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## Dug In With a D.J., Waiting for Y2K

By STUART ELLIOTT

THOSE pondering whether to hunker down as the Year 2000 approaches may look to a decision by MTV to bunker down.

MTV Interactive, the online division of the MTV cable television network, is sponsoring a stunt for New Year's Eve that will relocate six young Americans to a dwelling that's not so much far from home as it is deep. They will live for a week in the bowels of Times Square as a kind of survival squad in case the forebodings of millennial Jeremiahs come true. Their stay is being called the Bunker Project -- "The Real World" meets the end of the world.

"No one believes the world will come to an end," said Allie Eberhardt, creative director at MTV.com, part of MTV Interactive, and executive producer of the project. "But who knows?" he added laughingly. "Maybe we're wrong."

If so, the MTV.com bunkernauts -- three would-be Adams and three potential Eves, ranging in age from 19 to 30 -- will be ready for a cosmic meltdown early on New Year's Day. In the meantime, they will be ensconced underground in a compound consisting of three redesigned 6-by-8-foot tornado shelters, a toilet, a shower, a kitchen and a media room.

A media room? Of course. This is, after all, MTV. And one of the six is a D.J., natch.

"It's important to preserve the MTV culture, the DNA, if you will," Mr. Eberhardt said.

The bunker is meant to blend the fin de siecle spookiness of "The X-Files" with the sensibilities of the space-age bachelor pad life style.

"It's somewhere between a 60's fallout shelter and David Lynch's 'Blue Velvet,' with a bit of 'Barbarella' thrown in," said Steven Harris of Steven Harris Architects in New York, which is preparing the bunker in the subbasement of the Times Square home of The New York Times at 229 West 43rd Street, near Eighth Avenue.

"It's a playful version of domesticity, a sendup like 'Pee-wee's Playhouse,'" he added. For Mr. Harris, the busyness "will substitute for the missing stimulations of life."

"I'm assuming younger people are fairly adventuresome," he said, walking through the subbasement space where tornado shelters, painted in colors he called Caterpillar yellow, John Deere green and Ford industrial blue are being set up.

That accounts for touches like a photoluminescent floor in the media room, sofas colored in atomic orange, button-tufted gold Mylar and flocked walls, beds made from cargo netting and fake-fur throws.

What does Lenore Davis, 27, a bunkernaut, want to take with her? "There's a body pillow I love and a cool camping sleeping bag," Ms. Davis, an account executive for LoadTV.com, a Web-based broadcaster, said. "If the world is ending, I will sleep in comfort."

The bunkernauts were selected from more than 300 people "who came in after a call out to our users and viewers," Mr. Eberhardt said. The list was winnowed by the MTV.com staff and an online vote.

The New York Times space was "the perfect find," he added. "We wanted a space in Times Square, because that's ground zero for New Year's Eve, and it provided us the atmosphere we were looking for."

The other tenants of what MTV.com hopes will be the most-watched bunker in New York since "All in the Family" went off the air are Mike Carson, 30, the D.J.; Zack Goodman, 25, a research scientist; Tina Kim, 28, a comedian; Maureen Kyle, 19, a student; and Michael Michael, 23, a musician.

The schedule calls for the six to move in on Dec. 26 and stay through the early morning of New Year's Day. Army officers are to visit for an hour a day the first five days to offer survival training. The goings-on can be watched by computer users -- at least until the stroke of midnight on Jan. 1 -- at [www.mtv.com](http://www.mtv.com). Television lights and cameras have been installed in the subbasement to make the Webcast possible. MTV.com's stipulations for the bunker brigade include a code of conduct covering nudity, language and sex.

Discussions are under way to show some of the activities on MTV on Dec. 31, Mr. Eberhardt said.

Both he and Nancy Nielsen, a spokeswoman for The New York Times Company, declined to discuss the financial arrangements under

which MTV Interactive is renting the space. It was vacated by The Times after printing operations moved to a new plant in College Point, Queens. The presses are gone, leaving cavernous spaces, concrete pillars, metal flooring and wires.

Ms. Nielsen said the idea was MTV's and this is solely their project. "At first, we thought this was really nuts, the idea of MTV locking six kids in our basement," she said.

"Then MTV said, 'Don't worry, we'll give them food and water.' "