

## Hazardous Waste—a threat to us all

By Elizabeth Denning

It seems that almost every time I turn on the television there is a story about hazardous waste sites. I can personally relate to this subject because last year at this time the state wanted to put one in our little town of 35,000. The people of our town came together so quickly that the decision to put it somewhere else was determined. Who knows where the state will finally decide to put the stuff. Nobody wants it!!

Hazardous waste involves the industrial waste created in manufacturing processes. It is toxic, flammable, corrosive, or reactive. It is regulated under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. These wastes are dangerous to humans and harmful to the environment. Low-level radioactive waste is all the radioactive wastes not classified in the high level. It comes from the nuclear power plants (97%) with the other, 3% coming from medical research labs, university labs, and hospitals.

Over two million radioactive packages are shipped in the U.S. each year. Experience has shown that trucks carrying "low-level" waste have accidents at the standard accident rate and for common causes. For trucks the accident rate is estimated at an accident every 150,000 miles traveled, including low-level waste shipments of trash, and shield shipments of resins, sludges, and irradiated components. It is scary to think that when you pass a truck on a highway that is not labeled that it could be carrying hazardous wastes.

There is considerable debate about the health effect of poor training, illegal dumping, and midnight burns. Serious health problems in workers include headaches, rashes, respiratory burning, tremors, memory loss, psychology changes, and hair loss. These are just a small few of the sites that have had considerable problems and failures causing health problems.

There are also a number of economic problems that come with a hazardous incinerator. Property values decrease near the vicinity of the facility and along routes mainly traveled by transport vehicles. Who wants to live next to a hazardous waste incinerator? There is also an increased cost for highway maintenance, for fire and spill response, and for facility inspections. Not to mention the effect on wildlife that is forced out of its natural habitat because of the construction involved in the building of a plant. The community around it becomes known as a "dumping ground."

The entire problem began a couple of years ago when Governor Martin signed an agreement with four other states. The governor promised North Carolina would build the dumps as our contribution to the agreement. In

this decision he chose the most undesirable method of disposal; incineration and landfill. He could have taken other avenues, but decided not to. One he could have taken would have been the idea of biological methods and metal recovery in which metals were reused. But the best idea would have been source reduction. When North Carolina entered the Low Level Radioactive Waste Compact, they proposed that they would be taking all the "low level" waste from eight states for twenty years; if the federal government cuts back on the low level of radiation exposure. One theory says that there is a threshold level of radiation in which harmful effects will not result. A more conservative approach says that there is no safe level of radiation exposure. This was stated by the Governor's Waste Management Board booklet.

This problem of hazardous waste does not stop in the United States. In Denmark a plant closed after toxic gases drifted through a community. Emergency orders kept people in their homes for twelve hours. In Sweden tests were done downwind from an incinerator, and fairly high levels of dioxins were found in the air and soils. Milk from the cows grazing nearby had more than ten times as much dioxin and furan as cows grazing elsewhere. In Scotland dairy cows picked massive levels of contamination, threatening public health through the sale of milk and meat. Cows were found to be ill downwind from the incinerator, too. The scary thing to think about is how close the incinerator could be to us. There are many failures that have happened at other waste incinerators. In El Dorado, Arkansas, the actual incinerator blew up! Six cases of rare sinus cancer have been treated by local doctors. Groundwater contamination and use of improper decontamination procedures are other problems. In Baton Rouge, Louisiana, citizens have complained for years of health problems that they have attributed to the plant emissions; complaints include nausea, itchiness, sore throats, dead livestock and dirty cars. This incinerator was temporarily closed. In Lenoir, North Carolina, numerous toxic wastes spilled into creeks and accumulated in fields. It closed in 1987 because of violations of federal laws. Local residents documented spills, and with the number of proposed dumps, we could be taking most of the volume of radioactive wastes from our nation. This means that 37% of the nation's radioactive waste would become North Carolina's responsibility forever! Will North Carolina be another landfill in the sky? Nobody knows, but many are willing to fight it to the end.

