

Your Car Matters

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Tom Dwyer Automotive Services June 2012 Newsletter

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The NRC recently relaxed nuclear safety standards. Very, very quietly

The NRC just relaxed nuclear safety and training standards.



Have you heard about it?



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News To Make You Furious



Tom's Tidbits

Don't get taken for a ride by vehicle "enhancers"



Greetings!

I've noticed a new wave of cynical ads swamping radio, TV, and web for Fuel Optimizers and DIY Air Conditioning Rechargers. I have concerns about products like these, each for different reasons, so for this month's Tidbits I thought I'd explain why I think you're better off avoiding them...

Let's start with the "mileage optimizers". They will claim to do things like improve gas mileage, enhance vehicle performance, reduce emissions, maximize horsepower, and/or minimizes fuel consumption. Any system that showed a significant, consistent, verifiable increase in mileage would be immediately adopted as original equipment by all the vehicle manufacturers. Meeting CAFÉ mileage standards currently costs these companies big bucks, and easy stuff like these gimmicks would be tested and used in a heartbeat. I see increased mileage hocus pocus every time fuel prices rise. Whether it's platinum, hydrogen, or magnets, no one has shown me any real results yet! There may be some effect from fuel optimizers, but they would have to save a lot of fuel before there is a break even on the price tag of some of these devices. Good driving habits, trip planning, properly maintained vehicles, and driving less work best in my opinion.

I have different concerns with the "fix it yourself" AC products. Kits that allow untrained users to attempt to restore cold air are not new. They seem simple enough, but usually the only guarantee is you're out your money! Even if short-term cold air is gained, the possible long-term damage far outweighs any benefit. Low refrigerant charge is only one of the multitude of reasons an AC system would stop working properly. And, if the system is indeed low, then where did the refrigerant go? AC systems are supposed to be sealed, so if the refrigerant has escaped through an undetected leak then just adding more is an infected band-aid at best. AC systems require a precise level of genuine 134a refrigerant and specific type and amount of a lubricating oil to function without destroying very expensive components like the compressor. Compressor replacement can cost over \$1000.00, especially if the system is contaminated with bogus refrigerants or shrapnel from a now damaged compressor.

If your AC system is contaminated with counterfeit refrigerants or sealants you now have even bigger problems; qualified shops will not want to service your AC as the unknown refrigerants or sealants can destroy recycling and recharging equipment (that can cost well over \$7500.00) and the hazardous waste in your AC system is now your liability. If there is a chance your system may contain something other than 100% genuine 134a you need to tell the service provider or get ready to pay for damaged equipment and hazardous waste disposal. Really, AC work on your vehicle is best left to quality professionals in the first place. "Air Conditioning Systems" deservingly is an ASE certification area all by itself. AC system repair is not for quickie lubes or amateurs, so please, if the cold air stops let us handle it.

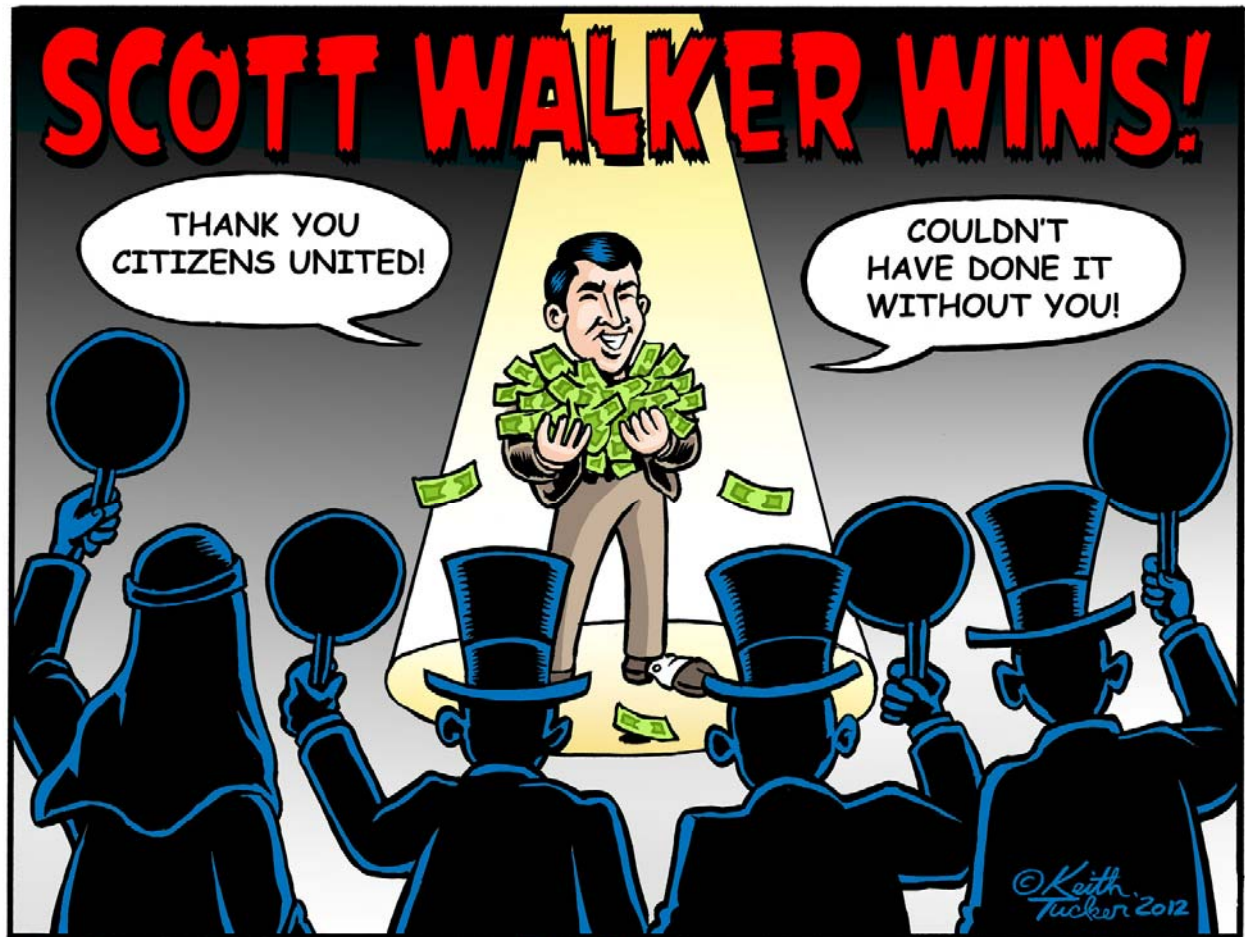
Apparently the old adage still applies: If a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is. Pass it up, or at least check it out very carefully. We're just an email or a phone call away!

