

YourCarMatters

Tom Dwyer Automotive Services May 2013 Newsletter

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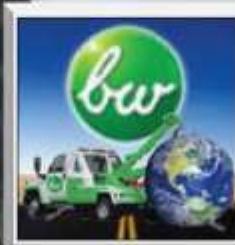
86-year-old gymnast on parallel bars

Our friends at PHAME Academy have gone I-Tech

Help stop mining at Mt. St. Helens, and have fun doing it!

A Company You Should Know About

Better World Club is building a better world... one roadside-assist at a time



Charity Begins At Home

...but wise giving begins with a little research



Our Best Used Car Buying Advice

There are lots of lemons out there. Here's how to find the peach.



News To Make You FURIOUS



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Our Feature Articles



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News To Make You Furious

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Tom's Tidbits

Priorities matter. And they show.



Greetings!

A wise person once said “there’s always time for the things you put first”. Priorities matter and priorities show most clearly in what actually gets done. Here at the shop we put our client’s priorities first, and we think you recognize that in the service and advice you receive. On another note....Over and over, Congress has shown us their priorities in the most cynical and corrupt ways. Just this month they managed to [gut a law barring Congressional insider trading in under a minute!](#) TARP bailed out Congress’ friends and funders, [but homeowners got the shaft](#). The sequester was an immutable law of nature until congress critters noticed the its effect on their air travel, and then magically [found wiggle room for the FAA to shift funding](#). In the meantime, housing, education, food assistance, disaster relief; indeed, all the programs that matter in the lives of the middle class continue to languish...

The American people, on the other hand, seem to prioritize the American people. Some quick statistics- there are over 960,000 public charitable organizations and almost 98,000 private foundations in the country; non-profits account for 9.2% of all wages and salaries; public charities reported over \$1.5 trillion in total revenues in 2010. This may restore your faith in human nature, but unscrupulous people are there to tear it down again. Many charities are lean, efficient, and fanatic about helping their respective causes, while others are little more than fronts for fraud. In one of our Feature articles this month will help you find which charities spend your money as you’d want it spent, and which ones you should avoid. Your generosity can make a real difference in people’s lives, but only if it gets to the people who matter.

While we’re talking about generosity I’d like to thank all our clients for the way you’ve supported our shop through the years! Your word-of-mouth recommendations of our shop to your friends and family account for more than half of the new clients we meet every month. If you can, though, I’d like to ask you to prioritize that support even more. For a long time, the other major source of new clients for us had been KPOJ. The loss of the station hurt Portland deeply on many levels but here at the shop it’s meant a huge decrease in new clients for us. The January-to-June period can be our slowest period, and without the steady flow of new clients this year it has been exceptionally difficult. Please, if you like what you’ve found at our shop, go out of your way to tell a friend. Write a review on Yelp or Angie’s List and share your experiences with us. Having a few more people become part of the Tom Dwyer Automotive Services family would certainly make things easier for us to maintain the high standards you’ve come to expect from us.

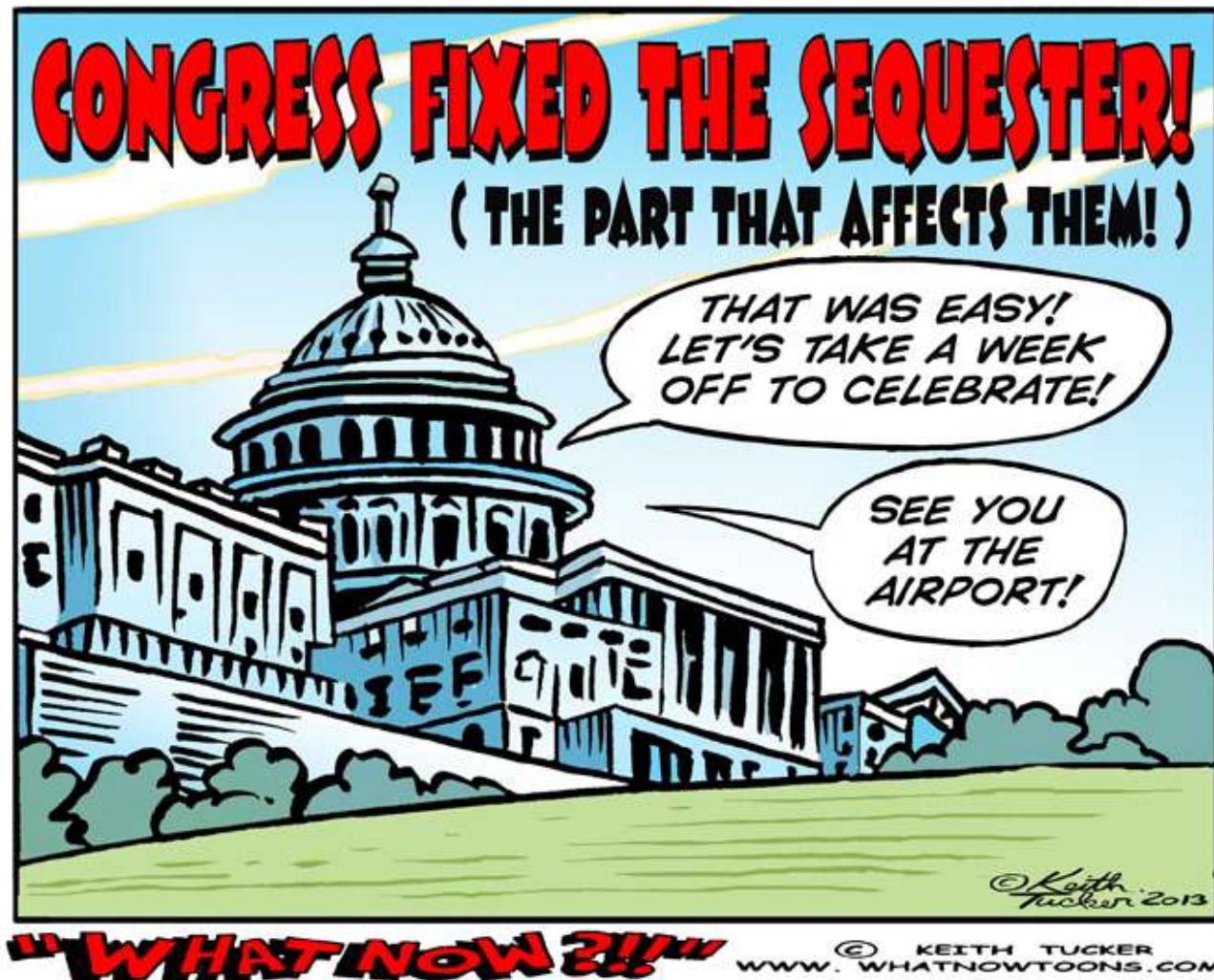
Rest assured, you and your vehicle will always be *our* first priority!

