

Civil Defense is ready-just in case

The need for preparation — for civil defense — is likely to be with us for a long time. . . . In a major attack upon our country, millions of people would be killed. There appears to be no practical program that would avoid large-scale loss of life.

From "Fallout Protection" Issued by the Department of Defense, 1961

By TOM PANZENHAGEN

Those were the days . . . the Cold War days.

Remember air raid drills back in grade school? Recall Pat Mill's offer of an ID bracelet that would withstand the intense heat of a nuclear blast? No boy or girl should die without one.

President Kennedy appealed for Americans to invest in fallout shelters. Khrushchev threatened to bury us.

It was an age of worry and hate for the bomb.

THESE DAYS, most people scoff at the notion of civil defense. They argue that we'll all meet again — don't know where, don't know when — if The Bomb goes off.

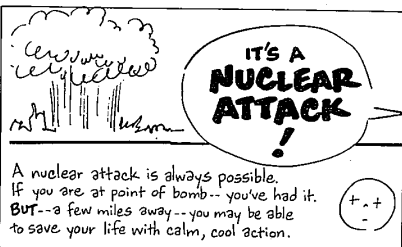
Southfield's director of civil defense, Arthur Becker, looks at it another way: "Civil defense is a hard thing to sell."

Becker hasn't given up, though. He sells CD from his office in Southfield's Civic Center and from his department's communications headquarters in a nearby basement every chance he gets. "We're working hard here, even if people don't know it," Becker said.

"Things are changing — we update our emergency plans every couple of years," Becker said. But things are changing in other ways, too.

The city no longer keeps its two dozen or so fallout shelters stocked with food and emergency supplies.

Instead, the city relies on assistance



This bit of advice comes from "What to Do in a Disaster" — an emergency information pamphlet published by Channing L. Bete Company and distributed locally by Southfield Civil Defense.

from groups such as the merchants at Northland shopping center.

A shelter there, in a vast tunnel under the parking facilities, could accommodate 10,000 people in an emergency.

"We'd rely on the restaurants and supermarkets in the center for food and supplies," Becker said.

If people couldn't get to a fallout shelter during a bombing, said Becker, they'd be safe in their basements — assuming the bomb doesn't destroy that basement in the first place.

Becker suggests that homeowners keep a supply of food — tuna fish, sardines, canned things — and a battery-operated radio in their basements at all times, in case of attack.

SURVIVAL is Becker's business. The much-decorated World War II veteran has called Southfield's civil defense shots for 17 years.

Becker, 61, remembers that the defense program had but a few volunteers when he took over in 1962. He

tion in times of peace and fair weather is to assist the police and fire departments whenever and wherever possible — also patrol neighborhoods in search of such things as garage doors that have been left open and lawnmowers and bikes that have been left unguarded on front lawns.

In such instances, a friendly "courtesy notice" is placed on doors as a reminder to residents to be more careful. It could be said, then, that the civil defense deputies are both fair- and foul-weather friends to Southfielders.

During last winter's massive ice storm, 50 civil defense deputies aided the fire department, police and Edison workers in clearing debris and watching downed wires to make sure no one was hurt.

As a result, the civil defense program was awarded a certificate of thanks by fire officials, Becker said.



ARTHUR BECKER

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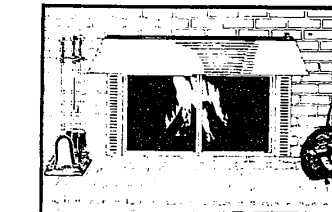
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