Make a great day,

Tom

What NOW?!! Toons

You Can Only See This Toon In Your Car Matters!



"WHAT NOW?!!"

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WWW.WHATNOWTOONS.COM

Goodbye, Jeff!

Our shuttle driver drives on down the road...

This month we have some news that will be particularly interesting (and a little sad) for our Courtesy Shuttle riders. Jeff Andersen, our longtime shuttle driver, shop expeditor, and face-of-Tom-Dwyer-to-our-clients, is moving on to greener pastures. No, he's not "leaving to spend more time with his family", but to get his teaching degree and begin shaping the minds of the next generation...

Jeff is a Portland native, going to Rose City Park Elementary and to Madison High before heading to the Minneapolis College of Art and Design for his BFA. "I wanted to come back to Oregon after college", said Jeff, "so when I got a local job offer I jumped at it". He was soon a graphic designer for an interpretive design firm in Sheridan. "It was a very specialized company, and working in a very interesting field. We did high-end information and way-finding for museums and parks around the country. You can still find a sample of my graphic work on display at Heceta Head, Oregon."

In 2008 Jeff relocated to Portland looking for something new, and found it at Tom Dwyer Automotive. "It's been great to be a part of Tom's business. It doesn't feel like I've been here 4 years already" he said. "The auto industry was something totally different for me. My only auto experience had been with

my own car, a 1989 Toyota Corolla, which I'd kept on the road myself since 1995." Fortunately, although Tom requires full ASE-

certification for our Techs he doesn't require the same level of automotive knowledge for our shuttle drivers. "My knowledge was useful because it helped me talk with the clients about their cars in a general way, but I would always guide them toward our Service Advisor team for more detailed answers."



"Visiting with the clients was the best part of the job. Teachers, students, scientists, doctors, politicians, radio personalities... I never knew who would ride in the van, but I could always count on a great conversation. No matter who it was, they all had the common thread of vehicle maintenance or repair to start with." Many had stories about their cars, whether it was a hand-me-down, or a family vacation they'd used it in. "We'd start off talking about how long the car has lasted but the conversation would always turn into something really interesting." He does have his favorites, though. "I really enjoyed driving our older clients. They're like walking encyclopedias of knowledge and life experience. Seniors have unique and insightful opinions on current social issues."

Jeff comments about some challenges of the job too. The steepest learning curve was learning the obscure areas of the city, which also brought its own rewards. "Portland is full of niche neighborhoods- Multnomah Village, Clinton Street, Rose City Park, St. John's, and so many more. Each neighborhood has a unique personality and distinct community." He said he didn't remember a 'best' day on the job, but he did remember a worst day- three winters ago, when there was about ten inch snow fall. "It snowed all night and the temperature dropped below freezing by morning, creating icy and treacherous roads. We still had a full ride schedule, though. It was nightmare traffic all over the city. That day really stood out, but I wasn't late for a single ride." These inevitable bad weather days or unforeseen schedule conflicts can create occasional glitches with the Shuttle, but Jeff said they don't create too much of a problem with the riders. "We have wonderful clients who are very supportive. They know sometimes things happen beyond our control, and they are very understanding and patient when it happens. It's a very rare to have to an upset shuttle rider."