Take Care and Make a Great Day!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom".

What NOW?!! Toons

See it FIRST in Your Car Matters!



A Company You Should Know About

Building a better world, one roadside-assist at a time

You know Tom Dwyer Automotive Services is a little different, so the companies we choose to work with are usually a little different too. Better World Club (BWC) is a perfect example. They're a national roadside assistance company comparable to AAA, but they're much greener and cooler than their competitor. Why? While AAA does many good things, it sees the world exclusively through an automobile-shaped lens. It advocates for highway, auto, and fossil fuel interests and against many environmental and alternative transportation issues. But like we said, BWC is different, and we think those differences will matter to you...

One of our clients, Barbara O., asked us if our other clients might be interested in BWC memberships. We know how important roadside assistance programs can be, and at the time we weren't really aware that any alternatives to AAA existed (or were necessary). But when Barb gave us the scoop on BWC we immediately knew that it was something we wanted to share with you.

Better World Club has been around since 2002. It was created by Todd Silberman and Mitch Rofsky, a couple of childhood buddies from Ohio. While test marketing an insurance program in Massachusetts, Mitch was approached by environmentalists who were fighting AAA lobbying efforts on issues like Clean Air and Mass Transit. He saw an opportunity to create a roadside assistance company, but one that actually shared his Progressive values. He wanted to give people a choice to put their money to work creating change through the power of market support. Put your money where your mouth is. That's their motto.

11 years later, Better World Club provides 24/7, nationwide roadside assistance, auto insurance in nearly every state, and travel services. You expect that, but, unlike other auto clubs, they've integrated their vision of social and environmental responsibility into every phase of their products and their company since the business was founded. They have a "triple bottom-line", meaning their impact on the environment and the communities they serve is just as important as company profit. And that's more than just a "let's talk about how green I am at a cocktail party" commitment. Membership materials are all either paperless or printed on recycled materials, they offset the carbon emissions of their fleet vehicles, and they give discounts to hybrid and biodiesel vehicles. BWC donates 1% of their revenue to environmental cleanup and advocacy, and, unlike some other auto clubs, they **don't** support the highway lobby. Instead, they stand up for cyclists' rights, pedestrian infrastructure, and higher emissions standards.



If BWC sounds like a company you want to support, then you'll be interested in the specifics of the roadside assistance plans they offer. And get this... they offer **plans for bicycles too!**

- BWC typically offers coverage in a [Basic Plan for \\$55.95/year](#) or a [Premium Plan for \\$89.95/year](#). If you sign up for either of the automobile plans, you can add [bicycle coverage](#) for \$17.00 more per year. [Bicycle coverage is typically \\$39.95/year](#) without an automobile plan.
- Plans are good for one year from date of purchase, and they do not automatically renew.
- As a member you can choose to receive BWC's free electronic newsletter, [Kicking Asphalt](#), with information on transportation, environmental issues and explanations of the impact of upcoming legislation. It's been called " 'The Onion' of corporate newsletters" by EcoTalk Radio, and in our opinion, it's second only to [Your Car Matters!](#)
- BWC also offers member discounts with various bicycle partners, travel companies and other eco-friendly services listed on the [BWC website](#).

We're so sold on Better World Club that we're offering not one, not two, but THREE discounts to encourage you to sign up...

- You can take 10% off their Basic Plan (\$50.36) or 20% off the Premium Plan (\$80.96). Make sure you enter the **ID Code BATD1020** for the Tom Dwyer discounts and rates.
- We are offering a discount of 20% on the Bicycle Plan (\$35.95, with **ID code BATD1020**)
- If you're not yet a Tom Dwyer Automotive Services client, you can also take advantage of another special offer... all current BWC Members qualify for an **ADDITIONAL 25% savings on labor costs** on their first visit to Tom Dwyer Automotive Services! (Maximum \$100 savings. 1998 and newer vehicles only. Please call for additional details)

If you have any further questions, the folks at Better World Club are there to help. Just call them at 866-238-1137, email them at club@betterworldclub.com, or visit their website at www.betterworldclub.com.

Charity Begins At Home

...but wise giving begins with research

We received a fascinating email a couple weeks ago. You may think people working for charities are underpaid martyrs working selflessly for the causes they believe in, but "Think Before You Donate" tells a different story. It describes five "bad" national charities and the salaries of their CEOs, which range from \$375,000 to \$2.3 million annually. It then describes ten "good" national charities and the amount of donations that go to support their programs. This is typically the kind of story we are all over... corruption, abuse, cynicism, all wrapped up in a tidy little package. But things flowing through the InterTubes aren't always what they seem, and a little investigation led to a slightly different story...



