

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

Journalist Thomas Retires Over Remarks

WASHINGTON (AP) — Helen Thomas, the opinionated White House correspondent who used her seat in the front row of history to grill 10 presidents and often exasperate them, lost her storied perch Monday in a flap over calling on Israelis to get "out of Palestine."

Thomas, 89, who made her name as a bulldog for United Press International and was a pioneer for women in journalism, abruptly retired as a columnist for Hearst News Service. The announcement, in a terse statement by Hearst, came after videotaped remarks she made to an independent filmmaker spread virally through the Internet.

She apologized, but White House spokesman Robert Gibbs denounced her comments as "offensive and reprehensible." Her press corps colleagues with the White House Correspondents Association issued a rare admonishment calling them "indefensible."

Thomas joined UPI in 1943 and began covering the White House for the wire service in 1960. Fiercely competitive, she became the first female White House bureau chief for a wire service when UPI named her to the position in 1974. She was also the first female officer at the National Press Club, where women had once been barred as members.

Progressive Leaders Upset With White House

WASHINGTON (AP) — Progressive activists who helped elect Barack Obama president complained on Monday that the administration and congressional Democrats have been too timid and too willing to compromise.

Even though Obama's major first-term achievement — an overhaul of the nation's health care system — passed without a single Republican vote, progressive leaders who gathered in Washington criticized the president for failing to create a government-run insurance option to compete with private industry.

They faulted Obama for the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the slow pace in repealing the ban on gays serving in the military and last year's economic stimulus package, which they described as inadequate at \$787 billion. They also criticized his handling of the Gulf oil spill.

"The White House has been an uncertain trumpet," said Robert Borosage, a co-director of the Campaign for America's Future, a progressive organization. "The administration's reforms were too often too timid from the start and too readily compromised along the way."

Although leaders still spoke with admiration for Obama, it was clear he's not as popular with unions, bloggers and other progressives.

Latest iPhone Revealed, To Come June 24

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The next iPhone comes out June 24 and will have a higher-resolution screen, longer battery life and thinner design.

CEO Steve Jobs opened Apple Inc.'s annual conference for software developers Monday by demonstrating the iPhone 4, which will cost \$199 or \$299 in the U.S. with a two-year AT&T contract, depending on the capacity. The iPhone 3GS, which debuted last year, will still be available, for \$99.

Some of the mystery surrounding Apple's latest creation had been punctured in April, when the tech blog Gizmodo bought a lost iPhone prototype for \$5,000 and posted pictures of the unit. Apple demanded it back, and authorities have been investigating whether a Gizmodo editor broke any laws.

"Stop me if you've already seen this," Jobs said Monday as he started his demo.

The iPhone 4 is sleeker and more advanced than the original iPhone that came out in 2007. Like the iPhone 3GS, it comes in black or white, though it has a more angular look. Its front and back are covered with glass, and it is rimmed with stainless steel that acts as part of the phone's antenna.

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One Dead In Natural Gas Line Blast

BY ANGELA K. BROWN
Associated Press Writer

CLEBURNE, Texas — A large natural gas line in north Texas erupted Monday after utility workers accidentally hit the line, sending a massive fireball into the air and killing one worker, officials said.

Authorities found the missing worker's body several hours after the explosion, once searchers could safely walk through the entire charred area. Authorities had hoped the missing man had left the scene on his own, like some of his colleagues who drove themselves to hospitals.

Brian Fine, Hood County's emergency management coordinator, said the worker's body was found some distance from the blast site. The man's name was not immediately released.

The worker had been riding a truck drilling holes for utility poles when the line suddenly exploded, and other workers lost sight of him in the intense smoke, said Roger Harmon, Johnson County's top elected official.

Near the blast site in rural Johnson County about 50 miles southwest of Dallas, officials later found the truck upside down and saw that the 2,000-pound drilling component had been ripped off the vehicle and hurled 250 feet away, said Cleburne Fire Chief



PAUL MOSELEY/FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAMMCT
The blast scene is shown after a natural gas line exploded on Monday in Johnson County, Texas.

