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Oil slick turns to coast

United Press International
PORT ARTHUR — Weather in the Gulf of Mexico switched abruptly Wednesday, sending a massive oil slick toward land and threatening major environmental damage to beaches along the Texas coast, Coast Guard officials said.

Landfall was expected between Port Arthur and Galveston Thursday or Friday, and Coast Guard spokesman Keith Spangler said "you could have very thick oil, a lot of it, all along the beach."

The 1.3 million gallon spill from a ruptured British tanker had been headed away from land, but wind and sea changes have forced the slick — nearly 14 miles long and 200 yards wide — toward the coast, Spangler said.

Crude oil continued to leak Wednesday evening from the tanker Alvenus, which apparently hit an uncharted shoal early Monday afternoon, he said.

Top priority was given to getting the crippled ship — still carrying more than 13 million gallons of crude — into Port Arthur, Spangler said, and efforts to contain the spill were dropped.

Coast Guard officials Tuesday and early Wednesday had used plastic floats to trap and suck some of the oil into a barge, but Spangler said that was halted when the weather changed Wednesday.

"Our cleanup efforts as they are will only be able to contain 1 percent of the amount of oil that is in the water," he said, "and we have 10 times that amount aboard the tanker."

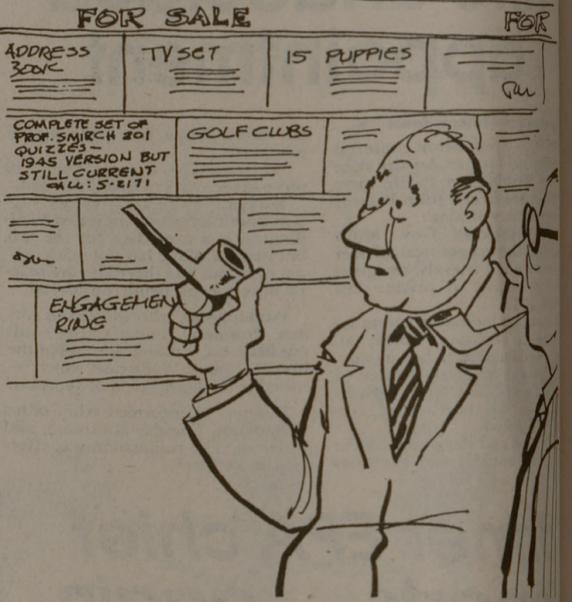
"We have abandoned the cleanup efforts of the oil in the water and are concentrating our efforts toward salvage of the tanker and its cargo."

Tugboats will try to turn the ship so vapors are blown away from workers trying to unload it, reducing the fire hazard, he said. Until that turn is made, it is extremely dangerous to work aboard the ship, Spangler said.

There is a chance conditions could change again and the shoreline could be spared, he said, but if the slick continues on its current path the environmental damage could be enormous.

"It could be a major, major incident. It could have a major impact on the environment, on the beaches and so forth," the spokesman said.

Slouch By Jim Earle



"We're going to have to get around to updating those tests."

Cable

(continued from page 1)

down in communication between Community Cablevision and the Sycon Corporation. He says he paid the cable company Wednesday for services for the month of August and hopes that in the near future a contract will be worked out so that the satellite dish can be used.

Another problem with satellite dishes, Di Bacco says, is that they use private communication signals. He says unless permission is given by pay TV channels to broadcast the pay TV shows, satellite users are breaking a federal law. "Everything sent out by satellite and microwaves except for public broadcasting services is private communication," Di Bacco says.

Right now nothing will be done to private homeowners, who own and operate satellite dishes, Di Bacco says, because most of these people live in the country where cable service is not offered.

