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Money Saving Programs
See our website for complete details

Carbon Neutral Program
Offset your vehicle's carbon emissions and save 10% off labor cost!

Labor Lock Program
Pay today's prices for the rest of your life!

Planned Maintenance Package
Get up to a 60% discount by buying your basic yearly maintenance services in advance

First-Time Clients ONLY!
Save \$75 to \$150 on our most thorough inspection!

Moneysaving Programs

To stretch your hard-earned dollars their farthest



Tom's Tidbits

Am I just a shill for Saddam?

Greetings!

I'm not afraid to take strong stances on political and social issues. Today's environment usually finds me in the camp of the Progressives, but does that make me a shill for Progressive positions? Do I mindlessly parrot propaganda, or do I choose logical positions based on the general welfare? Thanks to an article in this month's newsletter, that's more than just a rhetorical question...

One of the newer weapons in the US/NATO arsenal is Depleted Uranium (DU). Made from spent nuclear fuel, DU rounds shatter and burn on impact leaving a fine dust of low-level radioactive particles that stay in the environment for the full 4.5-billion-year half-life of the DU. Doctors in Fallujah are blaming DU for a catastrophic rise in infant deaths and abnormalities, and US doctors are investigating links between DU and Gulf War Syndrome. Nothing is proven yet, but there is strong evidence supporting these associations. Our "News To Make You Furious" column this month is about the use of DU in Iraq, including its effect on Iraqi births, medical and technical information from a variety of sources, and an organization that's trying to do something about it. We also put together a KPOJ spot on the issue, and built a DU page on our website.

Here's where it gets interesting. Before the newsletter article went out, even before the KPOJ spot had run, a gentleman named LtCol (USAF Reserve, ret) Roger Helbig contacted us to set us straight on the issue. He left a very animated phone message then sent his first email which included:

"Your web page about DU is the answer to the Iraqi propagandists' prayer. Are you proud of that? You have loaded it with lies and I presume that you don't actually know anything about the subject so I suggest that you stick to fixing cars, which I presume that you do know about!"

His second email apologized (sort of) for the tone of his first, then called us "liars" and "recruiters for America's enemies", and went on to assault the reputation and credentials of Major Douglas Rokke, one of the leading voices against DU (although we didn't actually include anything from Maj. Rokke in our DU article). Col Helbig then referenced [two articles to prove DU was harmless](#) (both links were to the same article, strangely by a Captain Doug Rokke) and finished up by telling us that DU has not been used anywhere in the world since 2003.

A little research showed us not to take Col. Helbig's attacks too personally; [he apparently spends quite a bit of time "debunking" DU information](#). However, "not taking it personally" isn't the same as "not taking it seriously". To build a 'logical position based on facts' we have to consider all aspects of an issue. If Lt. Col. Helbig raises legitimate questions, shouldn't they be addressed? Let's take a few of them point-by-point...

- **We're helping Iraqi propagandists-** No, we're not. We're letting people know about serious allegations that have a reasonable chance of being true. A propagandist may make use of the truth for evil ends, but I don't think ignoring truth is a reasonable alternative.
- **We're spreading lies-** No we're not. We're telling you about an issue that shocked us, and giving some of the background and science that goes with it. We directed you to a variety of newspaper articles, medical journals, and scientific papers that describe the history and support the thesis of our article.

- **DU is safe-** No, it's not. DU is mostly uranium 235, an isotope of the U238 in nuclear reactors. It's not as radioactive as plutonium or even the original U238, but it is both chemically and radioactively toxic. More importantly, the DU described in the articles Col. Helbig referenced is DU in the form of whole ammunition, not microscopic dust. Since the dust has a half-life in the human body of about 5000 days, breathing it in makes a difference. That doesn't PROVE it is responsible for the Iraqi horrors, but it isn't "safe".
- **Major Rokke is unqualified-** Apparently this is an issue Maj. Rokke has faced before, because he had to [fax a copy of his qualifications to the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission](#). But assume for the moment that Rokke was a sociopathic liar... he's not the only person making these allegations. The validity of the science surrounding DU is not dependent on just one guy, so even if he IS unqualified (and it seems like he is, although we have no way to tell for sure from here) it wouldn't make the allegations untrue.
- **DU has not been used since 2003-** Not really sure on this one. We tried to confirm this with both military and civilian sources. Some agree with Col. Helbig, others don't. However, DU is the standard round for the M1A1 Abrams tank and it seems unlikely that we would have shelved one of our newest war toys for the last 12 years without reason.

We've addressed most of Col. Helbig's points above, but there's a question that he's obligated to answer in return. There IS an overwhelming and sudden increase in infant deaths and birth defects in a defined geographic area, an increase that began just after our assault with radioactive weapons on that same area. Granted, it could be coincidence, but is it LIKELY to be coincidence? DU provides a reasonable, scientific explanation that fits the observed facts. Col. Helbig has to do more than simply deny it's true.

I'll take Col. Helbig's advice on one thing, though... we'll mostly "stick to fixing cars" because we're NOT qualified to evaluate the long-term health effects of low-level radioactive nanoparticles. I imagine the same goes for Col. Helbig. I'll also agree with him on something else (although for different reasons)... you shouldn't take our word for any of this. We ARE an automotive shop, and not a news outlet. We can't do the first-person investigative reporting that used to be standard for news agencies. WE COULD BE WRONG, AND SO COULD EVERYONE ELSE. DU MAY HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS, BUT IT'S NOT VERY DAMN LIKELY. So, now that you're aware of the situation, find out as much as you can for yourself. Read the SCIENCE, not the opinion or propaganda. DEMAND real, in-depth information from the sources YOU trust. Make real, rational evaluations to the best of your ability. And then, if you come to the conclusion we did, TAKE ACTION! DON'T LET THIS STUPIDITY CONTINUE IN YOUR NAME!

Make a great day,

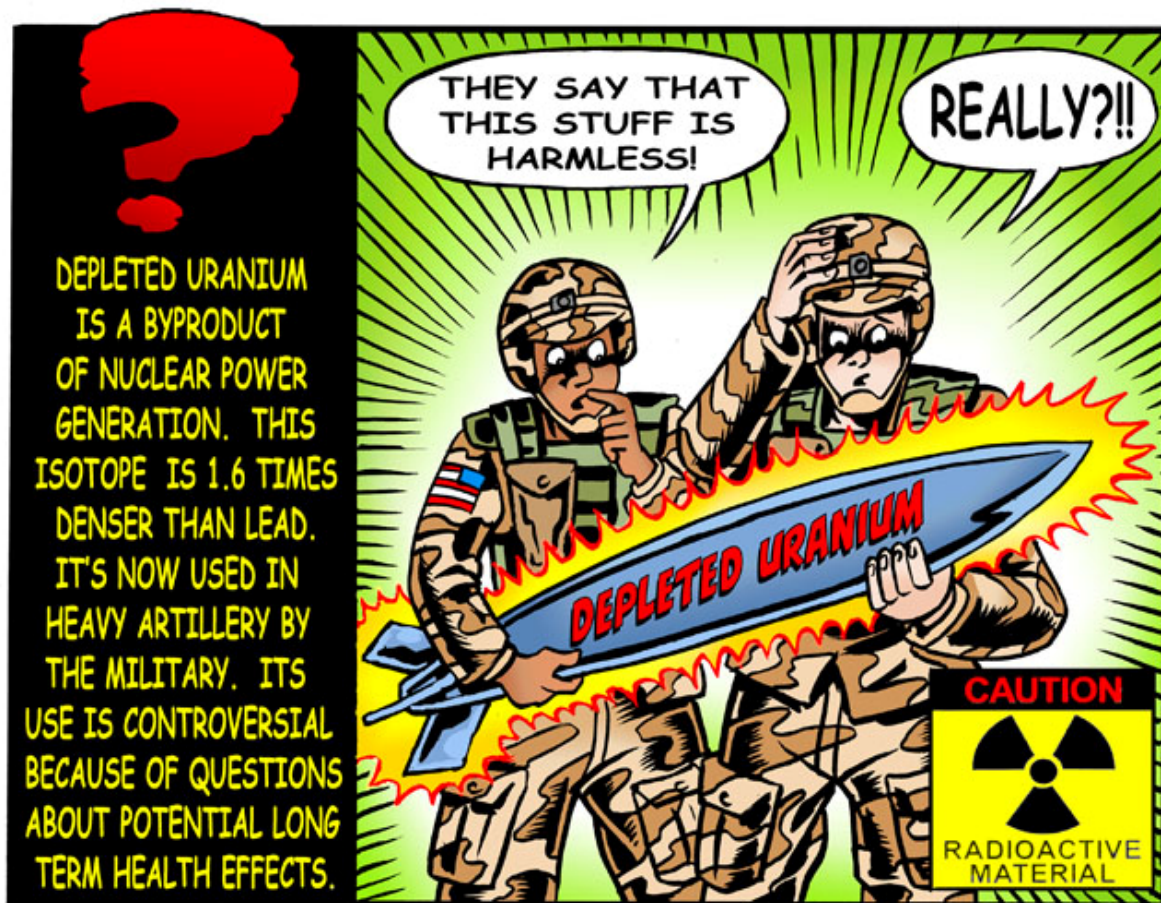


Tom



"What NOW?!!" Toons

You can't see this one anywhere but here



"WHAT NOW?!!"

