

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

Jalapeños are best out of oven

A reader, Diana (Black) Jolly, in Hugo, Colo., wrote to ask a couple of questions about my recipe for stuffed jalapeños. Perhaps I should answer them here in case anyone else has the same queries.

Diana asked if I served them hot or cold. I have to admit I don't know how they would be cold. They've never had a chance to cool off. We eat them as soon as they come out of the oven and we can take a bite without scalding our tongue.

Her next question was, "Do I use fresh or canned jalapeños?" I have always used fresh but, she went on to say that she used canned ones and everyone liked them, so I learned something new from Diana. She said she also made a batch of mild peppers. So for those of you who "think" you don't like jalapeños, that might be your answer.

My youngest daughter, Kara, called to say she wanted to make them but because she and her husband Adam were on the Atkins Diet, she wouldn't roll the peppers in the brown sugar.

"Then don't bother," I told her. "It's the brown sugar that gives them



Out Back

By Carolyn Sue Kelley-Plotts
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the 'special' flavor."

Actually, they would be just fine without the sugar. In fact, I've eaten jalapeños just stuffed with cream cheese and put on the grill. They were delicious, too. Paula Dean and I share the same philosophy: "Everything's better with cream cheese on it."

— ob —

Jim is on the last leg of our tile job. The bathroom is done, most of the hallway and one third of the utility room. My contribution to the project has been to stay out of his way, bring him plenty of iced tea and "pray that he not sin with his mouth." That's what he always tells me when I ask him what I can do to help.

However, I do get to paint the baseboards. And, that's something

I better get done as soon as possible so he can put the washer and dryer back where they belong without having to move them again.

— ob —

Sunday was Mother's Day and I heard from every one of the kids. That, alone, made it a good day. To all the other mothers out there, I hope you had a great day, too.

From the Bible

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Write

The Oberlin Herald encourages Letters to the Editor on any topic of public interest. Letters should be brief, clear and to the point. They must be signed and carry the

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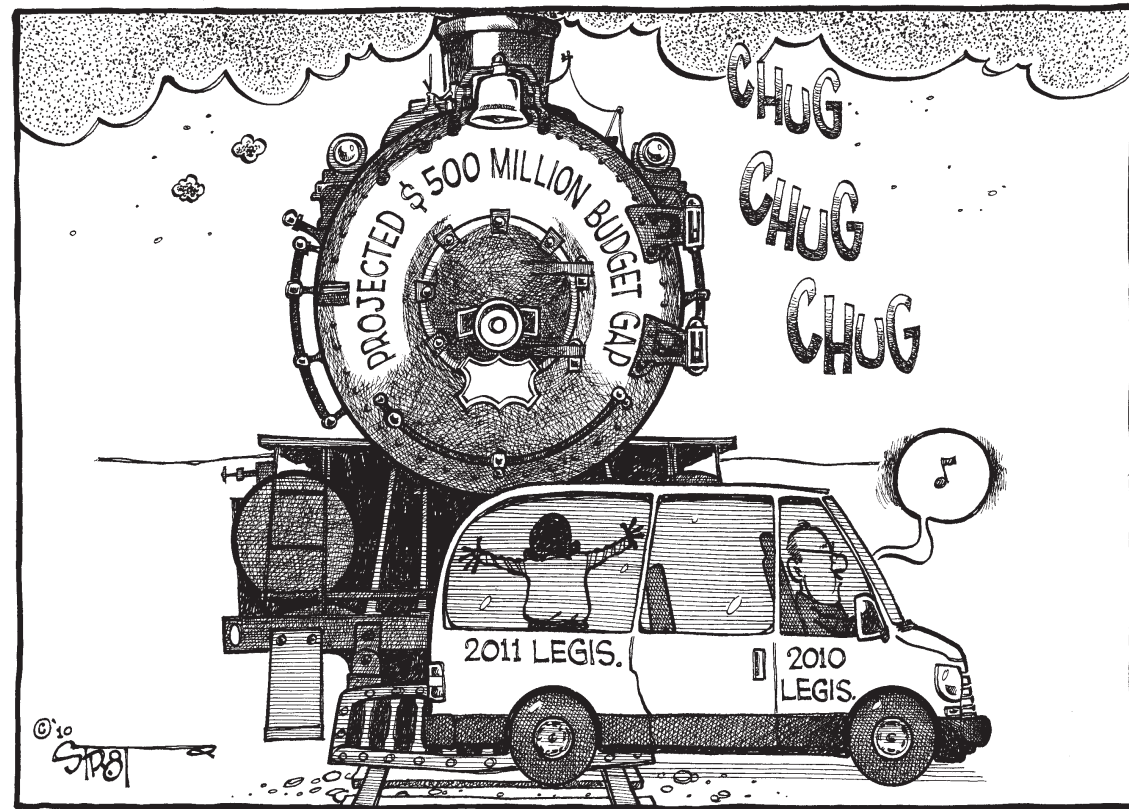
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She doesn't watch television

