

# Salt mine problems produce concern in area

By Lee Strong  
Senior staff writer

When officials of Retsof's Akzo Salt Mine asked about drilling on the A.R. Christiano Farm near Cuylerville to reach the site of a mine collapse, Jerry Christiano said he and his two brothers — Vincent and Richard — agreed without hesitation.

"We just told them 'go ahead,'" said Christiano, a parishioner at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Leicester. "I haven't even got all of the leases done. But I'm not worried about that.

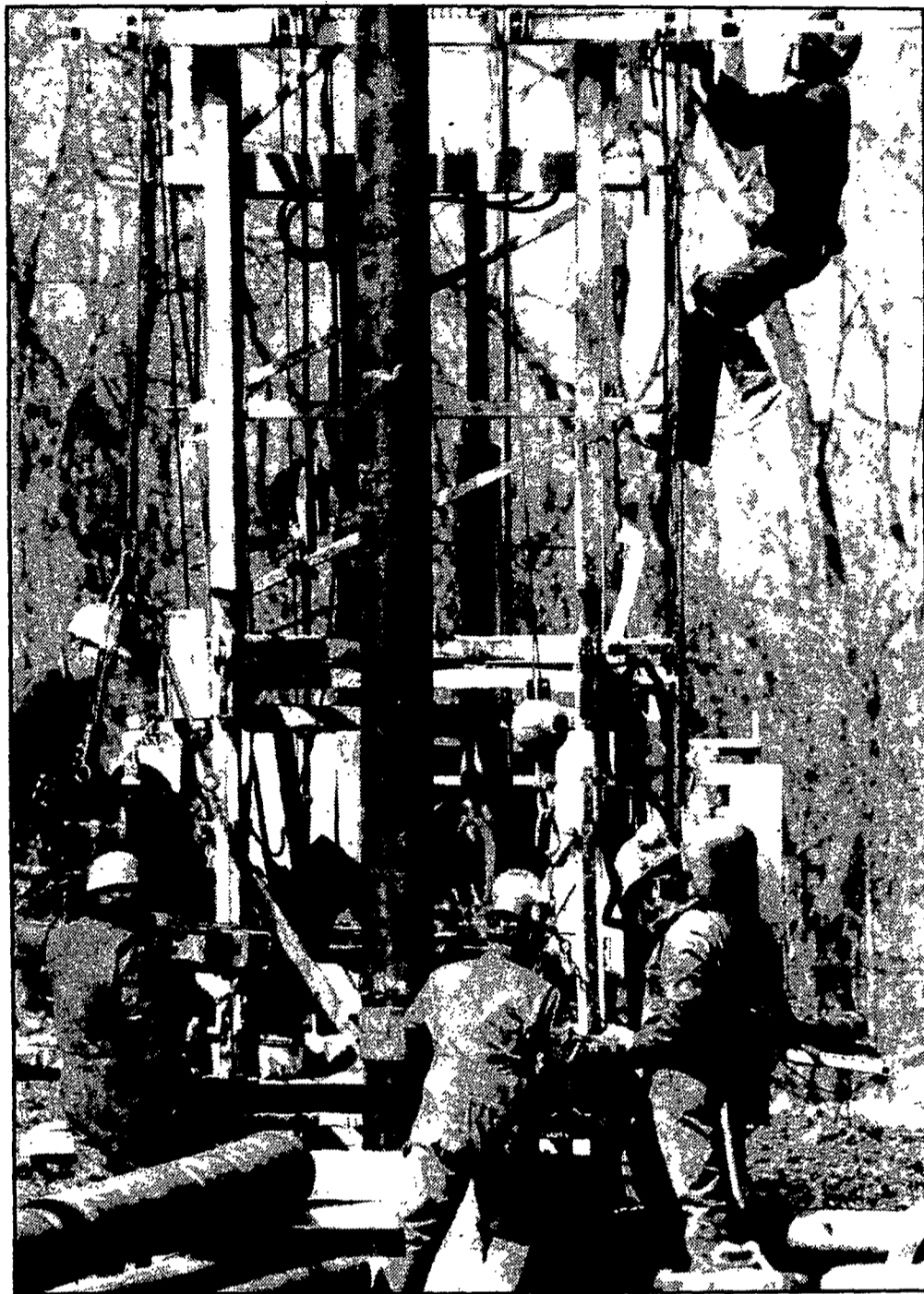
"If we don't get the mine open and these people back to work," Christiano continued, "It's going to be devastating to the area."

The Christiano farm is located above the site of the March 12 collapse. The mine is located approximately 1,100 feet beneath the earth. The collapse — and not an earthquake as was originally speculated — is believed also to have caused damage to a bridge near the junction of routes 20A and 39 in Cuylerville. The bridge has been closed since the collapse.

Water has been pouring into the mine's damaged section at an estimated rate of 4,000 gallons per minute. Mining operations have ceased, leading residents to worry that unless the leak and the threat of additional collapses can be relieved, the approximately 310 workers employed at the mine could lose their jobs.

Closing the mine even on a short-term basis would also have a rippling effect on the local economy beyond the direct impact on employees and their families: The Genesee and Wyoming Rail Road depends on the salt from the mine for the bulk of its freight service; area stores rely on mine workers and truckers who transport the salt for business; and the mine pays a significant portion of local property taxes.