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WWW.WHATNOWTOONS.COM



A Progressive Face In the Mayor's Race **Mr. Smith goes to Portland... hopefully.**

The [Oregon State Legislature](#) was running late, which meant [District 47 Representative Jefferson Smith](#) was running late too. Smith is one of the three leading candidates for the Portland Mayoral election in May, but even after a long day at the Legislature and a long drive back from Salem, he was still ready for the interview he had generously promised us. It was nearly dark when we finally sat down at the SE Holgate Street campaign headquarters, but he was still full of energy.

"How's the campaign going? You're supposed to say it's going GREAT! But the answer is really 'who knows'?" Judging from the interest, it's actually going pretty well. The Smith campaign has over 900 volunteers and 1500 donors, and has garnered endorsements from [ASME 189](#), [BikeWalkVote](#), a string of State Senators and Representatives, [active transportation advocates](#), and over [200 individuals](#) on his [website](#). "We have a very diverse demographic. We have one of the oldest staffers in any campaign, and maybe one of the youngest too." This broad base is exactly what Smith is trying to build. "If we do it right, we'll build a crew of volunteers and supporters that reflects the city."

[Jefferson Smith's District](#) is mostly East Portland, bounded by I-205, 147th, I-84, and Division St, with a little bump up to the airport industrial area. Why would he leave a safe job as Oregon State Rep to run for Mayor? "It didn't occur to me when I ran for Rep that I would run for Mayor one day. But, while working on state issues I found my constituent's issues weren't statewide issues. They were talking about unpaved roads (59 miles just in east Portland), safety on Max, gangs, and a better economic development plan than 'strip clubs and strip malls'. I found that these things are hard to deal with on a state level, and to make a difference in their lives I needed to work at the local, city level."

Smith wants to see a smarter economic growth plan with greater equity, a greater city role in education, careful oversight of our transportation expenditures, and improvements to the way the city works. Throughout our interview, he talked a lot about infrastructure, whether buildings, roads, web, or especially people. Why that emphasis? Why not pick a couple general initiatives to support? "Because the basics matter. Basic services. Underpinnings. Foundations. Concentrate on those, and everything else follows."

Asked to name the biggest current downside to the way the city currently works, Jefferson had a big-picture answer. "Hopefully it's not a problem-solution situation, but a question of overall system improvement." He says that in a time of budget cutting and tightening, we need to reduce management overhead and target frontline services for residents. Every big system needs constant improvement, and Smith believes that small changes to the way services are delivered can mean big differences to efficiency, effectiveness, and the way the City is perceived to its citizens. One example of this is his idea to have a THREE digit number, like 311, that would tie in all city services instead of the current 7 digit number that no one knows. "This three digit number would be a one-stop shop, like triage for city services. The goal would be 'What can we do to help you? What non-city services can we direct you to? Here is the person who can help you RIGHT NOW.' This directorial ability is a SKILL that can be learned and sharpened. [New York City has a similar system](#), and it dropped transactional costs 20% (Transactional cost is the people/cost involved in each city encounter). Increasing government transparency works with better service delivery to increase people's satisfaction with city government. I would expand budget mapping, actually applying expenditures to a geographical map, so people can see exactly where their money is being spent".

An overriding message to Smith's philosophy aside from strong delivery of basic services seems to be his reliance on the power of Portland's people rather than specific policy initiatives, a philosophy that showed again when it came to our neighborhoods. "[The Office of Neighborhood Involvement](#) has been run similarly for the last 40 years. As our population grows, becomes more diverse and technological, there's a risk of deprioritizing the Office of Neighborhood Involvement. The strength of our city has always been its people. We have the waterfront park because our people wanted that instead of the Westside freeway. We could increase involvement by rotating council meetings through the various neighborhoods, or engaging development outreach with communities of color to do better, deeper work. Chicago has experimented with more citizen participation in budgeting. We increase involvement when we increase accessibility, accountability, and responsibility."

This reliance on Portland's people is ideally suited to Portland's weak Mayor system of city government. "The Mayor is only successful to the degree to which they empower the people, including other city councilors, to accomplish their best objectives." It would also work well in interactions with [Metro](#), the Portland area's unique regional government, where he would take a very active role. "Regional planning is one of the most important realities of our city", he said. "Detroit is a ghost town; it had no planning. It was too easy for surrounding suburbs to offer benefits for new businesses that moved in, but they had no incentive to make sure the core of the city worked. And sure enough, that's what happened... the core of the city didn't work! One of the things we have to do is reestablish the case that we're all in this together, and that for the region to be successful PORTLAND must be successful".

Leveraging Portland's people may indeed be an important priority, but in today's economic environment voters are concerned with what politicians will do for the economy. One of Smith's initiatives in this area is his emphasis on [Economic Gardening](#) which differs from classic Economic Development in its emphasis on cultivating businesses that already exist locally rather than hunting for larger, established businesses to bring to the area. "Detroit is realizing it doesn't make cars... it bends metal, paints metal, welds things, assembles things. They're finding they can apply these skills to new sectors. That same way of thinking can help us here. Portland and Vancouver partnered to help a small company called [Keyscaper](#) that makes painted keyboards. They moved from painting "Grandma" on a keyboard to licensing partnerships with characters and sports teams, producing a higher end product with a much larger markets. They went from a couple thousand dollars a month to a hundred thousand dollars a month, and added 12-13 new employees. It didn't require some big tax break, oil subsidy, or deregulatory move. The total cost to the taxpayer was about \$2,000. Economic gardening keeps our money at home, and deposits out of national banks into local banks".

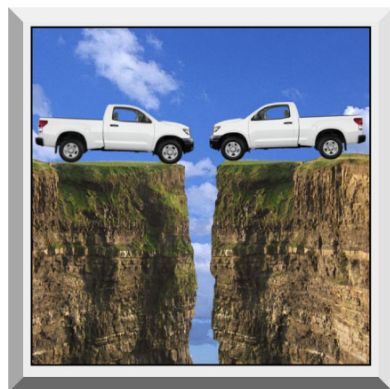
Jefferson's reliance on people came out again in his thoughts on community policing. He believes whoever heads the police bureau (one of the job duties assigned by the Mayor to the other city councilors) must be committed to community policing. Just like any other city employee, the job of the police is to solve problems. Not merely punish crime or enforce the law, but to solve the everyday problems of everyday citizens, which might or might not include arrests. "Cops are only effective when they get out of their cars and into the community. I don't want the feeling of law enforcement on one side of the table and the citizens on the other, but of everyone solving common problems".

The idea of police as community helpers led into questions about the [Occupy movement](#), which Jefferson said is "the most important protest in my lifetime. Nothing has done more to elevate awareness of growing income inequities than Occupy." He is one of the only mayoral candidates that did not back an immediate move to evict the protestors. "It wasn't because I wanted folks violating park codes, but if we had been the first major city to evict, even before Oakland, I'm not sure our result would have been much better". Again, Jefferson's view of Portland's people and energy as a resource rather than an obstacle colors his approach.