Asked what behind-the-scenes glimpses he would share with our readers, there were a couple things Jeff mentioned. "I wasn't aware of Tom's outspoken politics when I started, but it was pretty easy to accommodate. His political views align with my own, so after four years there hasn't been any conflict. I respect Tom for making a stand for the progressive cause. He takes a big risk of alienating potential clients, but does it anyway." Our Book and Bumper Sticker Library was the other thing on his mind. "It's a unique feature of the shop, and although many clients like it, not all of them know it even exists."

So what's taking Jeff away from the Dwyer family? "I'm leaving to earn my Masters of Teaching at Concordia University. I've been researching schools for over a year, and Concordia University in Portland has a strong reputation for creating quality teachers". What subjects does he want to teach? "With my background, I'm most interested in teaching art. I'd like to teach high school. Middle school children have a lot of curiosity about the world, but they're still on the edge of childhood. High school students are generally excited about learning, and eager to transition into adulthood. The interactions become more sophisticated and the teaching a little more challenging." When he graduates, even this Portland native may consider a change. "Staying in Oregon would be fine, but this time I'm open to moving out of the area as well. Maybe somewhere warm!"

Jeff thinks his experience at Tom Dwyer will be helpful as he moves on to this next adventure. "Sometimes it's easier to not make an effort with people I don't know, but this job has forced me to break out of my shell. I enjoy meeting new people now; I've developed the confidence to start a conversation with just about anyone." When asked if there was any parting words to our clients, Jeff said "I'd like to thank everyone for this experience. It's been a great job; I've met hundreds of incredible people, and had the chance to see the city in a whole new way. Thanks to everyone for all the good wishes and support I've received on my decision to make this change."

So long, Jeff... we'll miss you, and we wish you all the best!

How To Protect Your Summer Road Trip

Why planning ahead keeps you in the driver's seat

You may be packing the kids into the minivan for a trip to Disney, piling in with your friends for a drive to Burning Man, or heading to Boston to see an old flame, but if you're planning a road trip you'll be joining millions of other people in this year's great Summer Driving Exodus. You have at least one thing in common with all these folks... absolutely nothing will ruin your trips more completely than an automotive breakdown. Here's the single most important thing you can

do to insure safe, fun, and smooth summer driving... Bring your vehicle in for service NOW, at the START of the summer, well BEFORE you plan on heading out.

Why is this so critical to protecting your vacation? You know that your vehicle needs to be in top shape, but sometimes people put off their vehicle check until the day before they leave. Here are some reasons this practice can put your trip in jeopardy...

Last minute appointments can be hard for us to accommodate. You're not alone in wanting to get your car checked out for the summer, so this is the busiest time for any auto shop. We are certainly no exception. During the summer rush we are frequently scheduled 2 or 3 days out on our appointment calendar, and sometimes even

farther. This can present real problems getting your vehicle in if you have a short window of availability. As an example, one of our clients called on a Wednesday to have his vehicle serviced Thursday for a Friday trip. Unfortunately, we were already full for the week and we weren't able to help him in that instance. We hate saying "no" to any of our clients, and planning ahead helps us avoid having to say "no" to you.



Quick turnarounds don't leave any room for the

unexpected. An issue particular to short repair deadlines is that there is no margin for error if something unexpected pops up. For instance, some engine leaks can take two days to repair. We can't fix it, much less fix it right, if you drop it on a Friday and need to leave Saturday. Suppose you have a problem that would be a quick and easy fix, but the only replacement part available has to come from Tulsa? Little glitches like this can put your vehicle out of commission and ruin your vacation, and they're all the more frustrating because they're completely avoidable. Please, call us with enough time to give you the quality service you expect and deserve!

You'll need a couple days to make sure the repair worked. We fix most vehicle problems on our first attempt, but that's no comfort if you are the rare person that needs

to bring your vehicle back. Repairs can fail for many reasons- parts may be faulty, the original diagnosis may have been wrong, problems may develop in a related system after the first repair, or the original problem may have masked another problem that no one knew about. As just one example, a replacement alternator may test well and work fine for days before it suddenly fails. Our 24-month/24,000-mile local and 12-month/12,000-mile nationwide warranty will cover you, but you don't want to test it out on your vacation! The only way to be sure repairs are successful is to drive long enough to make sure they hold up in the real world. Always leave a couple days of margin for a shakedown period before you head out of town.

Advance planning is important, but don't "risk it" if you see a problem coming. If you are getting ready to go and your vehicle starts doing anything that makes you nervous, call us before you hit the road. We take break-downs and emergencies without appointment at any time, and we'll always do our best to get you back on the road in time for your trip. Even if there's not enough time to fix an issue, we may at least be able to

keep you from breaking down or get you into a rental car.

Rely on us if you DO run in to problems on the road. If you're our client, then we will help you any way we can, anywhere you are. We might not be able to send our Courtesy Shuttle to Minnesota to pick you up, but we can give you complete vehicle information over the phone if you have a breakdown. If you find yourself broken down and don't know if the local shop is giving you good advice, we'll be glad to offer our opinion. Also, our work carries a nationwide warranty for 12-months or 12-thousand miles. If you are out-of-town and have a problem, or if you can't reach our shop, call 877-252-4609 and explain what's happening. They'll refer you to a local shop that will take care of you.

