

# Elon works to improve recycling habits on campus

**Jacquie Anderson**

Reporter

You might not think much of what happens to your Coke can after throwing it into a recycling bin, or about what happens to the needle that was just used to draw your blood at the local hospital.

Physical plant workers at Alamance Regional Medical Center and Elon University know how important it is to the safety and sustainability of the environment that both hazardous and non-hazardous waste is disposed of properly. Employees of the medical center think recycling is so important that they make sure to have it play a daily part in patients' and students' lives.

Most of the office supplies used and the furniture provided at ARMC are made from recyclable materials. The furniture is given to other foundations when it comes to the end

of its usefulness at ARMC. The more daunting task for any medical facility is the process of safely destroying and properly disposing of hazardous waste.

Wendell Osbourne, director of material management for ARMC, explains that there are four kinds of hazardous waste generated from the hospital: chemical, chemotherapy, radioactive and infectious or regulated materials. Chemotherapy and infectious products are collected by Stericycle in Mebane, and are incinerated in order to eliminate any risk of leakage into the surrounding environment. North Carolina Radiological Pharmaceutical is in charge of collecting and properly destroying all radioactive products or isotopes.

Infectious waste alone costs the hospital 32 cents a pound for removal and extermination. According to Osbourne the hospital destroyed 170,000 pounds of such material last year. This amount is described by Osbourne as "low

compared to most hospitals." He said the costs of removal are little compared to the possible danger a leak or exposure to these wastes could create to nearby wildlife or human dwellings. Just a few miles away at another major Alamance County institution, Elon University employees are hard at work emphasizing the importance of recycling to students.

Elon is a member of the Collegiate Recyclers Coalition, and provides recycling bins in all dorms, classrooms, administration offices and the library. The materials from the bins are collected by Republic Waste and transported to the FCR Recycling Corp. in Greensboro, where they are sorted out into the appropriate sections and enter the process of being recycled. According to Elon's Web site, the university recycled 144,000 pounds of white cardboard and paper, and 16,000 pounds of other recyclable items in 2003. Employees of Elon's environmental services department

are hoping to see these numbers go up in years to come.

"One of our goals is to publicize recycling more on campus," says Edward Eng, director of Elon's Physical Plant. "We are working with the Student Government Association to create contests and activities that will increase awareness of recycling on campus."

Osbourne puts it best when confronted with the question of how the process of recycling can be improved at institutions. "The biggest way we can improve the process of recycling is to eliminate using any products that are non-recyclable." Until this improvement is made, citizens at these institutions are working hard to publicize and perfect the recycling process.

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## Breaking through the bubble

### Supreme Court won't undo Massachusetts gay marriage law

The Supreme Court rejected a challenge by conservative groups to the status of Massachusetts as the only state that sanctions same-sex marriages. Justices had been asked to overturn a year-old decision by the Massachusetts high court that legalized gay marriage. They declined, without comment. In the past year, at least 3,000 gay Massachusetts couples have wed, although voters may have a chance next year to change the state constitution to permit civil union benefits to same-sex couples, but not the institution of marriage. Opposers of the November 2003 ruling by the highest court in Massachusetts argue that it violated the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of a republican form of government in each state.

### Seven people die in Army helicopter crash

An Army helicopter carrying seven soldiers crashed after hitting a web of support wires on a television transmission tower whose warning lights had been knocked out in a storm last week. Everyone aboard was killed. The helicopter, a UH-60 Black Hawk bound for Red River Army Depot in Texarkana, went down in a field about 30 miles northeast of Fort Hood. The fog was so thick when emergency crews arrived that they could see no more than halfway up the tower. The helicopter was headed to check out equipment being readied for use in Iraq. All the victims were from Fort Hood.

### Iraqi security forces suffer new attacks

Insurgents stepped up attacks on Iraq's new security forces, killing seven Iraqi police and guardsmen in a suicide bombing hours after storming a police station north of the capital. Two U.S. soldiers died in a bombing in Baghdad.

In addition, two U.S. Marines were killed in a weekend bombing south of the capital. U.S., British and Iraqi forces have been going through the area to clear Sunni insurgents from a string of towns and cities between Baghdad and the Shiite shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala. Military offensives in Fallujah and elsewhere have made November the second deadliest month for U.S. troops since the March 2003 invasion, with at least 130 Americans dead.

### More than 140 still trapped in China mine

Toxic gas hampered the search for 141 trapped coal miners following an explosion in central China. At least 25 people were confirmed dead. High levels of carbon monoxide kept rescuers from reaching the site of Sunday's disaster in Shaanxi province. However, 127 workers managed to escape the state-owned mine, with 45 hospitalized and 11 with serious injuries. The blast rocked Chenjiashan coal mine early Sunday morning, when 293 workers were underground. The explosion was centered around coal pits five miles from the mine entrance. Most of the miners who escaped were working close to the entrance and many suffered from carbon monoxide poisoning.

### Postal Service gets ready for an abundance of holiday mail

The U.S. Postal Service expects to handle 20 billion pieces of mail between Thanksgiving and Christmas, up slightly from last year, the agency said. While the overall total averaged out to 670 million items per day, the peak mailing day is expected to be Dec. 20, as people send out cards the weekend before Christmas. Mailings could jump to 850 million items that day. The postal agency is striving to make mailing as convenient as possible, selling stamps by telephone at 1-800-STAMP-24 and via the Internet at <http://www.ups.com>, as well as at 38,000 post offices, 21,000 retail stores and 16,000 automated teller machines. Many post offices will have extended hours, and some will open on Sundays.

### Job prospects look bright for college seniors

The recovering economy and looming retirement of the baby boomers are making this a very good year to be a college senior looking for a job after graduation. Recruiters, career counselors and students say the fall recruiting season has been the most active since the dot-com boom. College hiring is expected to increase 13 percent over last year, according to a new survey from National Association of Colleges and Employers. Seven out of 10 employers said they expected to increase salary offers to new college grads with an average increase of 3.7 percent. Four in five employers called the job market for new grads good, very good or excellent; last year, fewer than two in five did.