Clint Ishmael.

At least seven of the other 13 workers who had been working at the site went to hospitals. Gary Marks, CEO of Glen Rose Medical Center, said two people were treated and released, and four others were in stable condition. One patient was taken to Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Fort Worth. Spokeswoman Whitney Jodry did not have person's condition.

Laura Harlin, a resident of nearby Granbury, said around the time of the blast she heard a "huge rumbling" that initially

sounded like thunder and then like a tornado because it lasted so long.

"For about 10 minutes, it was so loud that it was like there was an 18-wheeler rumbling in your driveway," she said.

The explosion caused confusion among officials in its immediate aftermath, with one city official initially saying three people had been killed.

Heat from the blast forced firefighters to stay about a half-mile away until the gas flow was shut off, and they were unable to douse the flames.

A control room at Houston-based Enterprise Products Partners LP, which owns the gas line, immediately identified a break in the line near Cleburne, said company spokesman Rick Rainey. The 36-inch line was equipped with valves that automatically shut down gas to that section of pipe, and the fire was out about two hours after the explosion.

The pipeline helps carry gas from West Texas across the state to utilities, distribution companies and commercial users on the eastern end of the state. Rainey said the company would work with customers to avoid any disruption to their service from the fire.

The injured workers were digging for a subcontractor hired by Waco-based Brazos Electric Cooperative, Snow said. A message seeking comment from that company was not immediately returned. A spokesman for the subcontractor, Oklahoma-based C&H Power Line Construction Services, did not immediately respond to a call for comment either.

Johnson County's emergency management coordinator, Jack Snow, said officials were investigating whether the gas line was marked. The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration were also at the scene.

GULF OIL SPILL

Well Cap Captures More Oil; But Outlook Gloomy

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The cap on the blown-out well in the Gulf is capturing a half-million gallons a day, or anywhere from one-third to three-quarters of the oil spewing from the bottom of the sea, officials said Monday. But the hopeful report was offset by a warning that the farflung slick has broken up into hundreds and even thousands of patches of oil that may inflict damage that could persist for years.

Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the government's point man for the crisis, said the breakup has complicated the cleanup.

"Dealing with the oil spill on the surface is going to go on for a couple of months," he said at a briefing in Washington. But "long-term issues of restoring the environment and the habitats and stuff will be years."

Allen said the containment cap that was installed late last week is now collecting about 460,000 gallons of oil a day out of the approximately 600,000 to 1.2 million gallons believed to be spewing from the well a mile underwater. In a tweet, BP said it collected 316,722 gallons from midnight to noon Monday.

The amount of oil captured is being slowly ramped up as more vents on the cap are closed. Crews are moving carefully to avoid a dangerous pressure buildup and to prevent the formation of the icy crystals that thwarted a previous effort to contain the leak. The captured oil is being pumped to a ship on the surface.

"I think it's going fairly well," Allen said.

BP said it plans to replace the cap — perhaps later this month or early next month — with a slightly bigger one that will provide a tighter fit and thus collect more oil. It will also be designed to allow the company to suspend the cleanup and then resume it quickly if a hurricane threatens the Gulf later this season. The new cap is still being designed.

"It gives us much better containment than we've got" with the existing cap, said BP senior vice president Kent Wells.

BP and government officials acknowledged it is difficult to say exactly how much oil is spewing from the well, and thus how much is still flowing into the water. BP spokesman

Robert Wine said the figures being discussed are estimates, some of which have been provided by the government.

Ed Overton, a Louisiana State University professor of environmental sciences, suggested it is too early for anyone to claim victory. The spill, estimated at anywhere from 23 million gallons to 50 million, is already the biggest in U.S. history, dwarfing the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska.

"We're hopeful the thing is going to work, but hoping and actually working are two different things," Overton said. "They may have turned the corner, they may not have. We just don't know right now."

He said he doesn't believe BP will have turned the corner until it sees a significant flow from the well stopped. "And it is not entirely obvious to me that that is happening," Overton said.

"I do worry we are not removing as much oil as we ought to be getting," he added.