Give us a call if you have ANY questions. Many questions can be solved with a quick call to 503-230-2300 or email to tomdwyer@tomdwyer.com. Our salaried Service Advisors will be glad to discuss any vehicle concerns you might have. If you're in doubt about anything, a quick call could save a lot of vacation headaches.

Thank You For Your Service?

Thanks is more than a word, it means keeping promises

Memorial Day is in the rearview mirror again. This, as every year, it's important to remember that the holiday is about much more than cookouts and mattress sales. It's an opportunity to contemplate the sacrifices of American soldiers for 236 years, and to thank today's veterans on behalf of all of them. Although today's political debate is characterized by an almost pathological level of disagreement, we like to believe one of the defining characteristics of people of good will on either side of the divide is they respect our soldiers, regardless of the particular war they fought in. So as we were thinking about respect, we started thinking about what we, as a society, have promised our vets. What do we owe them, and how are we doing on that promise?

Probably the best place to check on how we're keeping our promises is with the vets themselves. [Blue Star Families](#) is a group formed by military spouses to raise awareness of the challenges of military life and to support military families in the challenges of military life. They questioned 3,634 military family members for their [2012 Military Family Lifestyle Survey](#) and found the top 5 issues of concern were

- Pay and benefits
- Spouse employment
- Effects of deployment on children
- OPTEMPO (the speed and pace of military life)

- TBI, PTS, and Combat stress (TBI is Traumatic Brain Injury; PTS is Post Traumatic Stress)



Vivian Greentree, who directed the annual survey for Blue Star Families, mentioned other significant findings. "The number of food stamps used at military commissaries has tripled in the last four years." Education had a big effect on children, "because on average, military kids change schools more than half a dozen times."

This was also the first survey to ask about suicide, finding that one in ten service members (and one in ten family members) reported considering suicide. "Twenty-three percent of the comments cited the need to eradicate the stigma that still surrounds mental health seeking or counseling," says Greentree.

The survey found nearly three out of four service members say the end of the restrictions on gays in the military had no impact on their ability to do their job, and three out of four also social media has become an important way to communicate during deployments.

Finally, and sadly, 95 percent of military families surveyed said the public doesn't understand or appreciate the sacrifices of service members and their families.

Why don't our military families feel appreciated? Are they right to feel that way? We'll look briefly at three areas where our

society has made promises to our vets, and see how we're keeping them.

Military Pay

By the end of June 2011, [inflation-adjusted median household income](#) for the whole country fell to \$49,909 and the poverty level for 2011 was \$22,350 (total yearly income) for a family of four.

After four months in the [military a new recruit gets about \\$29,959 per year in annual salary](#), including the value of free housing, free food, and income-tax advantages. This is a little higher than the \$25,000 that civilian high-school grads can expect, but it drops off rapidly after that. An enlisted person with 10 years military experience and technical training makes about \$54,952 compared to \$70,373 in the civilian world. Officers do a little better... if the person was a first-year commissioned officer they'd make an average starting salary of \$45,969, and after 10 years of experience would be taking home an average of \$94,313.

Is this an appropriate way to compensate people who dedicate their lives to the military? One good indicator of how adequate it is for our troops is this... A 2008 report showed that [military members and their families redeemed food stamps at nearly twice the civilian rate](#), and in 2011 Stars and Stripes reported [food stamp purchases at military commissaries nearly tripled](#). Nearly \$88 million worth of food stamps were used at commissaries nationwide, up from \$31 million in 2008.

Veteran's Health Care

The quality of veteran's health care varies depending on who you ask. As late as 2006, veterans themselves [rated Veteran's Administration \(VA\) health care higher than other Americans rate private-sector health care](#) for the sixth consecutive year. Yet the VA is also [plagued by scandals](#), is notoriously [hard to navigate](#), and (just like private sector insurance) can generate [anguish over what procedures or illnesses are covered](#). Even [Fox News sees problems with the VA](#), and an appellate court

found that [VA care for mental health was so bad it was unconstitutional](#).

Funding explains much of the VA's problems. When we figure the cost of a war, the cost of caring for our returned soldiers is not included. When it comes to the costs of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, that cost will be huge.

A study from Harvard University titled ["Soldiers Returning from Iraq and Afghanistan: The long-term costs of providing veterans medical care and disability benefits."](#) says the hidden financial costs of war in Iraq and Afghanistan will overwhelm the Department of Veterans Affairs for decades. The study says the Veterans Administration is both under-funded and under-equipped to deal with the current and future costs of veterans' health care. It estimates that since the Global War on Terror began, 16 US soldiers have been wounded per fatality, a casualty rate that exceeds the rate of previous wars. Over 200,000 soldiers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan have been treated at VA medical facilities thus far, with 900,000 still deployed on active duty. The study predicts that the cost of medical care and compensation benefits will exceed seven hundred billion dollars.