THINK BEFORE YOU DONATE

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS

The American Red Cross President and CEO Marsha J. Evans' salary for the year was \$651,957 plus expenses	MARCH OF DIMES It is called the March of Dimes because only a dime for every 1 dollar is given to the needy.	The United Way President Brian Gallagher receives a \$375,000 base salary along with numerous expense benefits.	UNICEF CEO Caryl M. Stern receives \$1,200,000 per year (100k per month) plus all expenses including a ROLLS ROYCE <i>Less than 5 cents of your donated dollar goes to the cause.</i>	GOODWILL CEO and owner Mark Curran profits \$2.3 million a year. Goodwill is a very catchy name for his business. You donate to his business and then he sells the items for PROFIT. He pays nothing for his products and pays his workers minimum wage! Nice Guy \$0.00 goes to help anyone! Stop giving to this man.
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Instead, give it to ANY OF THE FOLLOWING GO "GREEN" AND PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE IT WILL DO SOME GOOD

The Salvation Army Commissioner, Todd Bassett receives a small salary of only \$13,000 per year (plus housing) for managing this \$2 billion dollar organization. 96 percent of donated dollars go to the cause.	The American Legion National Commander receives a \$0.00 zero salary. Your donations go to help Veterans and their families and youth!	The Veterans of Foreign Wars National Commander receives a \$0.00 zero salary. Your donations go to help Veterans and their families and youth!	The Disabled American Veterans National Commander receives a \$0.00 zero salary. Your donations go to help Veterans and their families and youth!	The Military Order of Purple Hearts National Commander receives a \$0.00 zero salary. Your donations go to help Veterans and their families and youth!
The Vietnam Veterans Association National Commander receives a \$0.00 zero salary. Your donations go to help Veterans and their families and youth!	Make a Wish : For children's last wishes. 100% goes to funding trips or special wishes for a dying child.	St. Jude Research Hospital 100% goes towards funding and helping Children with Cancer who have no insurance and cannot afford to pay.	Ronald McDonald Houses All monies go to running the houses for parents who have critical Children in the hospital. 100% goes to housing, and feeding the families.	Lions Club International 100% OF DONATIONS GO TO HELP THE BLIND, BUY HEARING AIDS, SUPPORT MEDICAL MISSIONS AROUND THE WORLD. THEIR LATEST UNDERTAKING IS MEASLES VACCINATIONS (ONLY \$1.00 PER SHOT).

As it turns out, "Think Before You Donate" has been making the rounds of the Net for several years. It is popular enough that it was [examined by Snopes.com](#), the internet debunking site, as well as several [other sources](#). All the details are there if you want them, but here are the high points...

- The overall evaluation was that the info was “mostly outdated and inaccurate”
- The errors didn’t seem designed to falsely make a case one way or another. Here’s a few to give you an idea...
 - UNICEF’s CEO’s yearly compensation was \$472,891, not \$1,200,000. UNICEF’s efficiency is 91%, not the 14% cited in the email. (More on efficiency ratings below)
 - Red Cross’ CEO compensation was \$1,037,000, not the reported \$561,000.
 - United Way’s CEO is compensated at \$717,076, not \$375,000.
 - The National Commander of the American Legion receives around \$50,000, considerably more than the \$0 reported.
 - The Disabled American Veterans’ CEO received \$323,252, again more than \$0

They listed many more inconsistencies along those lines, but the gist of the email was to encourage people to support charities that put donations toward their basic cause and not to lavish compensation. So how do you tell if the charity you want to support is spending your money responsibly? Snopes went on to tell us about charitable efficiency ratings, which is the percentage of donations used to support program activities rather than organizational overhead. There are several groups that make it their business to evaluate charitable efficiency...

- [Charity Navigator](#) may be the most prominent rating agency, evaluating efficiency, transparency, and accountability. Their website includes advisory lists, top-10 lists related to charitable giving, and many tips for wise charitable giving.
- [GuideStar](#) rates and analyzes many aspects of non-profits, including their efficiency.
- Forbes Magazine has a [report on the 200 Largest U.S. Charities](#), including efficiency ratings.
- The Better Business Bureau has a [Wise Giving Alliance](#) concentrating on charity ratings. You can also check out many charities on their [basic website](#).
- The IRS also has a [list of approved charities](#).

And of course, there is someone out there watching the watchers. If you want to know about the methodologies and effectiveness of the charitable ratings agencies themselves, click [here](#) or [here](#).

The takeaway from all these rating agencies is that you should try to give to the groups that stretch your money the farthest, and these agencies can give you some guidance about which ones they are. But we have a little more to add. Instead of giving to big charitable groups, we recommend finding the small non-profit groups active in your community. We try to seek some out in our annual [Charitable Giving Calendar](#) and Willamette Week has their annual [Give Guide](#) issue, but your friends and family may be even better sources. Most of these small groups are too small to be rated by the charity watchdogs but you’ll have a good chance at seeing how the group works up-close, and won’t need to rely on a third party evaluation. Also, most community groups operate on a shoestring budget with many of their personnel working free or cheap, so they may appreciate your donation more than the big guys.

The absolute best way to ensure your donation is used to its fullest potential is to donate your time, not your money, to causes you believe in. Many groups actually need people more than cash, and if you work with a group you not only help them then, but you become an ambassador for the group in the larger community. And in the end, this is the only way to be absolutely assured that 100% of your donation actually gets to the cause!

Our Best Used Car Buying Advice

There are lots of lemons out there. Here's how to find the peach.

It's probably the excitement of summer, but we've had a few inquiries lately from people looking to buy new (or new-to-them) cars. It's a big step for anyone, and we've advised a lot of clients on it over the years. Here's a reprint of our 2010 article summing all that advice up in one place. From buying from private parties or dealers to the 15 Questions You Must Ask Before Buying A Used Car and even more, this article will give you everything you need to survive the Used Car Wars.

(July 2010, Tom Dwyer Automotive Services)

There is a reason that every vehicle on the market is being sold. The challenge of buying a used vehicle is finding the good one that fits your needs, is in your price range and is being sold for a good reason. You won't find that perfect vehicle unless you are prepared to perform a methodical, logical search, or get very lucky.