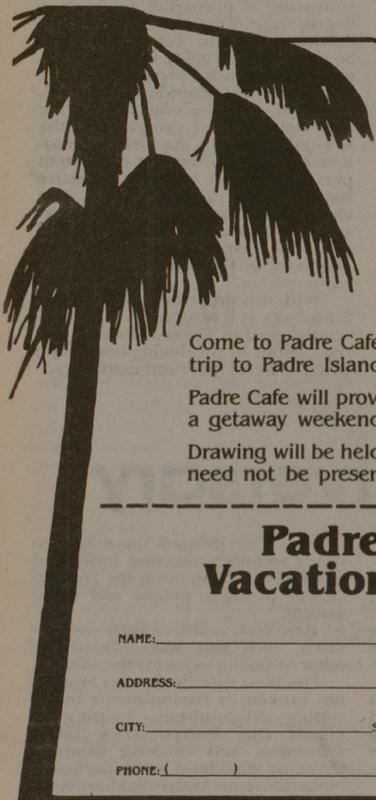
The situation is different when it

applies to apartment complexes, hotels and anyone making a profit by offering cable services through satellite dishes, Di Bacco says.

Two television channels, ESPN and HBO, have brought law suits against hotels for pirating their broadcasts.

Di Bacco says he thinks that in the future when growth in rural areas slows down and the number of satellite dishes levels off licenses will be required to use satellite dishes. He also says that cable companies acting as an agent for pay channels will require a monthly charge.

The cable companies will enforce this charge by not unscrambling signals that will be scrambled by HBO, ESPN and other cable channels, therefore signals picked up by private satellites will be scrambled. Di Bacco says a de-scrambling device can be bought from the cable company as long as a contract to pay a monthly fee is signed.



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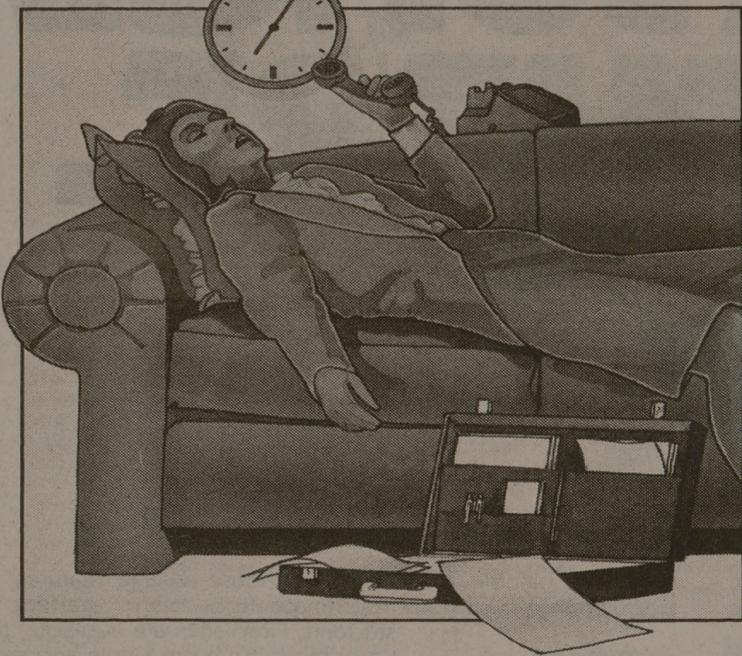
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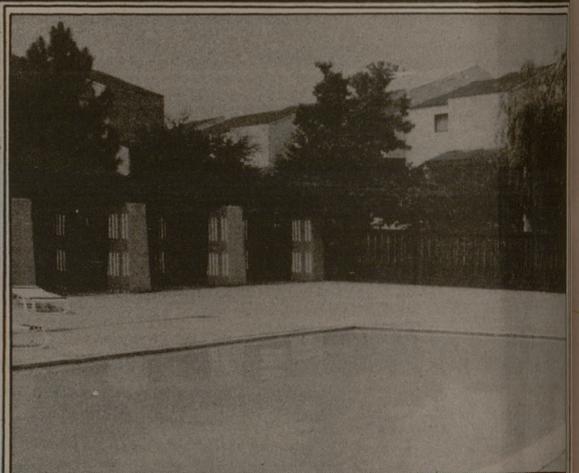
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