

Energy genius solves 'unsolvable' problems

United Press International
NEW ORLEANS — His formal education ended with high school, but Charles Cloutier insists he can solve any engineering problem — even cleaning up 42,000 gallons of oil in 12-foot seas.

Cloutier's technical expertise translates into many areas, but he has made a name — and a fortune — for himself in the energy business. When oilmen have big problems they come running to Cloutier for simple solutions.

He astounded the energy business in 1978 when he took just 38 hours to vacuum up 52,000 barrels of oil that spilled into Black Lake in southwest Louisiana. Eighty percent — 38,000 barrels — of the oil needed no treatment before it was returned to its owner.

"There is no problem you can't solve if you've got the money," he said. "I'll build you a bridge across the Atlantic Ocean if you give me the money."

Cloutier's last physics lessons came from a Morgan City, La., high school, but the mechanical genius has solved technical problems that have baffled highly trained government scientists for decades.

The 54-year-old entrepreneur holds nine patents on salvage and clean-up devices that have revolutionized the oil business.

"We don't let any of our

competitors have them," he said. "We keep them to ourselves."

His inventions include a paddle wheel skimmer that sucks up major oil spills and another device that cleans mucky oil spills from white beaches without damaging the sand.

Cloutier's companies — Triple C Marine Salvage and Anti-Pollution Inc. — have been hired by every major oil company to handle oil rig disasters and spills across the globe.

Cloutier says he can dispatch salvage or clean-up operations from his Morgan City base to any place in the world within 24 hours.

To do this, he designs lightweight, portable machinery rather than using manpower. Another trait that distinguishes Cloutier from his competitors is he returns the spilled oil to his employer — intact.

"We give the energy back to the people rather than destroy it," he said. "They pump it right back into the ground with no treatment."

He is a skilled commercial diver, airplane pilot, licensed electrician and mechanic. But Cloutier says the inspiration for most of his inventions comes from on-the-job experience.

One of his greatest brainstorms came in 1980 when 3.1 million barrels of oil gushed into the Gulf of Mexico from a

blowout at the Ixtoc 1 oilwell.

Cloutier devised a way to clean the mucky mess from Texas beaches in 15 minutes when scientists from across the world were unable to come up with a solution. The scientists were given nine months.

Although his invention came too late to help in the Ixtoc operations, Cloutier devised a method of cleansing oil-spotted beaches for future spills.

"I just sat down in a beach chair, ordered a beer and watched the spill," he said. "I watched Mother Nature float the oil on and off the beach so I figured that's what we had to do."

His patented beach skimmer amounts to an elementary, but ingenious, system that gently lifts oil from the sand with water pressure and then skims it off the surface of the water.

The system picks up about 12,000 gallons of water a minute from the ocean and drops it on oil-stained beaches. Like the ocean's natural tide, the large volume of water causes the oil to float to the surface.

"The big love for it is the opportunity to solve the problem and help the world solve its energy problems," Cloutier said. "And research is the cheapest way to intelligently solve problems."

"Ideas come easier now after 35 years of experience."

Clements endorses extending Voting Rights Act provision

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Texas Gov. William Clements Jr. strongly endorsed Thursday an extension of an expiring enforcement provision of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, but sided with the administration in opposing changes voted by the House.

"The Voting Rights Act has been good for Texas, and the act should be extended as presently constituted," Clements told the Senate Judiciary subcommittee on the Constitution.

Coverage under a special enforcement provision of the act has brought political gains for Hispanic Americans and other minorities in his state, Clements said.

Under a 1975 amendment, Texas and certain other jurisdictions are required to print bilingual ballots and election material and obtain federal approval of changes in election laws and practices.

A bill the House overwhelmingly approved last fall would extend the "pre-clearance" requirement indefinitely, but allow a "bailout" if a state can prove it has met stiff compliance standards.

"I applaud President Reagan's endorsement of a 10-year extension of the Voting Rights Act," Clements said. "As governor of Texas, I also applaud his position in favor of a 'reasonable' bailout provision."

Clements added the House-passed bill, which Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., and 61 other senators support, has bailout provisions that are so stringent and cumbersome, it is doubtful any covered jurisdiction could become exempt.

"For example," Clements said, "the proposed House legislation provides that every jurisdiction of a covered state must be granted bailout before the state can achieve bailout."

"It could, therefore, take only one of Texas' 254 counties to prevent the state from becoming exempt or one out of 1,102 school districts in the state of Texas in preventing the state from bailing out."

Clements endorsed extension of the act in its present form except for including a "fair" bailout provision, as the administration has done. Most agree the act provides for bailout in name only.

Another change proposed by the House would remove a requirement that intent must be proved to have a political system declared illegally discriminatory, making it provable by its effects — regardless of intent.

"I am in favor of extending the act like it is," Clements said.

Clements claimed an "unprecedented coalition" of minority groups in Texas favor extending the act unchanged.

Retired Baylor mascot provides possible heirs

United Press International
CLIFTON — Abner and Daisy Mae, retired mascots for the Baylor University Bears, have produced two cubs that could someday ascend to the pampered life that goes with being the motivating force behind a Southwest Conference school.

Abner missed the Tuesday births as he was back on the job in Waco, appearing in a campus play.

The twin black bears were unexpected by A.C. Parsons, owner of the Texas Safari Ranch, home of the retired mas-

cots for two years. Parsons said a caretaker cleaning Daisy Mae's cage found the cubs. Last year, Daisy Mae gained weight but did not have any cubs so when she again gained weight this year, park officials did not expect offspring.

It was not known if the cubs would be used as mascots at Baylor, but if legacy is a factor, their chances are good.

Newspaper charges breach of contract

United Press International
NEW YORK — The New York Daily News has filed suit seeking an injunction to bar sportswriter and columnist Dick Young from writing for the New York Post.

Young's column, scheduled to appear in the Post Feb. 8, will not run on that date under an agreement reached Wednesday by state Supreme Court Justice Norman Ryp and attorneys for both newspapers.

Ryp scheduled a hearing for Feb. 11, when the News will seek an injunction barring Young from joining the sports staff of the rival tabloid.

"We contend that he has an exclusive contract with us," said William L. Umstead, managing editor of the News.

He said lawyers for both sides agreed not to publish any columns by Young until the hearing next Thursday.

Young's departure from the Daily News after 45 years was disclosed last Friday.

Charging breach of contract, the News claimed Young signed a four-year contract in September 1980 providing him with a salary of \$100,000 for the first year, \$115,000 for the second year, and \$131,000 for the third and fourth years.

Young said he decided to leave the News because News officials refused to guarantee his contract.

Another group, the Ad Hoc Committee to Save the Daily News, was to meet Thursday to discuss a newspaper advertisement urging the Tribune Co. not to fold the News and to hear a report on a separate committee studying possibilities of employee stock ownership.

The newspaper has a daily circulation of 1.5 million and 2 million on Sunday.

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