First, determine the budget you have to work with. Whatever your budget, keep some money in reserve for necessary and desired improvements to the car. Any vehicle you buy will probably need some repairs or routine maintenance. Buying a vehicle that needs repairs is fine, but buying a vehicle beyond repair is not. The under-\$2,500.00 cars are the hardest market. There are plenty of \$500.00 cars priced at \$2,000.00, but very few \$2,500.00 cars priced at 2,000.00. The starting price point for a good low end used vehicle is about \$4500.00 and \$6500.00 to \$10,000.00 can buy a pretty nice used vehicle. Whatever your price range is; budget for repairs. Try to reserve at least 10% of the budget for needed repairs.

Second, select a quality model and range of years that fit your needs. Vehicle type, make and model are all matters of personal preference, but not all vehicles are created equal. Consult *Consumer Reports*, your friends, family and the service shop that will maintain your car for help determining which vehicles will meet those needs in the safest, most affordable manner over the longest period of time. I prefer to stay with Toyotas and Hondas as they are the most reliable vehicles out there. I think the Toyota Corolla is one of the best values on the planet. Narrowing your selection to one or two models will make you a better shopper and help you make an informed decision. The market value (i.e. Kelly's Blue Book), features, handling/driving characteristics, and overall value of a deal will be easier to identify after becoming familiar with specific models and years.

Third, determine your search methods. Budget time and energy for the search. It is important that you browse advertisements in a consistent manner. Good vehicles don't sit on the market long. Get the earliest edition possible of the publications that you are using. The first week of searching

will seem like there are too many ads to deal with. Be patient. If you do your homework, the next week you will realize that there might be only a few new ads and the rest repeats from the previous week. If you see a vehicle of interest, check the information and call the seller for a phone interview as soon as possible.

Low mileage is everything! An older good make/model of car with low miles is most often a better value than a newer vehicle with high miles. Don't buy the first car you see and don't be pressured into a deal by comments about other buyers coming etc. Sales people (not excluding private parties) have statements that are universal. There are always other cars and other days to shop. Don't buy any car until you feel it's right. Cars purchased in haste are rarely good vehicles. A pre-purchase inspection is the best investment you can make. I really hate the post-purchase inspection, there is no way to undo the deal after an inspection shows the vehicle is economically challenged or not repairable. Most bad cars can be quickly and cheaply sorted out with a good pre-purchase inspection process.

Some good sources of car ads here in the Portland area are:

- *The Oregonian*
- *Nickel Ads*
- *Auto Trader*
- *Willamette Week*
- School and Community Newspapers
- Bulletin Boards at schools, businesses, or retirement homes
- Friends
- The Internet

Be careful with Craig's List! We see a lot of bad cars from CL!

Buying from a major new car Dealer with used inventory.

Dealer inventory is not acquired from little old ladies, meticulous autophiles, or benevolent philanthropists. They probably won't offer you the best deal up front just because it's you. They need to sell all of their inventory, not just the two best cars on the lot.

Dealers are not my first choice, but their ability to take your old car in on trade and finance your new one makes their convenience very attractive. If you decide to go with a dealer, stay with the major dealers who sell both new and used cars and stay on their main new car lot, as opposed to the used car satellite lots. Be careful with small dealers and the used car lots as they rely on auctions, rather than trade-ins and lease-returns for their inventory. Auctions are where dealers trade their junk. Good vehicles don't cross state lines and don't go to auction.

Don't spend a lot of time with any one salesperson. If they don't have a car that fits your predetermined needs and price range, move on. If one of their cars interests you, ask them a few quick questions. Is the price firm? Has it ever been in an accident? Do you have the CarFax report? Does it have any remaining warranty? Can I have it inspected by an independent ASE Certified Master Technician? It is common for a dealer to know nothing about a vehicle, with knowledge comes responsibility.

The first questions that the dealer will probably ask you are, "Do you have a trade in?" and "Are you going to finance?" Tell them you have no trade in (even if you do) and that you are interested in their financing (even if you are not). If you have a trade in keep the deals separate. Work out the best deal on the car first, and then ask about trade values. The dealer may be willing to negotiate a lower vehicle price if there is an assumption of profit from financing. Once the price of the used

vehicle has been established, then introduce any other variables. The dealer will want to blend any and all the deals together and have you just focus on the monthly payment. There is more to the cost picture than the singular monthly payment.

If the dealer does have a vehicle that is of interest to you, make sure you have it inspected by a qualified, thorough, neutral party. The term “certified” used car doesn’t do much for me. I prefer an independent inspection and report, rather than the empty word “certified.” The dealer will usually let you have the vehicle inspected after signing paperwork. Be careful, the paperwork might obligate you to buy the vehicle anyway. Require the paperwork to give you the right to negotiate after the inspection or decline depending upon mechanical condition. If they won’t let you have it checked or you’re not comfortable with the contract, walk away. If the car checks out okay and you can reach mutually satisfactory terms, congratulations.

Remember that the dealer does this for a living and knows the game much better than you do. Time is on their side and they know that you might get burnt-out and buy anything in haste. What more could they want?

Buying from a Private Party

Private party sales potentially result in the best values but require much more commitment from the buyer. While it is easy to buy from a dealer, finding a good value in terms of both in dollars and vehicle quality requires greater effort. Professionals don’t leave money on the table. A professional is more likely to sell you a marginal vehicle for a good price, or a good vehicle for a marginal price than a good vehicle for a good price.

Private party sales are considered buyer-beware sales: you buy it, it’s yours. Therefore, make sure you’re dealing with a true private party and not a car salesman without a dealer’s license. In Oregon, people who sell cars for profit are required to have a license and with this license comes certain legal obligations. Similarly, beware of sellers who are not the titled owners of the vehicle in question. There is an increasing population of people that sell cars for profit but do not have a dealer’s license. Make sure your private party seller *is* a private party.