Instead of setting arbitrary time limits, he says he would have set conduct benchmarks. "I would have told them, look, I support the 1st amendment, but we can't have cops pushed in front of busses. I would have looked for positive directions to use and channel that energy". He pointed to some of the really good things that have come out of Occupy, like Move Your Money, help with foreclosures, Saturday market for nonprofits, and 99 Actions for the 99 Percent. Opening these avenues to the Occupiers and supporting their efforts could make a huge difference. "I'm not saying it would work any better than what the Mayor did, but it would surely work better than a use of force from the outset".

One major issue that was hurting his campaign when we talked was the Oregon State Legislature rule that forbids sitting Legislators from taking contributions for other political offices while the Legislature is in session. (You may be glad to know that the session is over now, so that rule no longer applies.) However, Jefferson's response when faced with this rule is interesting. "I basically had two alternatives. I could have resigned to run for Mayor, but I wanted to finish the job I started. The other was to use the wiggle room in the ethics rules to allow donations, but as soon as you're talking about 'wiggle room in the ethics rules' you're in trouble. So I decided to just live within the rules and not take donations." Asked how someone could help without causing problems, he quickly responded "Give volunteers! Give your time! Get involved! [Facebook](#) with your friends, talk with somebody. This campaign is driven by people, and we need people to be successful".

By now it was completely dark outside, and we were both ready to call it quits. But, when asked to sum up his thoughts on the campaign, Jefferson once again rose to the task. "I feel like we're trying to build a mini-movement campaign, one that reaches out and gets people involved in what we're doing, then they reach out in turn and the movement grows and grows. The City of Portland is will not be great because of the Mayor; it will be great because of the great people in the city. That puts a greater duty on the people of this city. They can't just watch what happens. They have to decide what's going to happen, and then we have to work to make it happen. This city should be one of the greatest places to live in the world. It should be a city that works for all the people. And, by working on some of those hard to do basic things, it can set an example to other cities about what a place can be like. I can't do that alone. But we can do that together, and I can help us".



Surprises in Vehicle Reliability

Who Makes The Most Reliable Vehicles On The Road?

When we're asked what vehicles are best for reliability, we typically say "Toyota and Honda first, then American cars. Stay away from European manufacturers." Things are changing, though. This article published in the February 20 Washington Post Business section tells you how and why vehicle quality is changing, and what you can expect the next time you go new car shopping...

(DETROIT, AP)— Car shoppers today are less likely to end up with a lemon. In the past five years, global competition has forced automakers to improve the quality and reliability of their vehicles — everything from inexpensive mini-cars to decked-out luxury SUVs.

The newfound emphasis on quality means fewer problems for owners. It also means more options for buyers, who can buy a car from Detroit or South Korea and know it will hold up like a vehicle from Japan. With few exceptions, cars are so close on reliability that it's getting harder for companies to charge a premium. So automakers are trying to set themselves apart with sleek, cutting-edge exterior designs and more features such as luxurious interiors, multiple air bags, dashboard computers and touch-screen controls. "It's a great time to be a consumer," says Jesse Toprak, vice president of industry trends for the TrueCar.com auto pricing website. "You can't really screw up too badly in terms of your vehicle choice."

It wasn't always this close.

In the 1990s, Honda and Toyota dominated in quality, especially in the key American market for small and midsize cars. Japan began building high-quality small cars and tapped into America's growing appetite for fuel efficiency in the 1970s. With their sterling reputation, they were able to charge more than Detroit automakers and cut Detroit's U.S. market share from 78 percent in 1980 to just under 43 percent in 2009, according to Ward's AutoInfoBank. Cars from Detroit generally weren't as trouble-free in the 1980s and '90s. Hyundai executives concede their quality used to be poor.

However, around 2006, as General Motors, Ford Motor Co. and Chrysler Group LLC were heading into financial trouble, they realized that people were shifting away from trucks and sport utility vehicles to smaller cars and car-based crossover SUVs. Gas prices were on the rise again, and the companies, which relied on bigger vehicles for their profits, had few cars to offer. Fearing the shift, Detroit decided to go after the Japanese and shifted research dollars from trucks to cars after years of neglect. Detroit also realized that Hondas and Toyotas were quieter and more reliable, so they spent more on engineering and parts to close the gap.

Meanwhile, Korean automakers Hyundai Motor Co. and Kia Motors Corp. were busy redesigning their cars, changing to more cutting-edge looks to boost sales. Then, Toyota's reputation was tarnished by a series of safety recalls, and Honda played conservative with new models that looked similar to the old ones.

The newfound emphasis on quality has closed the gap between best and worst in the industry. In 1998, J.D. Power and Associates, which surveys owners about trouble with their cars after three years, found an industry average of 278 problems per 100 vehicles. By this year, the number fell to 132. In 1998, the most reliable car had 92 problems per 100 vehicles, while the least reliable had 517, a gap of 425. This year the gap closed to 284 problems.

"We don't have total clunkers like we used to," says Dave Sargent, automotive vice president with J.D. Power. Nearly all automakers are improving in quality, but manufacturers that are at the bottom of the rankings are improving more quickly than those at the top, Sargent said.



KPOJ Beavers Baseball

What's the deal with the new KPOJ programming?

Our world was rocked in February when KPOJ started carrying Beavers Baseball. Every week until the end of May, they'll be carrying between 2 and 5 games spreading through the week and weekend. We aren't pleased about it and judging from the calls and comments we've been getting you aren't pleased about it either. There's not much we can do about it, but here's what we can tell you...

- The decision was not ours, nor was it KPOJ's. The decision was made by ClearChannel, the owner of five stations in Portland (KKCW-FM, KKRZ-FM, KIJZ-FM, KEX-AM, KPOJ-AM). It is a 5-year deal.
- The Beaver's regular season runs until the end of May, and maybe longer if they make the post-season. The full schedule of upcoming games is included below.
- We've fielded a lot of calls here at the shop about the format change. We're always glad to talk KPOJ with anyone who calls, but the Beaver's decision isn't ours and we can't do anything about it. Sorry, we REALLY wish we could!
- The reason given for the change is to expand the KPOJ audience. The people listening to radio baseball (by and large) aren't currently Progressive Radio listeners, and have little reason to spin the dial to check it out. They hope that people dropping in to hear baseball (and yes, there will be at least a few) will hear about the other shows and be curious enough to tune in. (Yes, we know that's lame, but that's the thinking).
- If you're flipping the dial as soon as the baseball starts, there's no need. The KPOJ content is still there. You can stream the audio from their [website](#) or from [iHeartRadio](#).
- We've been asked if this is part of a larger plan to kill Progressive Talk. The same thought has crossed our minds, but it's not part of any plot we're aware of. Probably.
- We've also been asked if we're going to do anything about the change; pulling our ads or putting together a protest of some kind. Sorry, but no. We're supporters of KPOJ and we'll stay with them through this mess, and we hope you will too. They'll be back to regular programming soon.
- Finally, we've been asked if there's anything the listeners can do. Sorry, but the answer there is "no" as well. The decision's already been made, and they're locked into it.
- On the other hand, a call to the station to voice your opinion wouldn't hurt and may make them think harder about doing junk like this in the future. You can reach out and touch KPOJ's Main Switchboard at **503-323-6400**, toll free at **866-452-0620**, or local at **503-248-0620**. If you want to send them snailmail, the address is **KPOJ Radio, 4949 SW Macadam Ave, Portland, OR 97239**. If you'd like to email KPOJ, just click [here](#). If you'd rather try ClearChannel instead, their phone is **210-822-2828** and their address is **Clear Channel Corporate, 200 East Basse Road, San Antonio, TX, 78209**.

So that's the deal. If you want to make plans around the games we've posted the Beaver's schedule below, along with a press release giving the facts of the whole deal. Play Ball!

