



The blowout preventer is just leaking a little

When the ultra-liberal Obama administration advocates opening up whole new oceans to offshore drilling, you know we need the oil.

So what do we do now?
Good question.
The spill, already big, will get bigger before oil-company officials find a way to shut it off. The gusher, which killed 11 and eventually sank the drill rig Deepwater Horizon, is pouring around 5,000 barrels of crude oil a day into the Gulf of Mexico.

As oil disasters go, it's big, maybe as big as the Exxon Valdez grounding in Alaska in the 1980s. Coastal towns and fishermen there say they're still dealing with the effects of that spill.

But apparently it could be much bigger. British Petroleum officials estimate the well's total flow at 40,000 to 60,000 barrels per day. The company thinks the blowout preventer, a valve designed to shut down an out-of-control well, may be working, just leaking a little. At 50,000, the spill would be 10 times bigger than it already is.

At the current rate, it will take nearly two months to equal the size of the Exxon spill, and experts still expect to have it shut down by then. The company has been using remote-control submarines to try to shut valves, tweak equipment and control the well at the wellhead, but that is 5,000 feet under the surface.

The firm tried to lower a containment dome over the well over the weekend, but it's another world down there, literally. It's dark, cold and the pressure is enormous. Natural gas turns to slush under those conditions, or worse yet, combines with water to form a kind of ice.

It was the hydrate crystals formed by the gas that gummed up the dome, keeping it from working. Slushy gas, expanding as it rose up the pipe, blew out the well and destroyed the drill platform.

The company has another dome ready to go and might shoot junk, ground up tires and the like, into the blowout preventer to jam the valve. Maybe one of its plans will work.

So right now, there's no thought of "Drill, baby, drill," despite what the administration was saying just a few weeks ago about expanded offshore drilling.

British Petroleum - the firm's U.S. operations used to be Amoco, or American Oil Company, originally was Standard Oil Co. of Indiana - already is paying claims for loss of income along the Gulf, but thousands more will come in. It's an economic and ecological disaster.

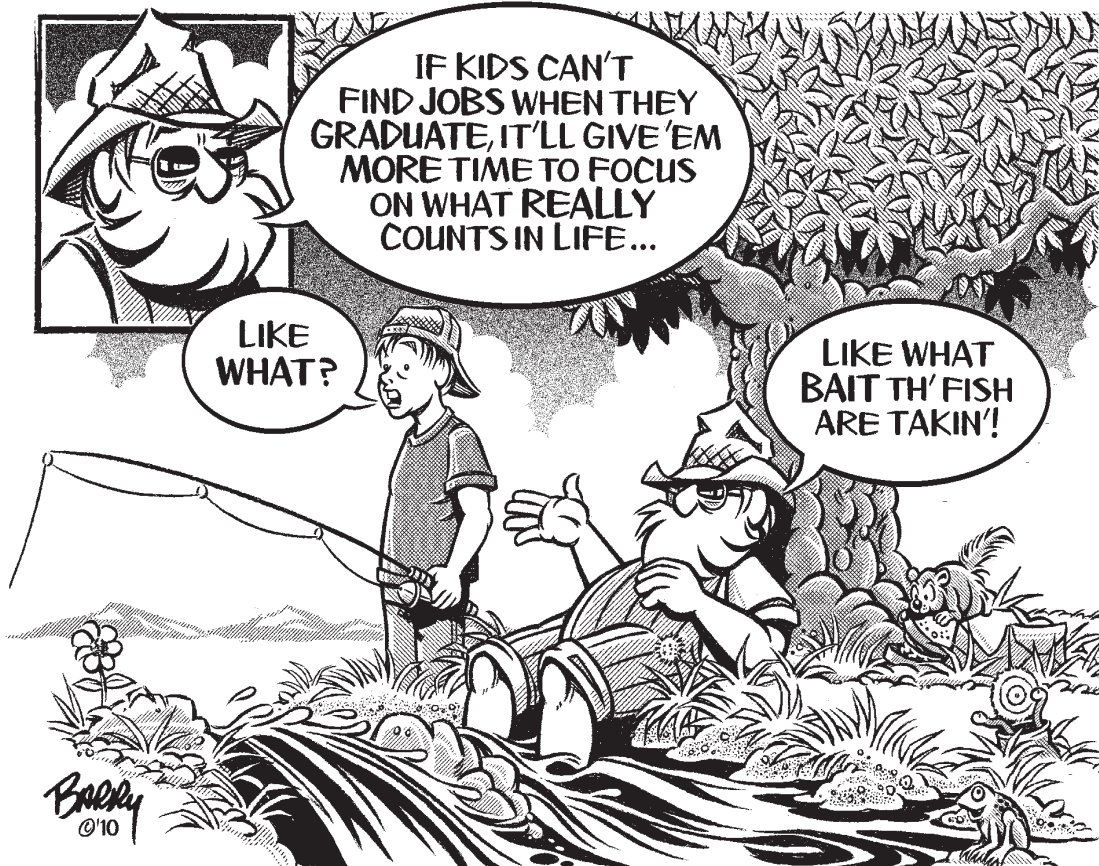
But what for the future?
We still need more oil, no matter what. We'll have to open up those drilling areas. But first we need to understand what happened on the Deepwater Horizon and why the blowout occurred. We need to know how to change drilling methods to prevent a repeat.