When responding to a private party advertisement, here are the **15 Questions You Must Ask Before Buying a Used Car:**

- How many miles are on the odometer?
- Is your name on the title? Is it an “R” titled vehicle or reconstructed titled vehicle? Is the title clear?
- Are the tags current? When do they expire?
- How long have you owned the vehicle (Both time and miles)?
- Where did you purchase it?
- How was it driven (for long or short trips, in the city or in the country)?
- Who drove it (a 16 yr. old / a 90 yr. old)?
- Who performed the maintenance and do you have the receipts?
- Has the vehicle ever been damaged or in an accident? If so, how much was the repair and where was it performed?
- Why are you selling such a “great” vehicle?
- What do you know that needs repair on the vehicle?
- Is the price firm?
- How are the: paint, body, tires, glass, accessories?

- Does the AC work?
- Can I have the vehicle checked by an ASE Certified Master Technician?

Write down the answers to your questions so you can verify the truthfulness of the owner's answers when you arrange to inspect the car in person. If you don't get a good feeling about the owner or the information they've given, move on and don't waste your time seeing the vehicle in person. I can eliminate 80% of vehicles from the ad itself or the phone call.

If you are satisfied with the owner's responses to your questions, try to see the vehicle as soon as possible. Bring your notes from the phone interview so you can verify each response and dress for preliminary inspection.

The Preliminary Inspection

Remember that no one buys a new car, maintains it to perfection and turns around and sells it long before the end of its realistic service life without a good reason.

Check the car to see if it has been warmed up before you have arrived. Place your hand on the hood near the radiator and feel if it's warm. If it feels warm, the car has probably been driven recently. It is good to observe a cold start to check for possible problems not apparent with a warm engine. Knocking, ticking, smoking, hard starting, stalling, poor cold performance, may be signs of serious problems and if these symptoms disappear when warmed up, these problems may not even be noticed in a professional inspection.

Inspect the body. Has the car just been detailed? Is it too clean to believe? Check the body panels for dents and paint problems. Check the uniformity of the body seams and the paint color-match and texture-match between panels. All the body panels and doors have VIN stickers that should match. Check the glass and the headlight lenses. Check for any paint on rubber moldings or overspray. Check the tires for match of brand and wear. Check the wiper blades. Look in the trunk. Check for moisture or any signs of mold, a spare tire and the original toolkit. Pull up any carpet or matting to see the trunk surfaces. If you smell mold take that as a sign the vehicle has water leaks that may be an expensive problem to fix.

Under the Hood

Check for the under-hood information and VIN stickers. There are usually two or more stickers affixed to the underside of the hood, on the panel over the radiator or on the inner fenders. These stickers give information about emissions, tune-up, and other important specifications. If they are missing, the hood or other body parts may have been painted or replaced. Check any seams, body panel junctions or fasteners for signs of work. Look at the belts and hoses and ask the owner if they are original. Ask if the seller knows if the vehicle has a timing belt and when it was last replaced. Look at the air filter if possible. Inspect the battery and its cables. Is it clean or crusty? Is it the original? If the under hood area is spotless ask if the engine has been steam cleaned. Oil leaks can be temporarily hidden with a good engine clean.

Check the Fluids

Pull the engine oil dipstick and check the oil condition. It should be full and clean. Ask the owner when the last change was and the frequency of changes in the car's history. Non-synthetic oil should be change every 3,000 to 4,000 miles or 4-6 months whichever comes first. If the oil was just changed it should be nice and clean. If the oil is 3,000 miles old it will be dark but should never be black. Ask the owner who changed the oil and what brand and viscosity of oil was used.

With the engine cold, open the radiator cap and inspect the coolant. It should be nice and green (or in some imports red), not brown or rusty looking. Ask the owner if they know when the cooling system was last serviced and do they know how old the thermostat is.

Check the power steering fluid. It should be clean and look either clear or pink, not metallic, and should not have a strong odor.

If possible, check the brake hydraulic fluid. It should be clean and transparent, not dark and dirty. Ask the customer if the brakes have been worked on and if they have serviced the brake fluid. Brake fluid should be replaced every 2-3 years or when brake work is performed. This is especially critical on cars with anti-lock brakes as an ABS brake problem can cost thousands of dollars.

With the engine warm, check the transmission fluid (automatics only). Pull the dipstick the fluid should be nice and pink. The level should be proper, no yellow or dark color and no nasty smell. There should not be any metallic particles in the fluid.

Check for Leaks

Puddles and/or stains under the car are a bad sign. Look for excessive residue of oil or other fluids on the engine, transmission or other underhood components. Also as mentioned, you should note if the underside or engine compartment is TOO clean to be believed. Was the engine just cleaned to hide a leak?

The Road Test

Plan to drive the vehicle for at least 30 to 60 minutes on a variety of road conditions and at various speeds. Before the car is started, turn the key to the on position and check that all the warning lights are illuminated. This is called bulb-check mode. Make sure that warning lights such as Check Engine, oil pressure, emissions, ABS, air bag and engine control all are working and not disabled to hide a problem. Turn the steering wheel back and forth to check for free-play. There should not be a lot of play in the steering. Check the brake and clutch (if applicable) pedal height and response. Start the car. It should start smoothly and easily. You should not have to depress the gas pedal on a fuel injected car to start it. There should be no unusual noises or any visible smoke (light vapor from the tail pipe is normal depending on the weather/temperature). Once the vehicle is started, place your foot on the brake and place the transmission (automatic) in drive and then reverse at a standstill. There should be no hesitation between park and drive or park and reverse, the engagement should be firm and quick.

Place the transmission back into park and check all gauges and vehicle functions. Do the gauges work, does the radio/tape/cd player work? Do the odometer numbers line up straight across the bottom? Is the odometer colored green or red from tamper-indicator? Do all the driver's controls work? Check the horn, vents, blower, defroster, seat controls, dash lights, park brake, turn signals, remote mirrors etc. and adjust them to your needs. Now you are ready to drive the car.