OSU Baseball on 620KPOJ- Upcoming Games

3/16- Fri @ California 2:30p
3/17- Sat @ California 1p
3/18- Sun @ California 1p
3/23- Fri Arizona 5:35p
3/24- Sat Arizona 2:05p
3/25- Sun Arizona 1:05p
3/27- Tue @ Portland 3p
3/30- Fri Washington 5:35p
3/31- Sat Washington 2:05 p.m.
4/1- Sun vs Washington 12:30p
4/3- Tues vs Portland 5p
4/5- Thurs @ Arizona State 6p
4/6- Fri @ Arizona State 6p
4/7- Sat @ Arizona State 12:00p

4/9- Mon @ Nevada 12:30p
4/10- Tue @ Nevada 12:30p
4/13- Fri vs Arkansas-Pine Bluff 5:00p
4/14- Sat vs Arkansas-Pine Bluff 1:35p
4/15- Sun vs Arkansas-Pine Bluff 12:30p
4/20- Fri vs UCLA 5p
4/21- Sat vs UCLA 1:30p
4/22- Sat vs UCLA 12:30p
4/24- Tue @ Oregon 5:30p
4/27- Fri @ USC 5:30p
4/28- Sat @ USC 1:30p
4/29- Sun @ USC 12:30p
5/4- Fri vs Oregon 5p
5/5- Sat vs Stanford 5p

5/6- Thurs vs Stanford 12:30p
5/8- Tue @ Oregon 5:30p
5/11- Fri @ Utah 10:30a
5/12- Sat @ Utah 10:30a
5/13- Sun @ Utah 10:30a
5/15- Tue vs Portland 5p
5/18- Fri @ Washington 5p
5/19- Sat @ Washington 12:30p
5/20- Fri @ Washington 11:30a
5/25- Fri vs Oregon 5p
5/26- Sat vs Oregon 1:30p
5/27- Sun vs Oregon 12:30p
5/27- Fri @ USC 5:30p

OREGON STATE ATHLETICS ANNOUNCES CLEAR CHANNEL'S KEX, KPOJ AS RADIO FLAGSHIP FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS

A Decades-Old Relationship Now Renewed Through 2017

CORVALLIS, Ore. (Feb. 2, 2012) – Beaver Sports Properties, a property of Learfield Sports and exclusive multimedia rights holder for Oregon State University Athletics, announced today a five-year, flagship radio agreement with Clear Channel Radio in Portland. Effective with the 2012-'13 athletic season, Clear Channel's KEX 1190 AM, KEX 102.3 FM and KPOJ 620 AM will carry all game action and related programming for the Beavers through the 2017 athletic season.

"We are excited to return to our longtime radio partner KEX and the Clear Channel Radio and Entertainment team," said OSU Director of Athletics Bob De Carolis. "KEX gives "Beaver Nation" optimal coverage of OSU athletic events not only in the Portland Metropolitan area, but also much of the West Coast. I look forward to another long run with one of the premier radio stations in the nation. I also want to thank Pamplin Broadcasting for its efforts in promoting Beaver Athletics for the past five years and its commitment to Oregon State University."

Terms of the agreement call for KEX AM/FM stations to air football game-day broadcasts, including all regular and post-season games and pre- and post-game programming. Additionally, the KEX stations will carry all men's basketball game-day broadcasts, inclusive of regular season and post-season play and pre- and post-game programming. KPOJ may air certain non-conference men's basketball games as mutually agreed upon by the network and station. Beginning this spring, the 2012 Beaver baseball games will air exclusively on KPOJ to include all regular season and post-season play, as well as all pre- and post-game programming.

Other flagship highlights include airing the weekly, one-hour coaches' shows entitled Beaver Sports Talk on both KEX AM/FM stations during football, basketball and baseball seasons, and airing a daily, two-minute OSU Sports Today show, hosted by Mike Parker, on all three stations (KEX AM/FM, KPOJ).

"We're pleased to renew our partnership with the Beavers and look forward to providing our listeners with exciting OSU athletics for the next five years," said Clear Channel Radio's Vice President, Market Manager Robert Dove.

"We feel confident the new Clear Channel relationship will ensure a greater reach and broader exposure for Beaver sports, while we certainly want to recognize KPAM for the excellent coverage they provided us the last five years," said Steve Sullivan, general manager for Beaver Sports Properties. "We continually look at ways we can enhance the radio broadcast experience for fans and know we have a quality programming partner in the three Clear Channel stations."

In addition to OSU, Learfield Sports manages multimedia rights and sponsorship for more than 50 collegiate institutions and associations and titles the Learfield Sports Directors' Cup. The company also provides exclusive sports programming to more than 1,000 radio stations throughout the country. For additional corporate information and a complete collegiate portfolio, visit learfieldsports.com.



Shop Talk

How You Can Save Money On Our Services

We all work hard for our money, and it's never been more important to stretch it as far as possible. However, it doesn't pay to be a coupon shopper when it comes to auto repair. If your brakes need to be fixed then they need to be fixed NOW, not as soon as there's a coupon for it.

On the other hand you have to budget your vehicle maintenance money, so you obviously want it to go as far as possible. Everyone faces this same problem, so we came up with the Moneysaving Maintenance Programs we'd like to see for our own vehicles, programs that are consistent with our goal of sensible automotive maintenance. They're designed to save you money as well as increase the effectiveness of our maintenance and repair services. We encourage you to sign up for one (or all!) of these programs to maximize the effectiveness of your auto maintenance dollars!

503.230.2300
TomDwyer.com
530 SE Tenino St.
Portland, Oregon

Labor Lock Program

Pay **today's prices** for the rest of your life!

If you opt-in to this program and come in for service **twice a year** (minimum \$250), you'll **maintain the labor rate you started with** as our labor rates increase.

1998 and newer vehicles only, please

Have you signed up for our **Labor Lock Program** yet? Why not? It's **FREE**, and it could mean BIG savings the longer you stay with us! Just like prices for everything, our shop labor rate will eventually go up. **The Labor Lock**

Program lets you keep today's rate for as long as you stay with us. All you have to do is tell us that you want to enroll! If you bring your car in at least twice a year (which is a good idea anyway because it lets us keep up on the ongoing status of your vehicle) then today's shop rate is your shop rate forever. Labor Lock is a way to recognize our valuable long-term clients without requiring them to join a program.

503.230.2300
TomDwyer.com
530 SE Tenino St.
Portland, Oregon

Carbon Neutral Program

Your **One-Year Registration** includes...


Offset of your vehicle's carbon production with wind and solar power
-AND-
10% off labor costs for all repairs and services at Tom Dwyer Automotive

Only \$30, \$50, or \$90 per vehicle
(depending on whether you drive a sipper, a drinker, or a guzzler)

1998 and newer vehicles only, please

Our **Carbon Neutral Program** is a partnership with Bonneville Environmental Foundation that has already offset more than 1.4 million pounds of carbon from our atmosphere. It's a **one-year membership that helps offset the carbon output of your vehicle, and saves you 10%**

on labor. This is our easiest way to save money quickly. We take the 10% discount as soon as you sign up, so if you're doing a repair with \$500 in labor then the labor discount will pay for the membership fee in just one visit! You get the cash discount, you have the good feeling of driving carbon-free, and you can't beat the cool window cling sticker you get as a member!



Planned Maintenance Package

Save up to 60% by buying your basic yearly maintenance services in advance

	Passenger, Light trucks	European, SUV, 4WD	Large vehicle, HD Diesel
(2) Minor Interval Services with synthetic oil	\$ 149.90	220.00	250.00
(1) 90-point inspection (Basic Inspection)	\$ 48.68	73.00	73.00
(1) 130-point inspection (Deep Inspection)	\$ 146.00	194.70	194.70
(2) Tire rotation and balances	\$ 79.90	99.98	99.98
25% off diagnostic charges (up to \$100 per year)			
Total normal charges	\$ 424.48	587.68	617.68
Cost to enroll	\$ 170.00	265.00	305.00
You Save	\$ 254.48	322.68	312.68
	60%	55%	50%
	savings	savings	savings

1998 and newer vehicles only, please

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530 SE Tenino St.
Portland, Oregon

Because planned, coherent maintenance is so important to the life and performance of your vehicle, we designed our **Planned Maintenance Package** to encourage exactly this type of sensible planning. It lets you buy your full year's vehicle maintenance needs up-front. **You save at least 50% on all the basic maintenance services you'll need throughout the year**, including oil changes, tire rotations, interval service

inspections and more. You save the most money of any of our savings programs but, more importantly, because the maintenance items you're getting are so critical to the reliability of your vehicle, you're getting the most value.