Veteran's Employment

The job outlook for vets is a mixed picture. [The unemployment rate for all Gulf War II Era vets](#) (anyone who served after September, 2001) was 8.3%, about the same rate as the civilian population. ([Other studies](#) put it as high as 12.1% or even 17%) However, drilling down, the rate is [vastly different for individual subgroups](#). Service connected disability didn't affect the rate much (8.5% with disability vs. 7.9% for non-disabled), but male veterans aged 18 to 24 had an unemployment rate of 29.1% in 2011, significantly higher than that of young male nonveterans at 17.6%.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about these numbers is that unemployment among veterans isn't higher. [They face special hurdles in the job market](#) that civilians don't encounter.

Many civilian employers don't understand the resumes or skills of a vet, so they don't see how they could fit into the business. A [new tool from Monster.com](#) can help with this a little; it allows a vet to input their MOS (Military job title) and the program returns a list of civilian world job skills.

Soldiers who stay active in the National Guard can be called up without warning and for indefinite periods, but employers must keep their jobs (or an equivalent) open until they return. This is a [risk that many employers are unwilling to take](#).

Finally, some [employers are worried about the stability or safety of vets](#), especially the Gulf War II vets who face massive problems from PTSD and TBI.

If we are going to do better integrating these people into the civilian world we have to do better, and fast. About 7,000 [veterans have found jobs through 140 "Hiring Our Heroes"](#) job fairs, but this will be small help facing what one VA official calls a "tsunami" of more than a

million veterans who will be returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Everyone, not just our military, deserves respect for the contributions they make to our society. We couldn't function without teachers, doctors, and accountants, and coal miners and farmers die on the job every day. But the military is something different... the rest of us may work hard, and we may even *accidentally* die on the job, but only soldiers can be *intentionally ordered* to die *as part of* the job. Not every soldier risks death every day, but each one accepts that possibility when they put on the uniform. Our country owes something special to any person willing to put their life on the line like that. First, those of us who stay behind have an obligation to build a society worth defending. If we are going to ask someone to give their lives for our country, it shouldn't be some cruel, ironic joke. Second, we must keep the promises we made to our veterans, both as a government and as people. If we can't keep our promises to them when they come back, then it's the worst sort of criminality to accept the gift of their lives before they go.

Drew's Kitchen

Velveeta Fudge



Yes, you read that right. Velveeta Fudge. We don't know what got into Drew this month, but when he opened up the recipe box this is what he came up with. He says that it's one of those things that sounds horrible, but when you actually make it you find it's delicious. (We asked him for some other examples of things like that and he couldn't find any, but nevermind.) Drew's never led us astray before and he says this time won't be any different. So, without further ado, we bring you Drew's recipe for Velveeta Fudge...

Ingredients

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened	½ cup unsweetened cocoa
8 ounces Velveeta cheese, cubed	2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1½ lbs confectioners' sugar, (5 cups unsifted)	2 cups coarsely chopped pecans or walnuts

Procedure

- In a large saucepan over medium heat butter and cheese cubes together, stirring frequently. Remove from heat
- Sift together confectioners' sugar and cocoa. Add to cheese, mixing well
- Stir in vanilla and nuts
- Turn into a 9x9x2-inch pan
- Chill until firm and cut into squares
- Makes about 3 pounds

Shop Talk

Auto detailing and our summer contests



Auto Detailing- Here's something you might not know about us... we offer auto detailing! We can't wash every car that comes through the shop ([here's why](#)), although we do offer free WashMan car washes through [Free Car Wash season](#) in the dusty summer months. Auto detailing is something different; it's a heavy duty, nook and cranny, in-depth cleaning of your vehicle. There are several reasons you might want to consider this service. You might like driving a vehicle that's as clean as when it left the dealer's lot, there may be an important client or family member you want to impress, or maybe you're selling your vehicle and you want it to look its best. No matter why, auto detailing can leave you with a whole new feel for your vehicle. Just drop your vehicle with us and we'll call you when it's gorgeous. Prices vary depending on the service you want, so please call the shop today and get on the road to a squeaky clean summer!

Summer Contests- To keep the summer interesting for everyone, we're putting on not one but TWO cash-prize contests this year. Enter one or both, and we'll announce the winners in our October issue of Your Car Matters. **Deadline is September 7, 2012**

Postcard Contest- Send us a postcard from the beach, mountains, great aunt Gertie's backyard, or anywhere else your summer adventure takes you. Be impressive, though, because you'll be up against some stiff competition... that's the winner from our 2010 contest below.

Send your cards to Tom Dwyer Automotive,
530 SE Tenino, Portland, 97202.

\$50 for the best postcard!



Explain This Image- Our Humorousness column this month is about a website called [ExplainThisImage.com](#) that has stacks of totally inexplicable photographs for you to explain, in a hopefully humorous way. We picked the image below for you to noodle over.

Send your funniest caption to
TomDwyer@TomDwyer.com

\$50 for the best caption!



Health Notes

What's the laziest way to health?