We need to study rig safety and formulate techniques to deal more quickly with the next blowout. We need to understand the special problems and issues of drilling in ever-deeper water. In short, we need to learn a lot.

Drill, baby, drill? Not so fast. First we have issues to work out.

But we still need oil. Even the president agrees.

- Steve Haynes



News From the Past

60 years ago - 1950

The Bird City Hospital for which everyone in Bird City has been dreaming of for several years is now becoming a reality. The building is actually taking shape, window and door openings can be seen and the pumice block walls are nearly all completed up to ceiling height.

Your share of the cost of the federal government as proposed by the new budget, averages out to \$282.17 for the 12 months starting next July 1. This compares with \$287.87 for the preceding 12 months.

Local agents for the Burlington Railroad, C.D. Churchill of St. Francis, this week stated the last run over the Kansas end for the railroad's daily passenger Nos. 189 and 190 would be Feb. 4.

Two loads of fine hogs taken by Marvin Mills to the National Western Stock Show in Denver and sold through John Clay Commission Co., were sold last

week by the commission firm at a reported price of \$17.50 per hundredweight.

Herbert Hornbeck, who for the past 5 1/2 years has been manager of the local Safeway Store has announced he and his wife have purchased the Willis Modern Cleaners in Horton and will be moving the first of February.

Announcement was made this week by F.O. Cooper of the sale on Jan. 1 to L. Richard Treese of an interest in Cooper's Rexall Drug store in St. Francis. Mr. Treese recently has been employed as pharmacist at the Cooper's Rexall.

O.H. Igou, the county's oldest resident, observed his 95th birthday on Jan. 7.

50 years ago - 1950
Carla Hendricks, one of the representatives of the Lawn Ridge school won the Cheyenne County Spelling Bee. She is a fifth grade student of Mrs. Barbara Ewing. Second place winner was Dixie Raile of Dis-

trict 46 at Wheeler, a student of Mrs. Mary Lou Munn.

Mr. and Mrs. Edwin O'Leary have purchased the Hill Top Motel and Market from Mr. and Mrs. Jake Schlepp and will take over the management of that business before May 1.

The annual FFA District Dairy Judging school was held at the Colby Experiment Station on Saturday with St. Francis winning third place. Gary Cooper received the second place individual medal in the dairy judging contest, competing against 104 other vocational agriculture students

Leonard Hilt of St. Francis and John Wahrman of Bird City are among the 136 Kansas Future Farmers of America members recommended to receive the State Farmer degree.

The new Phillips 66 Service Station on Highway 36 in St. Francis is holding its Grand Opening today. Jim Jones is the manager.

Casey's Comments

By Casey McCormick



scmcormick@nwkansan.com

Sports are more than just the players on the field. There are the referees, coaches and fans who also make each event come together. Without them, athletic events would be on the same level as pick-up games in the park.

A good example of how an individual who is not a player can have a gigantic effect on a game is Ernie Harwell.