Try to drive the vehicle on as many road conditions as possible. Find a good long, uphill climb (like HWY 26 to the Zoo) and watch the temperature gauge if equipped. The temperature gauge should not rise on a long uphill pull. Find a bumpy road to check for rattle and clunks. Apply the brakes firmly from several speeds. The vehicle should stop quickly and evenly in a straight line. Pull or pedal/steering wheel pulsation are signs that brake work is needed. The brake pedal should feel tall and firm at all times. If the car is equipped with anti-lock brakes a quick panic stop should be attempted. The wheels should not skid and the ABS related warning lights should not illuminate. The brake pedal will ratchet/vibrate noticeable during the operation of ABS brakes when the system is trying to prevent wheel skid. (This should not be confused with brake pulsation or

vibration from the operation of the standard brake system caused by warped rotors and/or drums.) Make sure the AC works, it is really expensive to fix it. Set and test the cruise control (if equipped) to make sure it will work properly. Accelerate firmly to check for performance problems. The vehicle should not hesitate, ping, stall, smoke or anything other than go like heck. Once back from the road test make sure to keep an eye and nose on any under hood smells or smoke.

The Emissions Test

Now with enhanced emissions testing in Oregon, you must be even more careful about purchasing a vehicle that might not pass. There is no waiver for this test. ALL CARS MUST PASS. It can be very expensive to make a non-compliant vehicle pass. Before you buy any vehicle, take it to one of the test centers and have it tested. DEQ tests are free of charge. It is the certificate that you pay for. A little inconvenience could save you a lot of money.

If the vehicle has passed the test to this point then it's time to take the vehicle to a professional for inspection. If the vehicle is not checking out to you specifications, it probably won't pass a professional's either.

In summary

Go with your instincts and experience. Use all your senses including your sense of smell. Put in the time and energy required to perform a logical search and you will be more likely to find a good vehicle being sold for a good reason.

A good used car will demonstrate:

- Long-term or original ownership.
- As low as mileage as you can afford.
- A reasonable sales price.
- A history of appropriate, professional maintenance, with documentation.

A good seller will demonstrate:

- A good reason for selling the vehicle.
- Proof of professional maintenance.
- Attention to details about vehicle maintenance.
- Willingness to have the car inspected.
- Honest answers to all your questions about the vehicle.
- A feeling of trust and openness about the circumstances surrounding the sale.

Drew's Kitchen

Lemon and thyme grilled pork chops



We just finished a stunning Oregon weekend with sunshine, temperatures in the low eighties, and the only clouds coming from the grills flaming up in every backyard around town. But sniff that cloud closely and you'll smell mainly hot dogs and hamburgers. If you want more than the same old fare, toss these pork chops on your grill for a taste that will keep you grilling all summer.

Ingredients

- 3 dried bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons peppercorns, cracked*, plus 1/2 tsp. ground pepper
- 1 cup dry white wine such as Sauvignon Blanc \$
- 1/2 cup kosher salt
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tsp. packed light brown sugar
- Zest of 2 lemons, divided \$
- 6 bone-in center-cut pork rib chops (3 1/2 lbs. total) with bones frenched* if you like \$
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil \$
- 2 1/2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh thyme leaves and small, tender sprigs

Directions

- Heat 1 1/2 qts. water, the bay leaves, and peppercorns in a large pot until boiling. Remove from heat and stir in wine, salt, 1/2 cup brown sugar, and the zest of 1 lemon. Nest pan in a sink of ice water and let brine cool. Add pork to brine. Chill at least 4 and up to 12 hours.
- Drain meat, rinse, pat dry, and set on a platter or baking sheet. In a bowl, mix oil, thyme, ground pepper, remaining 2 tsp. brown sugar, and the zest of 1 lemon. Pat mixture onto both sides of meat, pressing it in. Let meat stand at room temperature.
- Heat grill to medium (350° to 450°). Heat a large cast-iron griddle, 12-in. paella pan, or 2 large cast-iron skillets on cooking grate with grill lid down until water dances when sprinkled on cooking surface, 8 to 10 minutes.
- Set chops on griddle and cook with grill lid down, turning once, until meat is well browned and done the way you like, 8 to 10 minutes total for medium-rare (cut to test). Transfer to a platter.
- Crack peppercorns in a mortar, or seal in a plastic bag and smash with a rolling pin. Rib chops come from the rib end of the loin; if they aren't already frenched (some meat trimmed from the bone ends to make the chops look neater), ask a butcher to do it, or do it yourself by sliding a sharp knife along the bones.

(Drew would like to thank the fine folks at Sunset Magazine for putting this recipe out in June, 2011)

Shop Talk

Pre-Summer discounts save time and money



That last amazing weekend just confirmed... summer's almost here. Here at the shop that doesn't mean vacations, it means "all hands on deck!" as we enter our busiest season. It can be an awkward time for us as well, because a busy schedule may mean difficulties in getting you the service you want on your schedule. We're proactively trying to smooth this out by reminding you...

- Don't wait till the last minute to schedule your service. If you have a big trip coming up, get your vehicle in shape well in advance. This ensures we have time to make any needed repairs, and gives you a chance to test-drive the repairs to make sure they were done correctly.
- If you have any services you have been putting off, please schedule them now. We'll always be able to get you in, but scheduling now makes sure you won't have to wait to have it done.

To encourage everyone to come in before the rush, we're offering one of our rare special offers...

**Schedule your service before June 1 and receive
15% off labor costs, up to \$100!**

Just call and talk to one of our salaried Service Advisors. They'll get you scheduled right away and answer any questions you might have.

As a quick reminder, we're in our annual **FREE CARWASH SEASON** again! We [can't wash your car](#), so to knock the dust off your vehicle we offer coupons to Wash Man Car Wash instead. We can't give them away for minor services like oil changes, but for most visits you can count on a clean car on us. Again, just ask your Service Advisors!

Finally, we'd like to extend a special thank-you to all of you who consistently refer your family members, friends, and co-workers to our shop! New clients are the lifeblood of any successful business, and your referrals account for about half of the new clients we get. If you like what you've found at our business, please share it with someone else who'd appreciate it. And thanks again for all your generous support through the years!