The company is awaiting approval



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Akzo Salt personnel work on a drilling rig that penetrates the mine so that water can be pumped out. The rig is working on the A.R. Christiano Farm, which is located directly above the mine.

from environmental officials to pump out some of the water from the mine into the Genesee River through drill sites on the Christiano's farm. In addition, company officials hope to use drill sites to help plug the underground leak and prevent more water from getting into the mine.

Concerns over the mine are constantly on the minds of Livingston County residents, noted Father Edward B. Zenkel, pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Church and its mission parish of St. Lucy's in Retsof.

"The direct effect now is apprehension is in the air because of the need for employment, the taxes the mine pays," Father Zenkel said. He added, however, "A lot of the immediate shock has been lessened by the honesty of the people in the mine."

Indeed, Father Zenkel observed, mine officials have had a history of cooperation with area people. He noted, for example, that the mine donated the property on which St. Lucy's Church was built. And whenever local organizations or churches have run into financial problems, mine owners were quick to assist.

The response to the current situation among workers is one of trust and support, Father Zenkel continued. Miners were willing to renegotiate their contract in light of the problems, which, he said, "shows they feel they are being treated very fairly."

And, he reported, women in the parishes have even joined women from area churches to bake cookies for safety teams currently working in the mine.

The Christianos are also doing their part by allowing the drilling operation on their land.

"When you have something like the mine go out, you've got big problems socially, economically," Christiano said. "My two brothers and myself are very much concerned about the people who work in the mine."

## Just war, conscientious objection dual norms, says prof

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Current Catholic teaching on the morality of war represents a "sea change" from what was taught in the past, according to Dr. Jamey Campbell, a professor at Rochester Institute of Technology.

"Within the last 20 years, the Roman church has moved from a norm of just-war theory to a double norm," Campbell said. He noted that the other norm taught by church leaders today is "conscientious objection."

"Both norms share a common presumption against the use of force as a means of settling disputes," he said, noting that Jesus strongly counseled against violence in Matthew 5:38-48.

Campbell made his remarks as part of a forum on "War, Religion and Morality" on Tuesday, March 29, at RIT's Kilian J. and Caroline F. Schmitt Interfaith Center.

Campbell was joined by Rabbi Judea Miller of Temple B'rith Kodesh, and Dr. Mohammad Shafiq, Imam of the city's Islamic Center.

All three speakers noted that their religions support defensive war and wars to stop genocides, but all three faiths also strongly condemn any violence against the weak and the defenseless.

Dr. Shafiq explained that, in particular, Islam stresses the need to eschew revenge and practice mercy on prisoners of war and the inhabitants of conquered cities — a practice exemplified by Islam's

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Dr. Jamey Campbell, RIT

founder, the Prophet Mohammed. The prophet forbade his followers to plunder and pillage their enemies, he explained.

"Even if there is a war, keep to morality, keep to ethics," is Islam's message, he said.

Judaism also condemns excessive or needless war, but Jews have varied from those who withdraw from warfare completely, regarding it a worldly concern of the powerful to those who embrace just warfare on behalf of the innocent whom duty calls the good to defend.

"An absolute pacifistic approach is hard to find in Judaism," Rabbi Miller concluded. "Everyone regards peace as the ultimate goal for the end of days, but impractical now."

The Christian churches — and most notably, the Catholic Church — has rad-

ically changed its thinking on conscientious objection since Pope Pius XII condemned pacifism in the 1950s, Campbell noted. Although the pope also condemned total warfare, Pius thought "conscientious objection to a just war was immoral," he said.

Vatican II, however, saw the church acknowledge the duty of nations to protect those who refuse to bear arms as long as they perform community service, Campbell explained. This laid the ground for future hierarchical endorsements of conscientious objection including the U.S. bishops' endorsement of the belief in their 1983 peace pastoral.

Pacifism, a mark of the early church, has always existed at Christianity's margins, Campbell noted. But the just-war theory to this day holds sway over the consciences of most Christians, as evidenced by the debate provoked in 1990-91 when President George Bush used the theory to justify forcibly removing Iraq from Kuwait.

Yet, from the Iraqi point of view, Kuwait — indeed, most Middle Eastern nations — derive their origins from British boundary-drawers who sought to create Arab "nations" conducive to Western economic interests, according to Goodwin Cooke, the forum's keynote speaker.

A professor of ethics and international affairs at Syracuse University, Cooke served on several U.S. embassy assignments in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and served as consul and aide to

the U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia in the 1960s.

"To Saddam Hussein (Iraq's president) and many Arabs, the sovereign territorial state is a Western idea," Cooke said. "When President Bush said he wanted to restore the legitimate government of Kuwait, Saddam Hussein said there is no legitimate Kuwait."

He noted that the British and the French created kingdoms and nations throughout the Middle East earlier this century in order to protect their interests, and that many Arabs harbor a resentment of Western interference in their affairs.

"Most Arab governments supported the U.S.," he said of Operation Desert Storm. "But most people in the street supported Hussein."

Similarly, Serbs see themselves as potential victims of Croatia and Bosnia, not as those countries' invaders and persecutors, Cooke maintained.

For example, a Nazi puppet regime established by German invaders in Croatia during World War II still haunts its Serbian victims, Cooke said. Hence, it did not comfort the Serbs in the 1990s when West Germany became the first nation to recognize Croatia's declaration of independence — an act that was followed by Serbian attacks, he noted.

Cooke stressed that he was not justifying Serbian — or for that matter, Iraqi — atrocities. Indeed, he thought the West was justified in intervening in the former Yugoslavia because the war might spread to other nations.