More than just a broadcaster and play-by-play caller, Harwell was the voice of the Detroit Tigers for over 40 years. He died last week at the age of 92.

Born in Georgia, he had a smooth, southern drawl and a gentleman's style that endeared him to all he met. On television,

while announcing for the New York Giants in 1951, he called Bobby Thomson's "Shot heard 'round the world.'" While with the Tigers, from 1960 to 2002, he was the voice of their World Series titles of 1968 and 1984 as well as hundreds of games.

But what really made Harwell stand out was that he is the only team radio man to be traded for a player.

In 1948, the Brooklyn Dodgers were in Pittsburgh to play the Pirates and their announcer, Red Barber, was enjoying a day off with a round of golf. But he became nauseous and made it to the club house before vomiting from a bleeding ulcer.

Branch Ricky, who owned the

Dodgers, called his friend Earl Mann. Also a baseball owner, Mann had the Southern Association Atlanta Crackers and their radio personality, Ernie Harwell.

As the story goes, Ricky needed Harwell and the Crackers needed a catcher. Cliff Draper, who had appeared in only eight major league games years earlier, completed the deal.

So a southern gentleman replaced the Dodger's announcer and the rest is sport's history.

Harwell's Georgia drawl has been described as "a smooth ride on the river of baseball's heritage." I couldn't say it better myself.

Honor Roll

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GOD SAYS
All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.
II Timothy 3:16

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Residents urged to check for radon

Dear Editor,

Have you had your home tested for radon? The Surgeon General has warned that radon exposure is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States today.

Radon is a cancer causing radioactive gas. You cannot see, smell, or taste radon, but it may be a problem in your home. There are no immediate symptoms that will alert you to its presence. The age of your home makes no difference either. ANY HOME CAN HAVE HIGH RADON LEVELS. Testing your home is the only way to know if you and your family are at risk of radon exposure.

Letter to the Editor

It is very easy and inexpensive to test your home. The county extension office has radon testing kits that you can buy for less than \$5.00. Should you find that you do have high radon levels in your home they can easily be fixed by having a mitigation system installed in your home by a certified radon remediation specialist.

We had always thought that radon was rare in northwest Kansas. We were wrong. We had our home tested and found our levels to be quite high. Since then, we've had

a radon mitigation system installed and our levels are now safe.

We wish we would have known about the risks of radon in our home years ago as Royce has lung cancer and has never smoked. We encourage you to have your home checked today. It is easier to deal with the problem now than the results later. It is a precious gift you can give yourself and your family. Please have your home tested today. (www.radon.com)

Royce and Darci Kehlbeck
Bird City

Church of Christ
332-2380, Pars. 332-3424
502 W. Spencer
Norman Morrow - Minister
Bible Class 11 a.m.
Morning Worship 10 a.m.
Wed. Bible Study 7 p.m.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church
625 S. River • 332-2680
Fr. Roger Meitl
Sunday Mass 10 a.m.
Weekday Mass 8:30 a.m.
Confessions Sat. 4-4:30

Salem Lutheran Church
332-3002
Pastor Chris Farmer
Sunday School 10 a.m.
Morning Worship 11 a.m.
Communion 3rd Sunday

Solid Rock Baptist Church
412 S. Denison
Welcomes You!
Pastor Allen Coon
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30
Prayer Meeting, Wed 7:30 p.m.

First Christian Church
Pastor Jeff Landers
332-2956 • 118 E. Webster
Bible Fellowship 9:15 a.m.
Church Service 10:15 a.m.

First Baptist Church
2nd & Scott • 332-3921
J.W. Glidewell, Pastor
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service 6:30 p.m.,
Wed. AWANA Club, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

St. Francis Community Church
332-3150
204 N. Quincy Street
www.sfccfamily.com
Pastor: David Butler
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.
Potluck & Communion - Every 2nd Sunday
Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.

Peace Lutheran Church, AFLC
202 N. College
Pastor Ken Hart
332-2928 Pars. 332-2312
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship 10:30 a.m.
Sunday Eve. Bible Study 7 p.m.
Communion 1st Sunday of the month

St. Francis Equity

St. Francis Herald

Praise the Lord