First-Time Clients ONLY!

Save **\$75 to \$150** on our most thorough inspection!

We'll take **\$75 OFF** our normal \$150 if you just do the inspection, **OR**
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Coupon **MUST BE PRESENTED BEFORE SERVICE** and **CANNOT BE COMBINED** with other offers. Sorry, but our coupons are **VOID AFTER THE SERVICE IS PERFORMED**.

Expires March 30, 2012 **Coupon Code FIRST2012**

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If you're reading this then you're probably already a Tom Dwyer client. Our **First Time Client Offer** might not be useful to you, but if you'd like to share our service with family or friends it can be a big help. For most new clients we recommend our Comprehensive Inspection so

we can establish a baseline condition for their vehicles. **This coupon takes \$75 off the cost of that inspection, and we'll waive the other \$75 if the user has a minimum amount of work done.** Our First Time Client Offer is a great way for anyone get started on the road to coherent vehicle maintenance... the best way to save money in the long run!

Vehicle maintenance is cheaper than repair, but that still doesn't make it cheap. As drivers ourselves we understand and sympathize, and we want you your maintenance dollars to go as far as possible. Please, consider how these programs can benefit you, then talk with one of our [Service Advisors](#) to sign up and start saving!



Health Notes- **Medical Uses of the Birth Control Pill**

The current flap about insurance coverage of contraceptives has focused on the obvious birth-control aspects, but the other health benefits of hormonal contraceptives seem to be almost casually dismissed. To fix this, we decided to devote this month's "Health Notes" to telling you what some of these non-birth-control health uses are, and to answer some other questions raised by hormonal contraceptives. The article below is from [The Center For Young Women's Health](#), a project by the [Children's Hospital of Boston](#) providing health information to teen girls around the world.

Medical Uses of the Birth Control Pill

Besides birth control, there are many medical benefits of birth control pills. Birth control pills can help irregular periods, PCOS, endometriosis, acne, menstrual cramps, and low estrogen conditions.

Adolescent girls and young women are frequently prescribed birth control pills for irregular or absent menstrual periods, menstrual cramps, acne, PMS, endometriosis, and for Polycystic Ovary Syndrome. Girls who are diagnosed with PCOS are often prescribed oral contraceptives to lower their hormone levels and regulate their menstrual periods.

Birth control pills (sometimes called "the Pill", oral contraceptive pills-OCP's, or hormonal pills) contain one or two types of synthetic (man-made) female hormones, estrogen and/or progestin. Similar hormones are normally made by the ovaries. There are many different types of oral contraceptive pills.

What kinds of medical conditions can be helped with birth control pills?

- **Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)**: is a hormonal imbalance which causes irregular menstrual periods, acne, and excess hair growth. Birth control pills work by lowering certain hormone levels to regulate menstrual periods. When hormone levels are decreased to normal, acne and hair growth often improve.
- **Endometriosis**: Most girls with endometriosis have cramps or pelvic pain during their menstrual cycle. Birth control pills are often prescribed to treat [endometriosis](#) and work by temporarily preventing periods. When hormonal treatment is prescribed continuously, young women will rarely have periods, or not at all. Since periods can cause pain for young women with endometriosis, stopping periods will usually improve cramps and pelvic pain.
- **Lack of periods ("amenorrhea") from low weight, stress, excessive exercise, or damage to the ovaries from radiation or chemotherapy**: With any of these conditions, the hormone "estrogen" is not made in normal amounts by the body. Birth control pills may be prescribed to replace estrogen, which helps to regulate the menstrual cycle. For girls whose menstrual periods are irregular (too few - or not at all), birth control pills can help to regulate the menstrual cycle to every 28 days and provide the body with normal amounts of estrogen. Normal estrogen levels are important for healthy bones.
- **Menstrual Cramps**: When over-the-counter medications don't help with severe [cramps](#), birth control pills may be the solution because they prevent ovulation and lighten periods.
- **Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)**: Symptoms of PMS such as mood swings, breast soreness, and bloating, along with acne can occur up to 2 weeks before a young women's period. Birth control

pills may be prescribed to stop ovulation and keep hormone levels balanced. Symptoms may improve, particularly when oral contraceptive pills are prescribed continuously.

- **Heavy Menstrual Periods:** Birth control pills can reduce the amount and length of menstrual bleeding.
- **Acne:** For moderate to severe [acne](#), which over-the-counter and prescription medications haven't cured, birth control pills may be prescribed. The hormones in the Pill can help stop acne from forming. Be patient though, since it takes several months for birth control pills to work.
- **Other Medical Benefits-** Because there is less menstrual bleeding when taking birth control pills, you are less likely to get **anemia** (low number of red blood cells, which carry oxygen from the lungs to the tissues). Birth control pills lower your chance of getting endometrial (lining of the uterus) cancer, ovarian cancer, and [ovarian cysts](#).

What are the side effects of birth control pills?

Most women have no side effects when taking birth control pills, but some women do experience irregular periods, nausea, headaches, or weight change. Each type of oral contraceptive pill can affect each woman differently.

- **Spotting or Irregular Periods:** Very light bleeding (you don't need to use a regular pad, just a panty shield) may occur during the first 3 weeks of taking the Pill and may continue up to 3 cycles, but this is not serious. If the bleeding becomes heavier (more than just a very light flow or lasts more than a few days), call your health care provider.
- **Nausea:** Sometimes a young woman can feel nauseated, but the feeling usually goes away if the pill is taken with food or with a bedtime snack. Sometimes a pill with less estrogen is prescribed if the nausea doesn't go away.
- **Headaches:** Sometimes, young women may complain of headaches when they start taking birth control pills. Most often headaches happen because of stress or other reasons such as skipping meals, not enough sleep, sinus infections, or migraines. If your health care provider thinks your headaches are related to the Pill, he/she may prescribe a different pill with a lower amount of estrogen or may take you off of it completely and watch to see if headaches improve.
- **Mood changes:** Feeling up and down emotionally can sometimes happen to anyone and is unlikely to be caused by the Pill. Exercise and a healthy diet may help, but if they don't, you may need to talk with your health care provider and try a different kind of oral contraceptive pill.
- **Breakouts:** Usually the pill helps cure acne, but a few women feel they get acne from a certain kind of birth control pill.
- **Sore or enlarged breasts:** Your breasts may become tender or may get larger.
- **Weight:** Some teens gain weight and some teens lose weight while taking birth control pills, but most teens stay exactly the same weight. Many times a young woman thinks she has gained 5-10 pounds, but when her weight is actually checked, there is no change. If you think you may have gained weight while taking the Pill talk to your health care provider. Try to remember to watch your portion sizes and eat 5-7 servings of fruits and veggies each day and don't forget to exercise. Your appetite may increase or stay the same.
- **Side effects usually go away in the first three to four cycles.** If you do have side effects, you should talk to your health care provider. If the side effects are very uncomfortable or if they don't go away after three cycles, your health care provider may switch you to a different pill.

Are there any risks with birth control pills?

Birth control pills with estrogen may cause a slight increase in the risk of developing blood clots in the legs. Among young women who do not take the Pill, 5 out of 100,000 teens and young women per year develop

blood clots. Among women who do take the Pill, the risk slightly increases to 15-20 out of 100,000 women per year. Find out if anyone in your family (blood relative) has had blood clots, especially when they were young. If you are a smoker, try to quit as soon as possible.

What if I forget to take one or more birth control pills?

If you forget to take your birth control pill at your usual time, take it as soon as you remember. Take your next pill at the regular time. If you do not remember until the next day, take two pills that day. If you are also using the pill to prevent pregnancy, [here are further instructions](#).

What if my period is very light while I'm taking birth control pills?

Your period may be so light when you are taking birth control pills that you may have only a brown smudge on a tampon, pad, panty shield or underwear. The hormone doses in birth control pills are very low. This means that the lining of your uterus doesn't become very thick so very little blood needs to come out each month.

Are there side effects that I should contact my health care provider about?

Most young women who take birth control pills have few or no problems. However, if you have any of the following problems, call your health care provider right away.