Health Notes

The final word on the fluoridation debate



Portland is consumed by the debate in advance of the May 21 vote on fluoridation. It's become a bitter battle with hype, propaganda, and distortion on both sides. While we'd like to bring you the absolute final truth on the fluoride controversy, that may be a little beyond the scope of *Your Car Matters*. However, we can do our best to give you the most sensible arguments we can find on both sides.

There's only one real source when it comes to polite, dispassionate discussion of public policy... Canadians.

Calgary was wrestling with the fluoridation question in 2011, so the CBC put together two doctors to calmly and respectfully discuss the issue. Dr. Robert C. Dickson is a family physician who led the anti-fluoridation campaign in Calgary, and Dr. Lynn Tomkins is a Toronto dentist and president of the Ontario Dental Association who supported fluoridation. [Click here for their debate, in both text and video.](#)



But Americans are rarely content with just a rational search for the truth. If the adversarial system is more your style, let's line up a real knock-down-drag-out debate to get at the truth...

In this corner, The American Dental Association, premiere business organization for America's dentists. They're in favor of fluoridation, and put out a 71-page booklet supporting their position...

[*Fluoridation Facts*](#) is a comprehensive encyclopedia of fluoridation facts taken from over 350 scientific references. *Fluoridation Facts* includes information from scientific research in an easy to use question and answer format on the topics of effectiveness, safety, practice and cost-effectiveness of fluoridation."

And in that corner, The Health Way House, a group based in San Marcos, CA, who put out a point-by-point refutation of the ADA's booklet...

"In [*The Fluoride Debate*](#), we have juxtaposed the arguments presented by the American Dental Association (ADA) with comments from many of the independent scientists who have examined the issue with an open mind. We believe that if people take the time to read and study both sides of the fluoridation debate — especially the science that has emerged over the last ten years — they will be appalled by the practice of putting this known toxic substance into the public drinking water."

So now you have all the truthest facts available. Read up, make your best decision, and get out and vote!



Sellwood Bridge Update

A sneak peek behind-the-scenes



Work is continuing on the Sellwood Bridge but it can be a little hard to tell. We see the flaggers, we see the traffic, but now that the Shoo Fly Move is over we don't see the progress. That's because most of the work is taking place on the south side of the bridge, down near the water, where crews are building work bridges from the shore to provide access to the bridge for construction. It's hard to get pictures of the construction from publicly accessible areas, so we sent one of our *Your Car Matters* photographers to meet with Mike Pullen, spokesman for the Sellwood Bridge project, for a quick peek behind the scenes.



This is about the best view you can get from public areas. It's taken from the east side of the bridge, at the top of the embankment. You can barely see the work bridge behind the crane, but that will become clearer in a moment.

See those big steel pipes? Those will become the base for the arch of the new bridge on this side. (That's Mike standing in one of the pipes to give you a sense of scale.) Instead of being pounded or dug into the ground, these pipes will be placed by "oscillating" them into the ground; twisting them back and forth and into place. That blue thing being moved by the crane is the machine that will do it.



Here are much better views of the work bridge as it extends out from the east bank looking west. It may be a temporary thing, but it's far from flimsy. When finished, it will have a "roadbed" made of 12"x12" timbers, sufficient to hold the cranes that will use it during construction. A similar platform will eventually extend from the west side to almost meet the east side platform. There will still be a gap between the two for river traffic. Crews will start pouring footings for the west side pilings in July.

Those concrete pillars are supports left over from the old bridge, and will have to be removed. You can see the metal tracks crews set into the sides of the pillars. These tracks will hold gigantic concrete saws that will cut the pillars apart piece-by-piece.



As always, Multnomah County maintains the definitive website on everything related to the Sellwood Bridge Replacement project, www.sellwoodbridge.org. Construction and closure alerts, archived information, and other resources are all available 24/7 for your convenience. Their two constantly updated live webcams of the bridge cams are available [here](#). If you're looking for something that's not on the website, you can contact Mike Pullen (mike.j.pullen@multco.us, 503-209-4111) or visit www.sellwoodbridge.org.

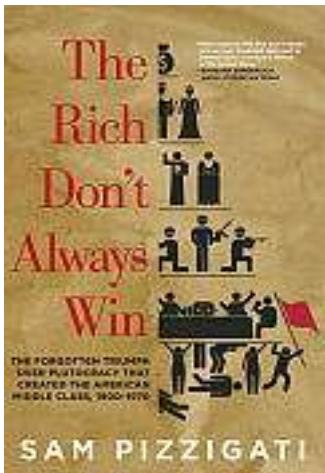


Book Spotlight

“The Rich Don’t Always Win” by Sam Pizzigati



George Santayana famously said “Those who forget history are condemned to repeat it.” But what about those who never learn history? The history of Labor in this country is shamefully overlooked in our schools and media, but our friends at [KBOO](#) sent us a book that fills in much of the missing parts. Compared to [Zinn's People's History of the United States](#), it tells the story of the rise and fall of the middle class, and explains why it won’t get better until we learn to respect labor appropriately. Just click the links to go to the Powell’s website for the book.



[“The Rich Don’t Always Win” by Sam Pizzigati](#)

The Occupy Wall Street protests have captured America's political imagination. Polls show that two-thirds of the nation now believe that America's enormous wealth ought to be "distributed more evenly." However, almost as many Americans--well over half--feel the protests will ultimately have "little impact" on inequality in America. What explains this disconnect? Most Americans have resigned themselves to believing that the rich simply always get their way.

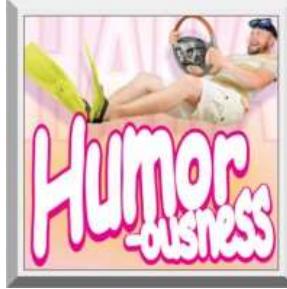
Except they don't.

A century ago, the United States hosted a super-rich even more domineering than ours today. Yet fifty years later, that super-rich had almost entirely disappeared. Their majestic mansions and estates had become museums and college campuses, and America had become a vibrant, mass middle class nation, the first and finest the world had ever seen.

