

On March 16, 1979 the Movie "The China Syndrome" was released. It is a thriller about a television reporter, Jane Fonda, and her cameraman, Michael Douglas, who discover safety cover-ups at a nuclear power plant. In one scene

contributing to the public's fears. 1 By Friday afternoon the rumors of a "radiation vacation" became a reality. School officials, guided by President Carter and Governor Thornburgh saying "its better to err on the side of caution" decided to cancel classes at least until Tuesday. By 4 pm Friday afternoon, campus looked like a ghost town. The weather helped too. It was a very gray day. The streets around campus were deserted, except for some seniors who saw humor in the situation and donned has mat suits and gas masks. Our emotions ran the gamut from surprised, to scared to confused to elated. Many of us headed home, armed with important possessions like teddy bears, cameras, and photos in case we could not return to campus at all. And we brought books too, just in case there really were going to be exams the following week! Another radiation vacation destination was "our nations capital". Two F&M students spending spring semester in DC had an unexpected party with friends from campus who decided to descend upon them. But they were very careful not to leave their dorm room too often as DC was not very far and no one knew how dangerous this really was or was not. And then there were the die hards. The people who decided that the fraternity party they planned for Friday night was a go. After all, hundreds of pounds of sand were already in the basement. And party they did-with anyone and everyone who decided to stay in Lancaster!

By the following week, we were back at school figuring out what exams and papers were due. Life had returned to its new normal. The semester would not be extended. The only visible memory of TMI were those bright yellow shirts with "hell no, we won't glow, on the front and radiation Vacation 1979 on the back.