The program chairman asked us who got eight hours of sleep a night, and I raised my hand.

He asked me how I did it.

I was stumped. I didn't know. I had to think about it.

I just knew that I usually go to bed and sleep for eight hours before getting up sometime between 7 and 8 a.m., depending on when I have to be at work that day.

It was some time later that it hit me.

I don't watch television.

It's as simple as that. I work, fix and eat supper, go for a walk with Steve and the dog, read for a few minutes and go to bed around 11 p.m. each night. I don't waste time watching television.

I have never seen an episode of *Friends* or *Seinfeld*, either originally or in reruns.

I don't know what all the excitement is about over *Lost* and *Survivor*. I have never watched *Oprah*, *Jerry Springer* or *Jay Leno*.

I will admit to watching an occasional episode of *Are You Smarter than a Fifth Grader* while fixing supper and am happy to say that I get most of the answers right, but I don't stress over it. I turn the set off as soon as I'm done cooking, not when the show is over.

I remember a time when I thought



Open Season

By Cynthia Haynes
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I couldn't live without television.

I was in high school.

By the time I got to college, there were no televisions in my dorm or sorority and I couldn't afford one in my apartment.

After school, we worked nights, then we moved to the mountains, where television signals were few and far between.

I just got out of the habit.

But I do remember. My grandparents got their first set in about 1952, and I would spend my afternoons over at their home watching Tom Mix, Gene Autry, Tex Ritter and Roy Rogers ride across the small screen. And I would dance and sing to *American Bandstand*.

In the evening, the family would enjoy Lawrence Welk, Ed Sullivan, *The Honeymooners* and *I Love Lucy*.

And the westerns, boy were there a lot of westerns — *The Rifleman*, *Wagon Train*, *Rawhide*, *Guns*, *Smoke*,

Rin Tin Tin, *Bat Masterson*, *Davey Crockett*, *Maverick*, *Have Gun — Will Travel*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Zorro* and of course, *Bonanza*. We watched them after school, on Saturday morning and in the evenings.

Saturday morning cartoons were a special treat. Weekdays we had *Howdy Doody*, *Captain Kangaroo* and the *Mickey Mouse Club*.

We got three snowy, fuzzy channels on our black-and-white set — ABC, NBC and CBS — and at midnight they would all play the Star Spangled Banner while showing pictures of flags and jet airplanes, and then everyone would go to bed, because watching the test pattern until 7 a.m. wasn't a lot of fun.

Now we've got two color television sets and a couple hundred channels and mostly I turn on a music channel and get something done.

Memories are nice, but who's got the time? I need my sleep.

Newspaper man earns award

The Kansas Press Association gave Tom Dreiling his just desserts the other night, and as they say in the movies, "it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy."

Dreiling received the Clyde M. Reed Jr. Master Editor-Publisher award at the association's annual convention. It's pretty much the highest honor the group gives, citing someone for a life's work in the business, other than admission to the Hall of Fame.

