

This is the first get-away weekend of the summer. As we enjoy hiking trails and clean beaches, my thoughts turn to the tragedy unfolding on our gulf coast with the big BP oil disaster.

In the May 2009 issue of "Sierra" magazine, an advertisement from "Life" magazine dated February 2, 1962 was reprinted. This two-page color ad purchased by Humble Oil & Refining Company featured Alaska's Taku Glacier with the following copy: "Each day Humble supplies enough energy to melt 7 million tons of glacier!

"This giant glacier has remained unmelted for centuries. Yet, the petroleum energy Humble supplies - if converted into heat - could melt it at the rate of 80 tons each second!

"To meet the nation's growing needs for energy, Humble has applied science to nature's resources to become America's leading Energy Company. Working wonders with oil through research, Humble provides energy in many forms - to help heat our homes, power our transportation, and to furnish industry with a great variety of versatile chemicals. Stop at a Humble station for famous Esso Extra gasoline, and see why the "Happy Motoring" sign is the World's First Choice!"

Ten years later Humble changed its name to Exxon.

Here we are, almost fifty years later, continuing to deal with a volatile and unstable energy source. The massive oil slick in the gulf of Mexico is creating a huge negative impact on water and land that will last for decades.

Just a little food for thought and to encourage all of us to conserve energy and support safer energy alternatives.

SOLAR WATER DISINFECTION

In the slums of Kibera outside of Nairobi, Kenya, people are reusing plastic water bottles and the sun to disinfect water.

According to the Kenya Water for Health Organization: "Women are linked with water all over the world, and wherever there are water access and sanitation issues, women feel the impact first. They are most often the water handlers, finding it, fetching it

and carrying it home. They are also the ones whose traditional duties of cooking, cleaning and laundering require the most water. And they are the ones who care for those who fall sick from dirty water, most often their own children."

Over the past five years, Kenyan women formed groups that bought water from the Nairobi Water Company, piping it to their clean tanks and selling it in their community at a reasonable price while teaching residents basic sanitation techniques.

However, not everyone is served by these new clean tanks.

One of their most successful sanitation programs teaches women in the community solar water disinfection. The technique is remarkably simple. Users fill ordinary clear plastic bottles with contaminated water and place them in direct sunlight for six hours, usually on the corrugated metal roofs of their homes. The water is sanitized by ultraviolet rays.

It is hard to believe this simple method can actually work, but regular testing of this treated water has consistently shown the solar method to be as effective as boiling or chemical treatment and at a lower cost. For more information go to www.womenseNews.org.

WRAP IT UP.

You still have two weeks to fill out your WRAP (Waste Reduction Awards Program) applications. The deadline is June 15, 2010. By taking a little time to fill out the application you will learn how to make your business greener. The WRAP application can be found on www.calrecycle.ca.gov/WRAP/.

VALCORE Recycling Board Secretary Jane Bogner's "A Sorted Affair" is published every other week in the Times-Herald. For recycling information call VALCORE Recycling at 645-8258 or visit www.VALCORErecycling.org.

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