

feature

A morning to remember

by Barbara McCay

"The explosion broke a lot of my wedding gifts. I had a cut glass pitcher and one part of it was on the buffet table and the other part was sticking in the wall. If I had been in the line of that, it would have gone right through me."

These are the words of 99 year-old Ella Fielding — a survivor of the Halifax Explosion. The Northwood Manor resident was living in the south end at the time of the disaster, Dec. 6, 1917.

Mrs. Fielding says the day still remains vivid in her memory, even after nearly 75 years.

"I was just finished tidying up my living room and dining room when the crash came," says Mrs. Fielding.

"It was a boom. Everything shook — the glass, the windows. The curtains rolled around the curtain rods. All the soot in the fireplace just came down on the floor. It was so covered with soot you wouldn't have even known I had a carpet."

At the time of the explosion, Mrs. Fielding was 24. She had been married a year and a half and was pregnant with her first child.

When the explosion happened she was alone.

"You didn't know where the men were," she says. "Everybody was going to work at nine in the morning."

She says nobody knew what happened.

"We all ran into the streets saying, 'What happened, what happened?' At first, we all thought it was an explosion at the Citadel."

But she says the police soon came around and told them it was an explosion between two ships in the narrows.

"They said, 'Leave everything,' and made us walk down to Point Pleasant Park," says Mrs. Fielding. "It was in the winter time and very cold. I just had time to grab a sweater to put over my house dress."

We all ran into the streets saying, 'What happened, what happened?'

She says they were allowed to go home early that afternoon. The police brought her husband, George, home from the hospital soon after.

She says her husband was in the service and had been working in his office near the docks at the time of the explosion. His office window caved in and buried him in glass.

"When they brought him home I

couldn't believe it," Mrs. Fielding says. "He was soaked with blood. His uniform was all cut up and his face was a sight. It was covered with cuts. He got terrible scars and he had those scars till his grave."

She says the streets were filled with people who weren't as lucky.

"All the dead were piled on the trucks with canvas over them," says Mrs. Fielding. "They were taken to the school auditoriums or any public building so that other people could find them. That's the way they started to identify people."

"There was snow on the ground and it was extremely cold," she says. "But if it hadn't been for that we would have had a terrible epidemic with so many dead around."

Mrs. Fielding says she tried to help those who did survive.

"Somebody asked if I could sew hospital gowns and I said, 'Yes' They brought me a lot of material and said don't be fussy about it, just get them together. They weren't fancy, because they had so many injured."

She says survivors could only make the best of the aftermath and try to pick up the pieces.

"You were just lucky to be alive."

December 6th is the anniversary of the Halifax Explosion - the result of the collision between the steamships - Imo and the Mont Blanc, in the Bedford Basin.

A word from our sponsors... YNN?

by Wilfrid Dinnick

A little bit of grammar, history, and biology but first a word from our sponsors. This might well become a reality in schools across Canada if Youth National News (YNN) gets their desired headquarters here in Nova Scotia.

YNN is an idea based on Channel One in the United States. The American channel was started and is being run by Tennessee businessman and now educational guru, Chris Whittle. Whittle Communications provides video equipment to schools in exchange for a three year contract of watching closed circuit Channel One which has educational programs, documentaries and a 12 minute News Cast all produced in some capacity through Whittle Comm. Channel One also has two minutes of commercials an hour. It is estimated that approximately \$600 000 dollars are earned daily with four thirty second spots in over twelve thousand schools.

Yesterday night, City Council had

its third hearing on the proposal to make The Youth National News headquarters in Nova Scotia. The Private Company wants to build in the Ragged Lake Industrial Park. The YNN report prepared for City Council was jammed with economic incentives for the council to say yes; a \$2.5 million dollar production facility, 155 full time jobs, and an estimated \$30.6 million in direct fiscal tax revenue for the province.

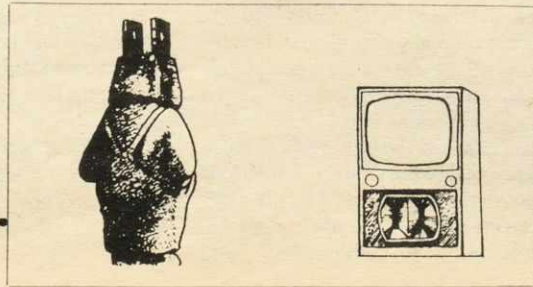
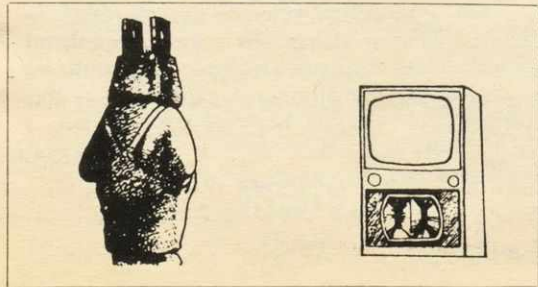
Rod MacDonald, President and the major shareholder in YNN, believes the program will slow the drop out rate, teach students to question TV and give students the practical skills they lack. The company will provide TVs, VCRs, and a video camera to the classrooms creating 'interactive TV.'

There is plenty of opposition in Halifax. School boards, teachers' unions, and parents are concerned about the implications of YNN. Anne White, President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Home & School Association, told city council last week it

gave her "visions of Big Brother." The company is driven solely by profit. Channel One has retained advertisers like Nike, Clearasil and Burger King.

Others fear that school boards which resist YNN now will eventually be blackmailed with the prospective of technology. Environmentalist David Suzuki wrote in his *Toronto Star* column that the programming of YNN "could well end up as 'infomercials'." Corporations will have a direct line to the specific market of teenage students. YNN has no reservations about admitting this. Its goal is to create a "valuable and lasting partnership between education and business."

This idea has been rejected by school boards in New Brunswick, Ontario, Quebec and more confrontation is expected here in Nova Scotia. Regardless of opposition, MacDonald said "there was no question that YNN will install its programs in the new year."



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