Used to be you had to have been gone for five years before being considered for the Hall of Fame and in those days, I always thought the admission standards were a bit too high for my taste.

Tom, or TD, as he usually signed himself over the years, toiled 44 years in the business until last fall, when the doctors told him his eyes and his feet had failed him, and he'd better stop working if he wanted to keep what he had left.

It was a bitter pill for a guy who loves his work and hated his first stab at retirement, but he agreed and moved to Goodland, where for more than 25 years he put out the old Goodland Daily News. He left in 1989 when new owners took over and told him they planned to cut his salary in half. His stories and his folksy column are fondly remembered more than two decades later.

Tom left his wife Jean in Goodland. She died in 1975 at age 37 after struggling with leukemia. That left Tom with two young sons to raise, a task that he seems to have done well.

Tom worked for the Catholic high school in his hometown of Hays, raising money and running the alumni association, but the



Along the Sappa

By Steve Haynes
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allure of ink was strong. Soon he was editor of the daily in Sheridan, Wyo., working for his old boss from Goodland. But Wyoming was cold, windy and it wasn't home.

He called one day, asking about an ad we were running for a publisher in Colby. He sent his resume and after some debate, we interviewed and hired him. It was the start of a productive relationship.

Two things always came through with Tom. People liked the newspaper when he ran it, and they liked his columns and editorials, at least when they agreed with him. He ran the *Colby Free Press* from 1998 to 2005, when he retired for the first time.

It was a difficult era, with a heated controversy surrounding the hospital. Both sides demanded loyalty, and covering the other at all often was seen as opposing the first. The paper won a major state award for its coverage, but that did not please either side.

In 2005, Tom told me it was time for him to retire. He found an apartment in Hays and moved. We found a replacement, who moved to Colby.

A few weeks later, in a handwritten note, Tom (then 71) told me he'd made "a terrible mistake." He asked if we had any jobs. At the time, Cynthia was on her second year as

publisher of The Norton Telegram, struggling to find time to supervise it and get her other jobs done. We told Tom he could go over there.

And as he had done in Colby, he pulled the staff together and started to make the paper better. He applied his usual soft touch and dose of humor, but when it was necessary, he laid down the law in the office.

Now, he's off to Denver to live with one of his sons, near to all his grandchildren. We wish him well. We'll miss him.

I wish I could say I dreamed up this award for him. That honor falls to Richard Gannon, now the lobbyist for the press association. Years ago, he was, while still in college, elected as a Democrat to be state senator for this area.

Tom and his brother Norbert, who had been state chair of the Democratic party, pushed that campaign, and it was Rich who suggested the whole thing to me. All I did was write the nomination letter.

Rich recalled stopping by to visit Tom during a break from college. He told Tom both parties had asked him to run, and he wanted to know what to do. Next day, to his surprise, an editorial in the *Daily News* talked up what a fine candidate Rich Gannon would be, and the rest, as they say, is history.

That's TD. What a guy.

Photo Policy

The Oberlin Herald wants to emphasize photos of people doing things in the community. If you know of an event or news happening that we should attend, please call 475-2206.

Please be sure to allow a couple of days' notice so we can arrange to be there.

Space in the paper is limited and so is the time of our staff, so we may not be able to get to every event, but we will try.

Because space is so limited, we cannot run team or group photos,

any pictures of people lined up or people passing checks, certificates and the like. (We will always try to make room for a story about any of these events, however.)

We do run wedding and engagement pictures and "mug" shots with stories and obituaries, when they are provided to us. Please remember that we need a clear, sharp picture. Dark or fuzzy prints will not work.

We cannot return photos unless you submit a self-addressed, stamped envelope with clear in-

structions for return. Other photos submitted may be picked up at our office within two weeks. After that, they will be disposed of.

Laser proofs of photos which have run in *The Herald* are available, first come, first served.