What's worse than going to bed for a full night's sleep, but being woken up by a screaming baby exactly halfway through? Actually, a [fascinating BBC article](#) says you should ask what could be better? It turns out humans aren't designed for an uninterrupted 8-hour block of snooze. According to historical and scientific examples we're hardwired with a bifurcated sleep pattern, meaning we sleep for about four hours, naturally wake up and be active for an hour or two, then go back to sleep for another four hours. Starting around the 17th century, improvements in street and home lighting, industrial (rather than farm) schedules, and even the rise of coffee houses contributed to breaking our natural sleep cycles. Now, what was once taken for granted as human nature is now almost completely gone.

Well that's all real interesting, but what does it have to do with the lazy way to health? Sleep more, sleep better, and you'll be healthier. You already know your body needs sleep, but you may not know how badly. According to [Slate Magazine](#)...

"...extended bouts of sleeplessness can cause an array of physical symptoms and might eventually kill you. The effects begin within the first 24 hours of sleep deprivation. First, the body undergoes subtle hormonal changes—cortisol and TSH levels increase, leading to a rise in blood pressure. A day or two later, it stops metabolizing glucose properly, creating carbohydrate cravings. A person's body temperature will also drop, and immune response becomes somewhat suppressed. All of these physiological changes are reversible, though—take a nap, and you'll be on the road back to normal.

It's possible that given enough time, sleep deprivation can kill you. While no human being is

known to have died from staying awake, animal research strongly suggests it could happen."

This may not be enough to convince your spouse that weekend naps on the couch should replace your gym trips, so here are several other articles you may want to check out. Get started on your new sleep-centered workout today because you know the saying... no snooze, you lose.

When your spouse asks why you want to revamp your exercise program, The Daily Beast has the best answer- [Waking up early is making us fat](#).

This Slate.com survey can tell you [How your sleep habits compare with other people's](#)

Scientific American has detaild on [how long can humans stay awake](#) if you're looking to push the envelope

[This article](#) from Mother Nature Network and [this article](#) from BBC talk about our natural bifurcated sleep patterns

Harvard Medical School has [6 good reasons not to scrimp on sleep](#)

If you're ready to commit to an exhaustive sleep regimen, the Mayo Clinic has [7 tips to help you sleep better](#)

EMedicineHealth has a great explanation of the [basics of just about every aspect of sleep](#) you'd ever want to know about, from stages of sleep to substances that alter sleep to circadian rhythms.

The Washington Post has more details on what [scientists are finding out about what sleep loss does to your body](#)

Sellwood Bridge Update

Construction hits home

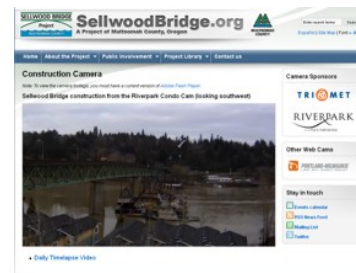


The Sellwood Bridge construction became a reality for us recently when crews started clearing the businesses from the corner of 6th and Tacoma. This will be the site for a small city of trailers as City, County, State, Federal, and Construction Team crews set up for the 4-year construction process. The edge of trailerville comes right up to the edge of our parking lot so we'll have a ringside seat, but it will be a short show- the demo crews expect to have the site cleared in a couple days. There's a 'before' picture below, and we'll have the 'after' pic for you in the next newsletter.

Another big issue for the Bridge this month was the Westside construction involving the Macadam Bay floating home community and the businesses near Miles Street. Macadam Bay currently has a driveway that connects with Highway 43 just to the north of the bridge, but it will be too close to the new bridge and will have to be moved for safety. The original solution to the problem was presented in 2009, and involved using part of Freeman Motors' parking lot as an egress. This was considered the way to go until Macadam Bay residents brought up safety concerns with the new location, causing the County to present several other options. These new options involved routing Macadam Bay traffic onto Miles Place and then onto Miles Street and back up to Highway 43, resulting in significant redesign and rebuild of the streets in the area, dislocating a home and business, and

eliminating much of the parking for the area businesses. This caused an uproar for all involved, and the June bridge meeting was packed with people offering testimony on the various options. After a very thorough examination, the Community Advisory Council recommended a variation of the original plan that calls for a new driveway next to Freeman Motors, changing a huge power structure to a much smaller one, and clearing trees and reshaping the curve between the driveway and the bridge to improve visibility. The revised design was unanimously accepted and will be passed up the chain to the County, so we'll see where it goes.

...and don't forget ...



Multnomah County is set to keep you updated on the bridge construction 24/7. Their website at SellwoodBridge.org

g has full project information, archives, and other resources. Probably the most interesting thing on the site are the cameras set up to cover the new bridge construction. The link at left takes you to the [live camera](#), and there's also a [time-lapse video](#) that will condense the each day's construction progress into just a few minutes.



