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President's Page

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A Hiding Place

WANTED: Safe, comfortable, retirement home. Must be able to withstand 100 mile-per-hour winds, 15-million degrees C heat. Prefer mountain site, away from the city. Reply: Box 00 ("Oh-Oh!", that is).

You see, I'm having trouble finding a hiding place. The way I figure it, nuclear war is inevitable. I mean, it's an established psychological fact that assuming the stance of readying oneself for battle makes one's enemies uneasy, whereas a less aggressive posture tends to relax them. Therefore, the more nuclear devices (bombs, that is) we manufacture — and we currently build three nuclear devices (bombs) every day — the greater the likelihood of a nuclear confrontation.

According to the director of the Center for Defense Information, Rear Admiral Gene R. LaRocque (Ret.), limited nuclear war is a myth. Only an all-out nuclear exchange should be expected, and we all know what that means!! I mean, I can appreciate water vaporizing at 100°C, but I can't even begin to comprehend 15 million°C. That's the amount of heat generated from the detonation of a nuclear device (bomb). Oh, sure, there are also gamma and X-radiation and neutrons diffusing through the atmosphere. But, it's the heat that really bothers
me. I am told that if a one-megaton nuclear device (bomb) were dropped on, say, Los Angeles, nearly one million people would die instantaneously, with another one million being seriously injured. There would be about 200,000 burn cases. Imagine, 200,000 with a total of only 2,000 burn-beds in the entire United States.

That gets me back to my original problem. Where can one hide? Certainly not in subways or in air-raid shelters. Who wants to be vaporized? Sanforized O.K., but not vaporized. And talk about purging your soul! Harry Houdini never disappeared as fast as we would if we were within six miles of where a 20-megaton nuclear device (you know) exploded.

No! The way I see it, the only safe place will be on a mountain top surrounded by something to keep all polluted air from reaching me. I could use huge fans, nuclear-powered, of course.

— David P. Frelinger, M.D.