

# Nuclear war: Teens confront a tough issue

By Alice Collins  
staff writer

The topic was nuclear war. The speakers talked about things like ICBMs, submarine missile launch, prompt radiation, fallout radiation, kill power, temperatures as hot as the center of the sun, heat that ignites and vaporizes everything.

One participant called it "a grim seminar."  
In was conducted in a Cranbrook School lecture room with a map of the world hanging up front.

About 100 high-school students at

Cranbrook and Kingswood schools in Bloomfield Hills came to listen and participate in the daylong program Friday.

"They came to face the tough nuclear war issue head on," said Cranbrook religious studies teacher Howard Berkowitz. Berkowitz and Cranbrook biology teacher Jim DeCamp organized the seminar, "but it was a core of interested students who carried it out," said Berkowitz.

"THERE'S BEEN more talk at school about it than there used to be," said Janet Sachs, a Kingswood senior, "but still not enough."

"We've tried to bring it up to talk about when we're eating lunch, but then the kids say, 'No, I don't want to talk about it at lunch, it scares me too much.'"

"But that's what scares me even more," said Sachs, a resident of West Bloomfield, "the fact that it's so dangerous they don't even want to think about it."

"It is hard to think about. But if we don't do something, there isn't going to be anything left. The kids've got to sign up for this so the ones here today (at the seminar) are the ones who are concerned most," she added.

THE CRANBROOK seminar is one

of an increasing number of events here and throughout the world designed to publicize and/or promote a freeze on the production of nuclear weapons.

"Our program is balanced but leaning toward criticism of the way the world and the United States has handled the nuclear situation so far," Berkowitz said.

"The issue arose for us because of the general threat and our concern for the way nuclear weapons might be handled in the Reagan administration."

The idea was to lay out the issue for the students, hoping the kids will decide there's more they want to learn about, said Berkowitz. "We could in no

way cover the whole issue in one day. This was to be thought provoking."

DAVID GEIGER of Bloomfield Hills, a senior at Cranbrook School, saw the film "War Without Winners" at Christ Church Cranbrook in February. That got him interested in helping plan the seminar, he said.

"I can make a very good case that we can't keep it limited," continued Saperstein. "But how are we going to find out?"

Saperstein, in non-technical terms, described the "enormous" kill power of current nuclear weaponry as compared to the "blockbuster" bombs of World War II.

A fraction of the weaponry systems of the superpowers of the world "could knock your opponent back to the Stone Age," he said.

"You're reading about people calling for a freeze on nuclear weapons, people calling for unilateral disarmament, others calling for full nuclear control," said Saperstein. "Some are pro nuclear weapons."

"I strongly suggest you don't take what I say with too much seriousness," said Saperstein. "But I hope you take it seriously enough to go out and read things for yourselves."

OTHER SPEAKERS Friday were Dr. Thomas Zipp of Ann Arbor, a member of Physicians for Social Responsibility, who spoke on the medical effects of nuclear fallout.

Participants saw the films, "War Without Winners," "The Last Epidemic" and "Dr. Strangelove" — all depicting nuclear war.

Also speaking was the Rev. Thomas Lumpkin. He addressed the religious and ethical implications of nuclear war.

OPENING SPEAKER was Dr. Alan Saperstein, professor of physics at Wayne State University.

"We can never prove in advance whether we can limit a nuclear war," he told the students. "If we had a lot of



STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Cranbrook and Kingswood students quizzed guest speakers about nuclear war at last Friday's seminar. Dr. Alan Saperstein (left), professor of physics at Wayne State University, was one of those invited to discuss the apocalyptic subject.

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