Gateway - Page 5



by Peter Smyth

We all breathe a heavy sigh getting through 1984 without a major confrontation between the world's SUPERPOWERS. In 1985 it is likely we will go on accepting the fact Reagan and Chernenko and other influential world leaders are playing Russian roulette with our lives.

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It is only the rare extreme masochist who fantasizes about being vapourized. It scares the hell out of the rest of us yet there are only a few who protest against this possibility — very real possibility. Dr. Helen Caldicott, who spoke in the Butterdome

on Rememberance Day, made the simplistic point that everything we do is irrelevant if there is going to be a nuclear holocaust in the near future. We can't leave it to these politicians to settle this issue for us because they are the same ones who are loading the gun for this "earth shattering" game of Russian roulette. They aren't listening to us.

We elect these people (if we are lucky enough we can vote) to serve us, yet they hold our lives in their hands and we let them. How big of an effort are they really making to save this planet? Apparently not enough. It has become more than an issue of defence. The world only has to be destroyed once not 400 times. Is there logic to Russia or the United States boasting just how many times over they are "capable" of destroying the world?

Picture Reagan and Chernenko sitting around a table with 4.5 billion people looking on with terror in their eyes. The two men are waiting for that one bullet to end it all. These leaders are so intensely involved in this power struggle they have smiles on their faces. They have no regard for the consequences about to unfold even though there is a small and growing number of people trying to remind them. They are not listening, it's gone too far. The people realize they will bluff one too many times, then one of them will run out of chances.

There is one difference with nuclear war, however, because in this situation there is no winner.

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There are so many illogical things society and governments do, but this is the greatest of them all. For millions of years the world has been evolving then man comes and shapes it to his needs. In a matter of hours we can destroy it all. This would appear to be desperately lacking common sense. Think about it. No one (almost) wants a nuclear holocaust, everybody would like a chance to plan for the future and live life through. The majority of people are peace seekers yet a group of so called "priveleged" leaders can simply say "go for it" and end everything.

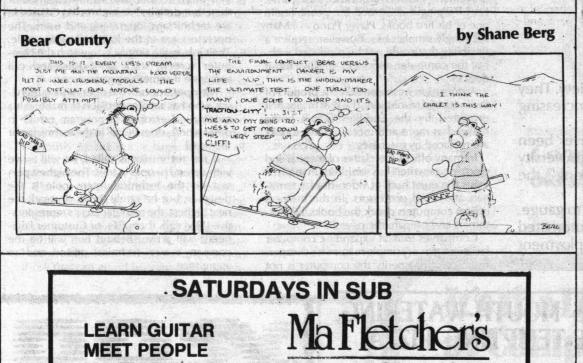
Maybe those planning to get married, those couples expecting a newborn child, those about to graduate from university after four, six, or seven years will receive a "sorry" once the first missile is launched. It isn't about to stop. As if Cruise missiles and Pershing missiles, along with all the other weapons weren't enough, but more research on how to destroy humanity goes on. Star Wars and even more destructive bombs are in the works. We don't want them but we're paying for them.

How do we stop this? Protesting isn't working. Caldicott said civil disobedience may be the answer. Violence would defeat the purpose but there are other ways to draw attention to show our concern over the threat of nuclear war. Something has to be done to make sure politicians take notice and realize the realities involved.

Reading about a nuclear holocaust and worrying about it solves nothing. Everybody has read articles like this before but enough can't be said until the words start sinking in and something is done about this greatest of all injustices. It sounds simplistic but world leaders have to start listening to the people they are serving. With a bit of common sense, serious talks could stop the arms race. If nothing is done we could commit the ultimate "stupid act" by destroying ourselves.

Be alive in '85.

Second Wind is a column for the opinions of Gateway staffers.



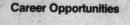
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