat stuff

This Thursday at 4:00 p.m. in rm. 282 SUB Be there. We need you.



CHRISTMAS CHARTERS
MONTREAL

DEC 21 - JAN 3
\$389.00

DEPARTURE TAXES EXTRA

MAIN FLOOR SUB