## Mid East Teach-In Draws Positive Response

By Lisa Gorman

"Why were we there?" "Why is religion such an important factor in the Middle East?" "What's going to happen now?" These are just a few of the questions that were tossed around during the Teach In on March 19th. While the Teach In was originally planned during the war, the speakers made it quite clear that although the fighting is over, the Middle East will continue to have a significant effect on the rest of the world.

On Tuesday, March 19th, Saint Mary's students attended six different sessions of this Teach In. Mr. Lee and Dr. Hume provided the historical overview of the Middle East while Dr. Esthimer and Dr. Caddell held group debates on the morality of not only the Persian Gulf war, but also war in general. Dr. Melbourne and Mrs. Anderson illustrated the feminine point of view through a skit. Dr. Quinn explained the intricate religion of Islam that has played such an important role in the Middle East. Dr. O'Shaughnessey and Cameron Campbell pointed out major reasons for U.S. involvement in the war and what consequences may arise.

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a waitress. "It mostly involved a lot of waiting around. Sometimes you feel like a nobody when you are just an extra, but you get to see how exciting it is for the major characters, so it makes you want to succeed even more," Tina says. "The first time I saw Richard Dreyfuss [the star of the movie] he looked kind of bummy, with a baseball cap on and old jeans. Holly Hunter [the leading lady]—was very short and had to speak with a Northern accent in the movie which was funny, because once she was off camera she'd go back to her natural Southern drawl," she explains. "Once while I was waiting to go on, I was standing with my tray. It was hard to balance because it was pretty heavy; it was real silver with real glasses. So I was standing there," Tina now gets up to demonstrate, "and I took a step back. Meanwhile, Richard Dreyfuss is directly behind me so when I stepped back I accidentally touched his foot; I mean I barely touched it. But then, all of a sudden, he grabs his foot, starts hopping around on one leg, and hollering. Everyone is looking at him and, of course I'm turning bright red. Just then he stops and says, 'Just kidding.'" Tina hopes to go to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to further her study of drama. Tina has been to many summer programs for acting at Brevard College, the North Carolina School of the Arts, and the University of California at Los Angeles. She has also had expe-

The Middle East is an extremely volatile area of the world right now, and the American public has a responsibility to stay informed about the events in that area. St. Mary's is lucky to have professors who are so well informed on the subject and are able to convey their knowledge to the students. The air raids and the ground battles may be over, and although Raleigh, North Carolina, is thousands of miles away, the Middle East remains a center for world attention which will continue to affect us for years to come.

Thanks to Ellen Anderson, Joe Caddell, Steve Esthimer, Karen Hillman, Jack Hume, Roger Lee, Lucy Melbourne, Linda Mueller, Maggie O'Shaughnessey, Van Quinn, Terry Thompson, Dean Watson, Talia Beckman, Amy Bolin, Alisa King, Donna King, Cameron Campbell, Katherine Jordan, Catherine Engstrom, Elizabeth Gillam, Alison Bates, and Ann Maury Smith.

## Spain Trip Planned

Carolyn Hicks and Anne Burks will be chaperoning a group of Saint Mary's students on a trip to Spain this summer. They hope to get a good group together, so let them know if you are interested.

rience acting on stage with The Junior League of Raleigh and directing here at Saint Mary's. "At first you might think it is luck, but it really takes dedication, and determination," Tina says. "It also pays to be nice and generous. Many people in this business are selfish, but people know when you are nice, and it will take you places. Sometimes I wonder what good I am doing in this choice of career; but, then I realize what a big part entertainment plays in our world. Entertainment can help bring out emotions in people. Acting is a form of art, and a great means of expression," she states. Two of Tina's favorite actresses are Glenn Close and Sally Field. "It really depends on the character. I like strong female roles, characters that you can relate to. I don't like women's characters that are all just sex objects; I like to see deeper emotion than that," Tina says. "I also like movies that have deep emotion that you can relate to. Movies that make a statement, like *Driving Miss Daisy*, are my favorites."

"Sometimes I do think about just being at the Oscars. I would love to feel the excitement of being there along with all the famous stars, and just seeing them would be a thrill for me!" she says. Tina did just receive an award of appreciation for her contributions to the drama department of Saint Mary's, a well-deserved recognition of her talent and hard work.