- Abdominal or stomach pain (severe)
- Chest pain (severe), cough, shortness of breath
- Headache (severe), dizziness, weakness, or numbness
- Eye problems (vision loss or blurring), speech problems
- Severe leg pain (calf or thigh)
- Remember: **ACHES**

What if I am also using birth control pills to prevent pregnancy?

If you take birth control pills for a medical reason, you're also protected from getting pregnant. The Pill however does not protect you against sexually transmitted diseases. It's therefore very important to **ALWAYS use a condom when having sexual intercourse**.



Drew's Kitchen

Lobster Ravioli in a Fennel-and-Chervil-Infused Nage

Last month's recipe for [Creamy Cheese Risotto](#) was such a hit that we decided to follow up with another fairly challenging recipe. This recipe from Drew's cooking buddy Emeril Lagasse isn't a mix-chill-serve quickie. It will take attention and work, but anything with lobster in it will be worth the effort.

Ingredients

2 ribs celery, roughly chopped	2 live lobsters, 1½ to 2 pounds each
2 onions, roughly chopped	½ cup finely chopped fresh fennel bulb (fronds and upper stems reserved)
2 carrots, roughly chopped	3 tablespoons minced chervil or parsley
1 lemon, juiced	½ cup heavy cream
1 orange, juiced	6 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon black peppercorns	1 tablespoon lemon zest
2 sprigs thyme	1 lemon, juiced
2 sprigs parsley	½ cup minced shallots or onion
2 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed	1 teaspoon garlic
2 bay leaves	36 wonton or egg roll wrappers
1 cup dry white wine	
1 teaspoon salt	

Directions

- In a large pot place 1 gallon of water and the celery, onion, carrot, lemon and orange juices, peppercorns, thyme, parsley, garlic, bay leaves, white wine and salt. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce to a simmer, then add the lobsters and poach for 9 minutes.
- Remove the lobsters from the water with tongs and drain. When cool enough to handle, remove the lobster meat and claw meat from the shells, finely chop and set aside, reserving the shells.
- Into a clean pot strain the cooking liquid through a fine mesh strainer. Add the lobster shells and bring to a boil over high heat and reduce by half.
- Add the fronds and upper stems from the fennel bulb and reduce again by half (should be between 2 and 3 cups).
- Strain the liquid again into a clean saucepan and bring to a simmer. Add the chervil, cream, 2 tablespoons butter and 1-1/2 teaspoons lemon zest to the pan and season to taste. Remove sauce from the heat and cover.
- In a large saute pan, melt 2 tablespoons of butter over medium heat and saute the fennel, shallots and garlic until soft.
- Add the chopped lobster meat and saute for 2 minutes. Add the lemon juice and remaining lemon zest and butter to the pan and stir to incorporate, then pour onto a plate to cool.
- On a flat surface spread out 18 wonton wrappers and spoon 1 tablespoon of lobster filling into the center of each. Brush a little water on the outer rim of the filled wrapper and top a wrapper. Press gently around the filling and the edges of the wrappers to seal. (Ravioli may be refrigerated at this point, covered tightly, until ready to use, up to 2 hours.)
- Bring a large pan of salted water to the boil, drop in the ravioli in batches and cook for 30 seconds.
- Drain thoroughly and place 3 ravioli in the center of each serving plate, and coat with the sauce.
- **Prep Time:** 15 min **Cook Time:** 1 hr 10 min **Serves:** 18 ravioli, (6 as an appetizer)



Sellwood Bridge Update

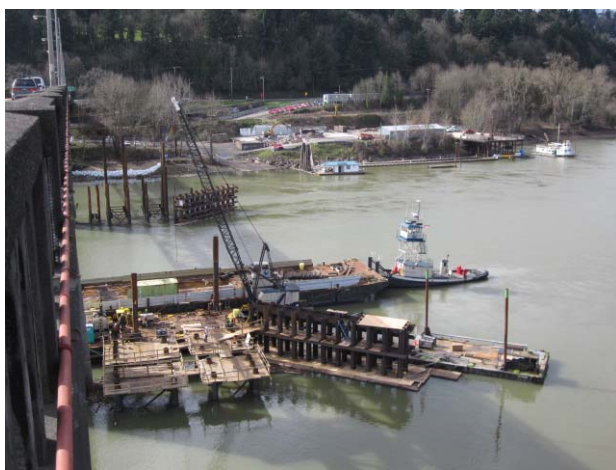
It's quiet, but moving along

It's been kinda quiet here at Ground Zero for the Sellwood Bridge reconstruction. The crews are building the supports that will hold the temporary bridge (which will actually be the existing bridge; please see our [article on the Shoo Fly option](#)) and preparing the surrounding area for major construction. Here are several pictures from the ongoing construction, followed by a detailed update from the county, originally posted on the [Sellwood Bridge Project](#) website...

Late Breaking News- 3/12/12-

Legislature approves funds for Sellwood Bridge and Cornelius Pass Road

(This story came in on Monday as we were just about to go to press. Thought you might be as excited as we were) The 2012 Oregon Legislature provided a major boost to Multnomah County's efforts to replace the Sellwood Bridge and make safety improvements to a winding stretch of Northwest Cornelius Pass Road. Senate Bill 1543 allocates \$5 million to construct the Highway 43 intersection with the new Sellwood Bridge and \$9.5 million to develop and construct improvements to Cornelius Pass Road... More info on www.SellwoodBridge.org.



Construction site under the bridge, 3/7/12

You can't see them while driving on the bridge, but these are the beginnings of the bases for the temporary bridge support piers.



Before-and-after of the Staff Jennings site



While the bridge construction will affect us here at the shop, the ones most affected will be the people living in the condos alongside the bridge. These photos of the construction footprint show just how tight the work will be.

Construction update from Multnomah County

River Work: The contractor continues to assemble and weld protective struts to the two fenders that protect the detour bridge piers from collisions with river traffic. Work continues on the east side fender the next two weeks. Next week the contractor will continue to install pile "helmets" on the in-river piling at Bent 19, in the center of this river. The pile helmet forms a base for the upper pier structure.

Staff Jennings Demolition: As this week's photos show, Konell Construction rapidly took down the main building at the former Staff Jennings boat store this week. Wood beams and other materials were salvaged or recycled. Konell will continue to clear the site next week. It will then be used as a construction staging area. When the new bridge opens, a bioswale on the site will filter stormwater from the bridge and Highway 43.

Other Westside Work: More fencing and erosion controls will be installed next week to set up a zone for the landslide stabilization work and tree protection measures. In the next two weeks, excavation work is expected to begin on the landslide repair under the west end of the bridge, east of the trolley tracks. Tree removal in the construction zone and on the west side of Highway 43 will begin in March after permits are issued. Highway 43 will be widened and the trees will be replaced with native species as part of the project. The contractor is identifying and protecting trees that will remain.

Eastside Work: Construction fencing has been installed around the county-owned property on the south side of SE Spokane Street adjacent to the Springwater Trail. This lot will be used as a construction staging area with fenced parking for some residents of Riverpark Condominiums whose parking spaces will be moved during construction. A construction driveway will be added from Spokane Street to the lot. The thirteen parking spaces at Riverpark are expected to be relocated in the next week. Fencing has been installed on the south side of Riverpark in preparation for setting up the construction zone there. Gates will be installed after the parking spaces are relocated. On March 5 – 6, the contractor will videotape exteriors of buildings at Sellwood Harbor and Riverpark that will be removed later this year. Additional fencing and "Trail Closed" signs are being placed to close the eastbank trail between Spokane Street and the Portland Rowing Club, under the bridge. Work to widen the trail is expected to begin next week. The trail needs to be widened to bring in equipment that will be used to build a land pier for the detour bridge.

Work Hours: No evening or weekend work is scheduled the next two weeks. Work on the weekend of March 10 is cancelled. Work hours the next two weeks are 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays.

...and don't forget...

The County has set up a couple cameras to cover the new bridge construction. The one at right is a [live camera](#), and there's also a [time-lapse video](#) that will condense the each day's construction progress into just a few minutes. Enjoy!