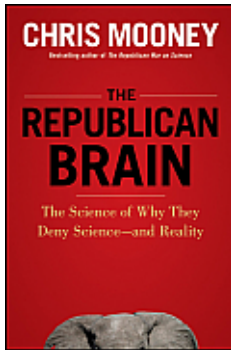
Book Spotlight

“The Republican Brain” by Chris Mooney



This month’s Book Spotlight shines on “The Republican Brain” by Chris Mooney. “Ha ha” you say, “Republican brain. What did they use to study it, a microscope? Is it a book of oxymorons? Did they study leprechauns too?” Yes, we can hear all the jokes, but that’s not what this is about. We’re not ashamed to pick books that stake out controversial positions, and “Brain” is definitely one of them. But we don’t think it is some vapid whack at Republicans and we certainly don’t want it to be seen as one.

“Republican Brain” talks about research in neuroscience pointing to biological differences between the brains of Conservatives and Liberals. New scanning technology allows us to see how the brain is working in real time, and how it reacts to new ideas. Many of the findings could be taken as offensive to conservatives, but they don’t have to be. (For example, research points to an “aversion to new ideas” among conservatives, but this could also be called “strength of conviction”). The book is a fascinating look at emerging science that could make us reconsider the political divide. If you want to learn more, just click the cover to go to the Powell’s Books website.



[The Republican Brain](#)

by Chris Mooney

Bestselling author Chris Mooney uses cutting-edge research to explain the *psychology* behind why today’s Republicans reject reality—it’s just part of who they are.

From climate change to evolution, the rejection of mainstream science among Republicans is growing, as is the denial of expert consensus on the economy, American history, foreign policy and much more. Why won’t Republicans accept things that most experts agree on? Why are they constantly fighting against the facts?

Science writer Chris Mooney explores brain scans, polls, and psychology experiments to explain why conservatives today believe more wrong things; appear *more* likely than Democrats to oppose new ideas and *less* likely to change their beliefs in the face of new facts; and sometimes respond to

compelling evidence by doubling down on their current beliefs.

Mooney goes beyond the standard claims about ignorance or corporate malfeasance to discover the real, scientific reasons why Republicans reject the widely accepted findings of mainstream science, economics, and history—as well as many undeniable policy facts (e.g., there were no “death panels” in the health care bill).

He explains that the political parties reflect personality traits and psychological needs—with Republicans more wedded to certainty, Democrats to novelty—and this is the root of our divide over reality.

“Republican Brain” is written by the author of *The Republican War on Science*, which was the first and still the most influential book to look at conservative rejection of scientific evidence. But the rejection of science is just the beginning...

Certain to spark discussion and debate, *The Republican Brain* also promises to add to the lengthy list of persuasive scientific findings that Republicans reject and deny.

Humorousness

Explain This Image



What's going on in this picture?



How about this one?



What context could there possibly be that would make sense out of this photo?

Our Humorousness column this month is about a website called ExplainThisImage.com. From just these three pictures you probably understand the concept already... it's a site full of bizarre photographs. The twist is that each photo has a place for you to enter your own caption for the picture. Two cautions- First, although the vast majority of the pix are family-friendly, there are a few risqué images you might want to watch out for. Second, and more important, there are thousands of pictures and you can lose many hours compulsively flipping through them. We know because we lost a lot of time ourselves picking out the small sample of pictures on the next page for your enjoyment.

Our in-depth reporting on this issue inspired us to create a contest for our clients this month. We've picked one image, and we want your best caption for it. The best entry (in our editorial opinion) gets \$50. Check out [this month's Shop Talk column](#) for more details, and good luck!





Popcorn Shorts

Cool stuff that's too small for a big article



Just like it says, Popcorn Shorts is about the kind of things we think 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!

[PHAME Academy's "Willy Wonka"](#)



We're proud supporters of Phame Academy, the music, art, and theater group for people with disabilities, so we want you to know [Phame's latest production, "Willy Wonka"](#), hits the Mt. Hood Community

College stage June 23 and 24. Please, consider coming out to support this Portland-born organization that is the only program of its kind in the country. If good theater is inspirational, involving, and emotional, then Phame offers some of the best theater ever staged.

[Saving money at the Farmer's Market](#)



It's the time of year when we start seeing Farmer's Markets popping up all over town. There's even one in our own Sellwood area, the [Moreland Farmer's Market](#), which we highly encourage you to check out. If

you're planning on enjoying a day at the market, then you'll want to read this article first. Brought to us by the [Ecology Center](#) in Berkeley, it's full of [tips on keeping your money in your wallet](#), no matter how tempting the rhubarb looks.

[The President in your living room](#)



The [Museum of the Moving Image](#) has created a website called [The Living Room Candidate](#) that pulls together all the televised presidential commercials since 1952. It's an amazing trip through political

history, and you can clearly see how our political messaging has changed in 60 years. All the hits are here, from "I Like Ike" in 1952, to the "Daisy Girl" commercial that ran only once, to the dreck we endured in the Obama/McCain fight. If you don't want to watch them all (and honestly, who could blame you) then just click the ["Curator's Choice"](#) for the cream of the crop.