The "spillcam" video of the leak continued to show a big brown billowing cloud of oil and gas 5,000 feet below the surface.

Police: Gunman Kills 4 Women, But Doesn't Shoot Any Men

HAIALEAH, Fla. (AP) — A gunman shot and killed his wife outside a South Florida restaurant where she worked, then targeted women inside and killed three others before committing suicide, police said Monday.

Police said 38-year-old Gerardo Regalado bypassed at least two men when he fired at the women inside. Three women were hospitalized in critical condition. Hialeah police Detective Eddie Rodriguez said.

"He went straight for the women," Rodriguez said.

Regalado is the half brother of former baseball star Orlando "El Duque" Hernandez.

The shooting began Sunday night in a parking lot outside the Yoyito Restaurant in Hialeah, where Regalado of Coral Gables was seen arguing with Liazan Molina, Rodriguez said. According to Florida marriage records, the couple married in 2007.

According to police, Regalado shot and killed Molina, 24, then entered the restaurant and fired on six women inside.

One employee called her brother after the shooting, saying she had been shot and was bleeding.

Felix Fuentes said his sister, Ivet Coronado, told him to "please call 911." He said the 36-year-old woman was recovering Monday from surgery for gunshot wounds to her chest and one of her arms.

Regalado drove off after the shooting, police said. Officers found him dead of an apparent suicide a few blocks away, with the same weapon used in the restaurant shootings, Rodriguez said.

People inside the Coral Gables house where Regalado and Molina lived refused to answer a reporter's knocks at the door. A person who answered the phone identified himself only as a family friend and said the family didn't want to talk.

Hernandez's agent, Mike Maulini, told the Spanish-language newspaper *El Nuevo Herald* that

the family does not know what caused Regalado to shoot seven women.

"This has taken everyone by surprise," Maulini said.

Regalado came to Miami from Cuba in 2006, he said.

"We do not know what might have happened. He was a good kid. Since he arrived he has tried not to depend on his brother and do his own work," Maulini.

In a statement, Hernandez's family offered condolences to the families of the seven women. "It is with great pain that we reach out to everyone affected and offer our prayers in this time of sorrow," the statement said.

It was not immediately clear if all the women shot were restaurant employees or customers. The shooting began shortly after the restaurant had closed.

A series of 911 calls released by police starting record breathless Spanish-language callers urging dispatchers to urgently send ambulances Sunday night.

"Hurry! Hurry!" said one terrified woman in Spanish to the dispatcher. "That man killed them."

A male caller in Spanish is heard on another recording at 10:11 p.m. breathing rapidly and telling the dispatcher, "He entered the Yoyito Restaurant and began shooting like crazy."

He tells the dispatcher that the man and a woman had argued before the shooting started. "They were arguing out in front of the restaurant ... he killed the girl," the man says.

A spokeswoman for Jackson Memorial Hospital declined to release any information about the three women being treated there because all had requested privacy. No contact information for one survivor, Yasmine Dominguez, could be found. There was no answer at the Hialeah Gardens mobile home of the third, 55-year-old Mayra Delacardad.

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from the National Science Foundation to be used at their discretion. They also receive an expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. for an awards ceremony and several days of educational and celebratory events, including visits with members of Congress and science agency leaders.

Last spring at the National Academy of Sciences, President Obama called on all Americans

to join the effort to elevate science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education as a national priority. The President's public-private "Educate to Innovate" initiative, which was launched last fall, has attracted more than \$500 million in donations and in-kind support from corporations, philanthropies, service organizations, and others to help inspire students to pursue studies and careers in math and science. Last month, Cabinet officials and others in the Federal government answered the President's call to action by volunteering in local classrooms as part of National Lab Day, a nationwide initiative

to build local communities of support for teachers and students studying mathematics and science.

"Science and technology have long been at the core of America's strength and competitiveness, and the scientists and engineers who have led America on its remarkable path to success share something very precious: science and math teachers who brought these critical subjects to life," said President Obama. "Today we honor some of the best of these teachers and thank them for their dedication. They are inspirations not just to their students, but to the Nation and the world."



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