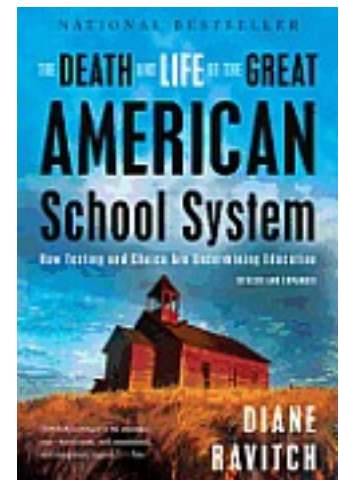
Book Spotlight

“Death and Life of the Great American School System”

You probably know that we’re proud sponsors of the [Illahee Lecture Series](#), a forum that brings speakers on topics from environmental science to neurobiology to politics. For this month’s Book Spotlight we decided to focus on the next speaker in the Illahee Series, Diane Ravitch (March 20 at Lincoln High School) on the state of the education system in America. Her latest book is “Death and Life of the Great American School System”, and it will form the basis of her presentation. We thought this would be a great opportunity for you to find out about one of their speakers before grilling them in person at the lecture. If you aren’t a fan of the Illahee Series yet, don’t wait any longer! Follow the bright beam of the Book Spotlight as it falls on...

Death and Life of the Great American School System, Diane Ravitch

A passionate plea to preserve and renew public education, this book is a radical change of heart from one of America’s best-known education experts. Diane Ravitch—former assistant secretary of education and a leader in the drive to create a national curriculum—examines her career in education reform and repudiates positions that she once staunchly advocated. Drawing on over forty years of research and experience, Ravitch critiques today’s most popular ideas for restructuring schools, including privatization, standardized testing, punitive accountability, and the feckless multiplication of charter schools. She shows conclusively why the business model is not an appropriate way to improve schools. Using examples from major cities like New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, Denver, and San Diego, Ravitch makes the case that public education today is in peril.



Ravitch includes clear prescriptions for improving America’s schools:

- leave decisions about schools to educators, not politicians or businessmen
- devise a truly national curriculum that sets out what children in every grade should be *learning*
- expect charter schools to educate the kids who need help the most, not to compete with public schools
- pay teachers a fair wage for their work, not “merit pay” based on deeply flawed and unreliable test scores
- encourage family involvement in education from an early age

The Death and Life of the Great American School System is more than just an analysis of the state of play of the American education system. It is a must-read for any stakeholder in the future of American schooling.

About the Author

Diane Ravitch is Research Professor of Education at New York University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. From 1991 to 1993, she was Assistant Secretary of Education and Counselor to Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander in the administration of President George H.W. Bush. President Clinton appointed her to the National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees federal testing. She is the author or editor of over twenty books, including *The Language Police* and *Left Back*, and her articles have appeared in numerous newspapers and magazines. A native of Houston, Ravitch graduated from the Houston public schools, Wellesley College, and Columbia University. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

[\(Please click here for an archive of our past spotlighted books\)](#)



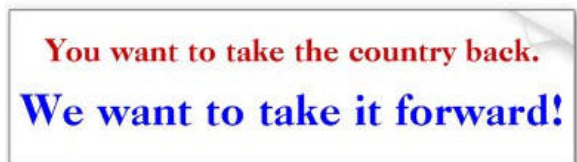
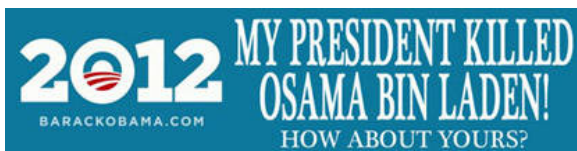
Humorousness

Because life's no fun without a few laughs

Like you, we get a few emails each month that make us smile... of course, we get a lot more that don't, but you won't see those here. You'll see jokes and riddles, cartoons and pictures, pretty much anything that will bring a giggle. We'll stay away from the raunchy or obscene, but humor is very subjective and if we DO run something that offends you, please remember that we probably weren't trying to. And of course, if you have any chuckles you'd like to share with our audience, just email them to TomDwyer@TomDwyer.com. And now, without further ado, we bring you this month's Humorousness! (And please, remember to tip your waiters and waitresses!)

Left wing bumper stickers

If you're one of our clients, you know we like bumper stickers. You may have even taken one from our [Book and Bumper Sticker Library](#) (if not, please take one the next time you're in). We got this collection in an email from one of our clients... maybe you'll see one in our library next time!



**HONK IF MY TAXES SUPPORT
YOUR WHINY TEABAGGING ASS**

PALIN2012-2014 ^{1/2}
Traditional Values. Less Traditional Dedication.

**AFTER THE RAPTURE
CAN I HAVE YOUR CAR?**

SARAH PALIN 2012?
The Mayans tried to warn us

**Don't want government?
Move to Somalia.**

**8 years of insanity
and NOW you're mad?**

 **SAVE AMERICA**
**Spay or Neuter your
REPUBLICAN**


**Don't pray in my school and
I won't think in your church.**

 **Republicans 2012**
Keeping Millions Out of Work
to Put One Man Out of a Job

**AM I LIBERAL
OR JUST WELL-EDUCATED?**

Tea it's the new
Kool Aid 

**IF LIBERALS HATED AMERICA
WE'D VOTE REPUBLICAN**

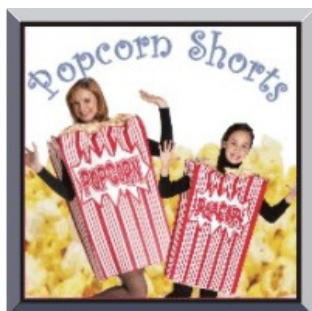
democrats are sexy.
who ever heard of a
nice piece of elephant? 

*Annoyed By Immigrants?
Tell It To The Indians...*

**I'd vote for a Republican,
but I'm allergic to nuts.**

 **The REPUBLICAN PARTY**
**Our Bridge to the
11TH CENTURY**

**When Did Jesus Become
Pro-Rich, Pro-War and
Only Pro-American?**



Popcorn Shorts

Cool or important stuff that's too short for a big article

Just like it says, Popcorn Shorts is about the kind of things that are really interesting, but don't really need a large article to explain them. From the sublime to the ridiculous, check in here for crunchy bits of info you'll love to munch. Bet you can't eat just one!

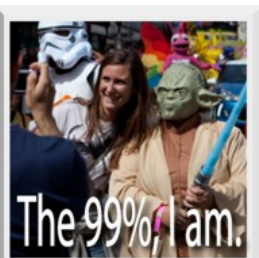
[Public Intelligence puts research at your fingertips](#)

public
intelligence

Public Intelligence puts research at your fingertips

WikiLeaks has some competition you might want to check out. While WikiLeaks specializes in exposing secret documents, [Public Intelligence](#) "compiles and defends public information using software and methods which are open source and available to the public at large". They provide open-source intelligence products from the private and public sector. Documents are provided in a raw format, available for download, with only excerpts and key facts accompanying them. You may be amazed by the content of the documents, but you'll be even more amazed at the stuff that is unclassified and publicly available.

Yoda Speaks Out



Yoda speaks out

Says it all, Yoda does. Balance and equity, his thoughts will bring you. With your friends share this link! Strong with the Force will you be.

[Fishing for Cash](#)



Go Fishing For Cash

Like fishing? Like cash? For five months this spring and summer, you'll have a chance to indulge yourself in both. Northern Pikeminnow eat millions of salmon and steelhead each year in the Columbia and Snake rivers. The Pikeminnow Sport Reward Fishery Program is aimed at reducing the number and size of these predators. From May 1 to Sept. 30, you can earn \$4 to \$8 per fish for every fish over 9" long. There are even specially tagged fish worth \$500! You can get all the details including rules and maps of the covered area at pikeminnow.org.

[Living Wage Calculator](#)



Living Wage Calculator

Many American families working in low-wage jobs don't earn enough to make ends meet. How much is enough? This living wage calculator estimates the cost of living for every community in the US. The calculator catalogs expenses for food, child care, medical, housing, transportation, and other expenses, then shows the living wage and typical wages for the selected location. You've heard about the union contract for hotel workers in New York that would top out at \$60K by 2018? Sounds like a lot, but is it? The answer may surprise you.



News To Make You Furious

Depleted Uranium- Our billion year gift to the world.