[15 strange green inventions](#)



It's an editorial position here at *Your Car Matters* that, in general, 'Green' is good. After all, why would you want to do something that destroys the environment if you have the option not to? It just makes

sense. Or at least it probably does until you get a look at these 15 inventions that take 'Green' a little too far. From a small lamp that runs on human blood instead of electricity to the next generation of eco-friendly bombs, you'll get a kick out of "Green Gone Wild". (Actually, the blood lamp is pretty cool if you can get past the 'blood' part.)

News To Make You Furious

The NRC just made some very, very quiet changes



The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is responsible for oversight of America's nuclear industry. As you might expect (or at least hope), they have detailed regulations on every phase of nuclear power production, as well as requirements for security of the plants, environmental regulations, public safety, and emergency procedures. As you also might expect, (but not really hope) it's the target of lobbyist cash carpet-bombing as the industry tries to write the regulations they will live under.

This political fight came into the public spotlight most recently with the [resignation of NRC Chairman Gregory Jackzo](#), a longtime defender of public safety against the interests of the industry.

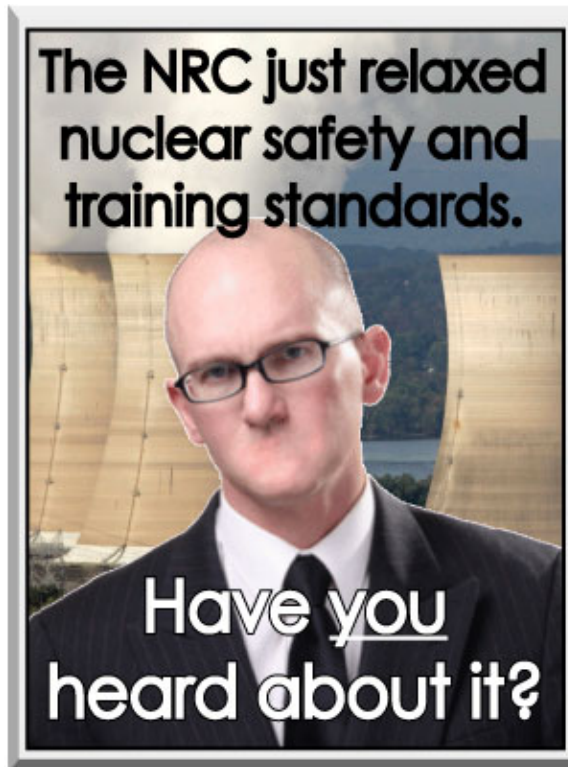
You can get furious about Greg's ouster if you want, but this month's Furious isn't about him. It's about the newest revision of the safety and security standards for reactors. [A May article from AP describes these first new changes in three decades](#), and points out how quietly they were

planned and implemented. Among the changes they mentioned were:

- Requiring fewer exercises for major accidents
- Recommending a smaller evacuation zone in case of radiation release
- Eliminating the requirement for local responders to always run practice exercises for radiation release
- Eliminating the requirement for local responders to participate in attack drills with plant security
- Adding a requirement for exercises in which no radiation is released

Now, it makes sense to check regulations and standards from time to time. After all, things change and the assumptions in place when the regulations were written may not make sense in today's world. But there's a couple things with this revision-

- The overhaul process has been going on for over 4 years, but was closed out without incorporating



lessons from the Fukushima disaster.

- Since few of us are qualified to evaluate these changes, we have to count on qualified nuclear watchdog groups to stay up on these things. Despite the 4-year process, the NRC managed to fly under all their radars. For example, the director of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service had to learn about the rules from a reporter. [The final rule](#) was announced on Dec 23, Christmas Eve being a prime time for politicians to release information they don't want seen.

Once the AP article came out and people became aware of what the NRC was doing, there was a bit of an outcry. In response, on May 18 the [NRC posted a response to the AP article](#) explaining the process they went through and emphasizing their openness and receptivity to public comment. (See the third comment on the list? That was put there by our own *Your Car Matters* staff.) The response was [posted and analyzed by the News Courier](#), a newspaper located near the Alabama's Browns Ferry nuclear plant. The NRC also posted a [separate article on their website explaining how their process was open to all](#). This article trumpeted the fact that "the NRC held additional public meetings around the country after the rule was published; more than 550 people participated." That one fact in itself may tell you everything you need to know about the NRC's publicity efforts. The NRC's 4-year comment period drew 550 people in the entire country, or about 11 per state, when more than 111,000,000 people live

within 50 miles of a nuclear plant. For comparison, a 2005 mine application in Washington state drew over 33,000 comments over its comment period.

So why is all this bureaucratic hem-hawing in "FURIOUS"? It's not that the rule changes themselves are necessarily bad. For example it sounds bad that the "immediate evacuation" zone has been reduced in case of accident, but there is reasoning behind it that may (or may not) make sense. The FURIOUS part is the way our government has gone about making these changes, changes that can affect the lives of every person in America. While the nuclear industry was consulted at every step, the people whose lives would be impacted were kept in the dark. A democratic government should consult its people, or at least go through the motions of doing so, before taking an action that has the wide-ranging consequences of this one. And, if you're reading about NRC rules changes for the first time in your auto mechanic's monthly newsletter, you should rightly be FURIOUS.