

Boise Fallout Shelter For Chosen Few (\$100)

This is the final part of a series by columnist Inez Robb on a community fallout shelter in Boise, Idaho.

By INEZ ROBB

BOISE, Idaho — What inspired the federal government, through the office of Civil Defense, to underwrite in Boise the first community shelter it has built in the U.S.A.?

The answer to that question, without doubt, is the persistence of a handful of young paterfamilias who live in the Highlands area, a new residential development tucked away in the foothills north of Boise. Highlands is largely a community of young families. The shelter project really began three years ago when a few youthful fathers started to worry about family protection from nuclear fallout in case of atomic war.

But why worry in Boise or, for that matter, in Idaho, a good many readers are probably asking?

Once upon a time, I planned to head for Idaho and safety in case of nuclear war. Then the Atomic Energy Commission constructed its great National Reactor Testing Station at Arco, near Idaho Falls, where the nuclear engines for the atomic submarine Nautilus, the atomic carrier Enterprise and the atomic missile cruiser Long Beach were built and tested.

At the Arco installation construction is well along on the natural circulation reactor, which it is hoped will offer major simplification to current nuclear submarine reactors.

Nearer home, and only 50 miles as the missile flies, is one of the Air Force's great installations, the Mountain Home Air Base. Closer still to Boise, the government is now building a complex of silos for intercontinental missiles.

So a handful of young fathers in Highlands began pestering

the local Office of Civil Defense. Eventually, of the \$142,000 needed to build the Highlands Community Shelter, Inc., the federal treasury provided \$122,000.

Designed to house 1,000 men, women and children, or approximately 275 families, the two-story shelter, driven into a foothill, was completed two months ago. On payment of \$100 any family in the Highlands area is entitled to shelter there in case of nuclear war.

But suppose a family doesn't have a hundred dollars with which to buy a membership and safety, or doesn't live in the Highlands area. What then? Then it's just too bad. In case of war, only paid-up members in the Highlands area need apply.

Many residents of Boise are bitter that "their money" — Federal tax money — has been used to build a shelter (prototype or no) for a small, select community.

The directors of Highlands Shelter Community, Inc., shrug off charges that they lack compassion and that their shelter is a denial that man is his brother's keeper.

The government may regard this community shelter as a prototype. But it is the second shelter these young men contemplate that could be the real prototype for the nation. The

directors own sufficient land adjacent to the present shelter to double its capacity if enough persons are interested.

It is hardly to be expected that the federal government would underwrite the second venture. So family memberships in the duplicate shelter would cost \$300 to \$350 at a minimum. "But it's still cheaper than a backyard shelter," the directors insist.

Only time will tell if persons are sufficiently interested in paying for community shelters for themselves and their families.

In the meantime, the present shelter is to be employed as a community center by a variety of organizations. It may even serve as the first clubhouse for the Highlands Golf Course, now being laid out on land adjacent to the controversial shelter. A nineteenth hole, indeed!

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