In the 1970s, the Soviet military developed armor plating for their tanks that regular ammunition couldn't penetrate. The Pentagon began looking for metals to make denser armor-piercing projectiles, and finally settled on depleted uranium (DU). DU is a byproduct of nuclear power generation; after the uranium has been spent in the reactor it leaves behind an isotope of the original uranium that is 1.6 times denser than lead. DU rounds are now common in heavy weapons like tanks, aircraft, and artillery.

One of the features of a DU round is the way it behaves when it hits its target. The incredibly dense material focuses all the pressure of the round at the very tip, pushing through virtually any armor. The round shatters on impact and is driven through the hole where the powdered DU then ignites on contact with air, creating a fireball that helps destroy the target. The fireball almost completely destroys the DU round as well... almost. While much is consumed by the fire, the rest is transformed into a very fine dust that is easily carried by the wind, captured by soil, absorbed by plants, or eaten or breathed by animals (and people). This low-level radioactive material has a half life of 4.5 billion years.



DU may be a major improvement in munitions, but the high cost of that improvement is only gradually becoming apparent. Some researchers think Gulf War Syndrome may be caused (at least in part) by DU from the first Gulf War. But more shocking is the effect our DU rounds are believed to be having in Fallujah, Iraq, right now.

Doctors in Fallujah blame depleted uranium used in devastating attacks in 2004 for a catastrophic rise in infant deaths, birth defects, and abnormalities. Iraqi parent's first question is no longer "is it a boy or girl", but "is it normal". **To compare: in August 2002 Fallujah General Hospital saw 530 births, 6 deaths, and 1 deformity. In September 2009 the same hospital saw only 170 births. Of those, 41 died and 31 of those had serious abnormalities.** A Fallujah pediatrician has documented thousands of these tragedies, but says there are no medical terms to describe them because so many were unknown until we dumped **twelve hundred tons** of depleted uranium there.

A WORD OF CAUTION... "News To Make You Furious" is a light-hearted name for a very serious column. We've told you about some really bad issues ranging from AminoSweet to the Mortgage Crisis to Slavery, and all with the idea that there are some foul things going on in the world and we are better off knowing about them than hiding from them. But this story... you can't "un-know" it. Once you've read this article, this abomination in Iraq will stay with you. You need to see the pictures of infants affected by this, and the horrific devastation visited upon them and their families. But the images will haunt you, and the shattered lives of these children will scar your dreams. It's NOT for casual web-surfing, but it IS for people who can't turn away from the things being done by our country, and in our name.

So with that, here is some in-depth information on the latest outrage in Iraq. And trust us, if you can stop crying long enough, you'll be FURIOUS...

Not surprisingly, most of the reporting on this issue is coming from Al Jazeera, the CNN of the Middle East. Here are two of their major articles, and some links to images of the DU-Associated birth defects...

[Fallujah babies under a new kind of siege: Doctors and residents blame US weapons for catastrophic levels of birth defects in Fallujah's newborns.](#)

[Iraqi doctors demand cancer probe- Are rising cancer rates a result of radioactive weapons used during the US invasion?](#)



[Images of Iraqi DU Babies](#)

CAUTION: These are graphic and horrific images.

Use your best judgment to decide if you really need to see them.

[Still images of many of the infant casualties](#)

[Video, with attached letter to the U.N.](#)

But the issue is beginning to get attention from other quarters as well. Here are several articles that deal with DU, its use in Iraq, and the medical science connecting it to health concerns. They are written from both technical and general-information standpoints, by medical and military experts, and from a variety of reporting institutions.

[Depleted uranium casts shadow over peace in Iraq](#)

[The Quantity of Depleted Uranium Used in Iraq](#)

[Depleted Uranium Radioactive Contamination In Iraq: An Overview](#)

[US to use depleted uranium](#)

[Horror Of US Depleted Uranium In Iraq Threatens World](#)

[The Use of Depleted Uranium in the 2003 Iraq War: An Initial Assessment of Information and Policies](#)

[Remains of toxic bullets litter Iraq- The Christian Science Monitor finds high levels of radiation left by US armor-piercing shells.](#)

[Cancer Spreading In Iraq due to Depleted Uranium Weapons](#)

[The Excessive Use of Weapons and Banned Weapons](#)

If you want to get involved, there is at least one organization dedicated to controlling DU weapons...

[International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons](#)

The International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW) was formed in 2003 in Berlaar, Belgium to promote a campaign based on reliable information on depleted uranium weapons. It is a global coalition of 155 groups in 32 countries campaigning for a ban on the use, transport, manufacture, sale and export of all conventional weapon systems containing uranium (usually called depleted uranium weapons). It also seeks health monitoring and compensation for communities affected by the use of uranium weapons and the environmental remediation of such sites.

Editorial Note:

((By Charles Letherwood, Tom Dwyer Outreach Coordinator) We first became aware of this issue through the accusation that depleted uranium (DU) was responsible for the deaths and birth defects seen in Iraq, so that was how we wrote the story. Since we wrote it, two people have called to say the whole issue is a lie. It was easy to dismiss LtCol Helbig (see [Tom's Tidbits](#)) but harder to dismiss the comments of a friend of mine, Capt. Eugene (Lee) Hill. A friend since college, Lee and I have spent many happy hours flinging epithets at each other across the political divide but I have usually found him to be motivated by integrity and frequently susceptible to logic and science. He cited several reports (among them Bernard Rostker's "[Depleted Uranium: A Case Study of Good and Evil](#)", James McLaughlin's "[Depleted uranium – a health, environmental, or societal issue?](#)", and Albert Marshall's "[Analysis of Uranium Dispersal and Health Effects Using a Gulf War Case Study](#)") that said DU was safe. He also made some disturbing logical points... DU rounds were used much more heavily in the tank battles near Ramallah, but the same infant effects haven't been seen there. Also, in the industrial area of Falujah, dioxin that was "liberated" by our shelling is floating around the environment. Dioxin is a known cause of birth defects, and could be responsible instead of the DU. He also pointed out that there were no first-source scientific articles in our story, and suggested I rewrite the story appropriately.

We struggled with what to do at this point. When we wrote the article we thought it laid out a fair (if damning) treatment of the DU issue, but now we knew that there was an argument on the other side. What standards should we meet with our newsletter? How 'proven' does something have to be before we share it with others? If we are going to write about large issues beyond our area of expertise (like the mortgage crisis, slavery, mountaintop removal mining, and a host of others), what level of investigation do we have to meet before it's OK to report?

Tom agreed we should at least mention the controversy, which resulted in this month's Tom's Tidbits dealing with LtCol Helbig. But in deference to Cpt Hill, we also wanted to at least try to give due diligence to the information he cited on the other side. I looked at the originals for some (but not all) of the documents that Lee mentioned, and also looked deeper into the documents supporting DU health effects.

My evaluation (for what it's worth) is that the "pro" DU papers generally seemed like older studies and reviews based on extrapolations of acute exposures from uranium workers, miners, and military personnel. This would make sense as these papers were prepared when DU was just beginning to be identified as a suspect in Veteran and Iraqi health problems, and no targeted science was available. In addition, I thought some of the pieces (most specifically, [the IAEA report on DU](#)) weren't as definitively "pro" DU as they were portrayed. We also added a review of the current literature surrounding DU health impacts to increase our first-source credibility. (We could find no corresponding literature review on the "pro" DU side). On review, these "anti" DU papers seemed more like direct experimental science based on the DU conditions found in Iraq. While they did show mechanisms by which DU could have the effects it is purported to have, they did not conclusively establish a causal link from DU to either cancer or birth defects in humans. This also would be expected, as science is being brought to bear on a complex question and the answer is only beginning to take shape.

So DU may or may not be the only culprit in the Iraqi births. But as I researched the issue, one of Lee's questions stuck in my mind. He said that dioxin might be responsible for many of the problems. Would that matter? If we changed the title to "DU and Dioxin... Our Billion Year Gift To The World" would that make things better? I think the birth defect spike probably exists, and that even Col Helbig and Cpt Hill would agree US actions are a little too coincidental not to have some role in it. I think that if there is any possibility of truth to these accusations, then we as a nation have a fundamental duty to determine the extent of that truth so we can act accordingly. In the end, that is the point of this article.)