Americans today ought to be taking no small inspiration from this stunning change. After all, if our forebears successfully beat back grand fortune, why can't we? But this transformation is inspiring virtually no one. Why? Because the story behind it has remained almost totally unknown, until now. This lively popular history speaks directly to the political hopelessness so many Americans feel. By tracing how average Americans took down plutocracy over the first half of the 20th Century--and how plutocracy came back-- *The Rich Don't Always Win* will outfit Occupy Wall Street America with a deeper understanding of what we need to do to get the United States back on track to the American dream.

Humorousness

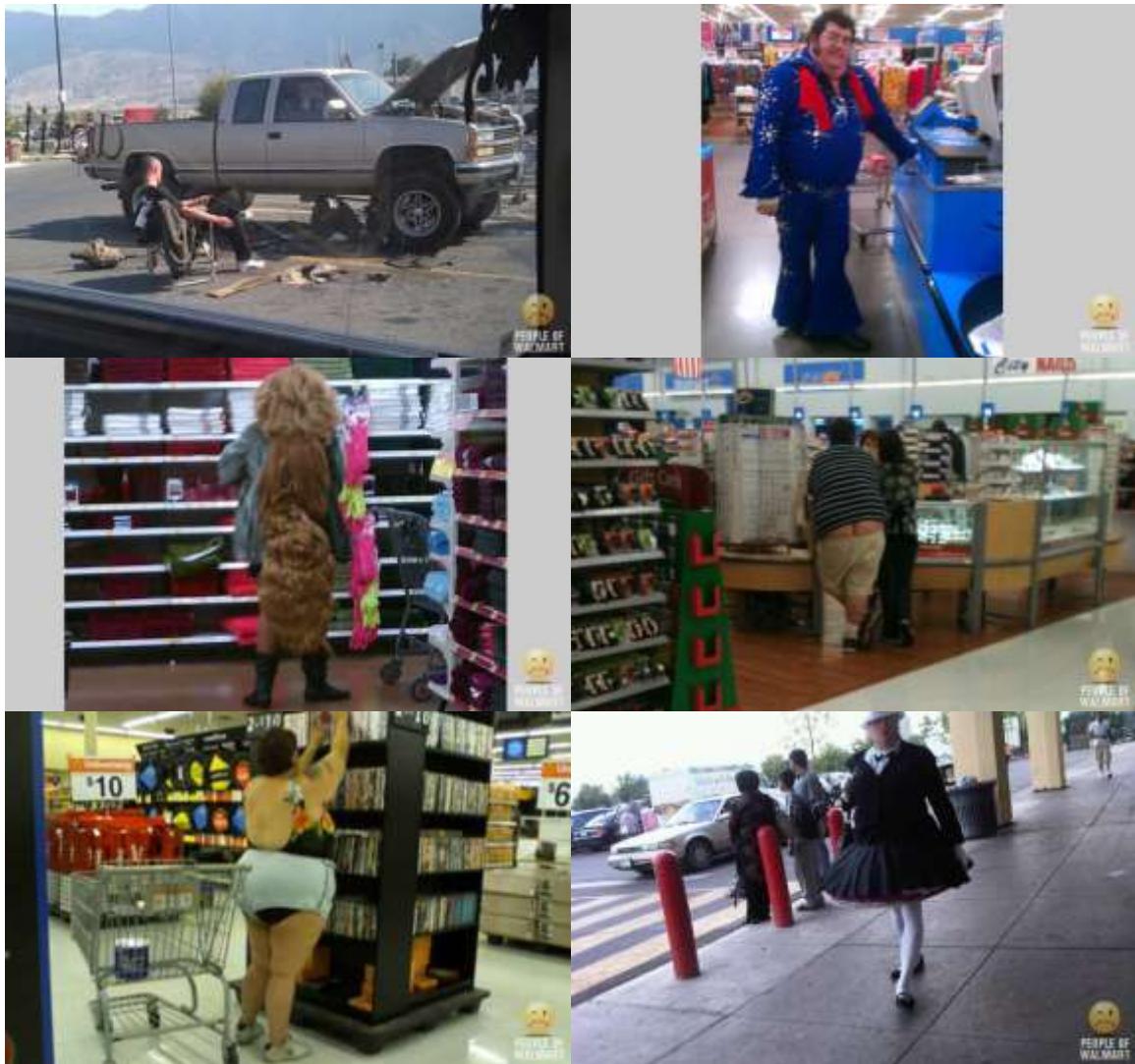
People of Wal-Mart



“People Watching” is a vastly underrated activity. It’s cheap, requires no training or equipment, and it’s good for hours of fun. In this month’s Humorousness we’ll take you on a safari to one of the best places to observe the human condition... Wal-Mart. It’s such a great place to see odd humans in their natural habitat that a website has sprung up to document them, [“People of Wal-Mart”](#), and they have put together 196 of their all-time besties in the gallery below...

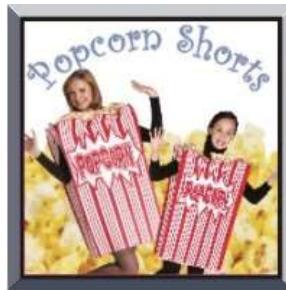
People of Wal-Mart’s Greatest Hits

Be aware that there are some scantily-clad and scary people, but these are all pictures taken in a public place so they can’t be all that bad... or can they? Here’s a few to get you started, and if you look at the rest (which you know you will) they you have no one to blame but yourself.



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. By the way, much (but not all) of our delicious Popcorn comes from articles we've posted on [our Facebook page](#). If you're on Facebook, please stop by and "Like" us and we'll keep a fairly-constant-but-not-frequent-enough-to-be-annoying stream of these coming to your virtual door!



[Why should you care about Chained CPI?](#)



Barack Obama has an interesting style of negotiation: Give your opponent everything he wants, then stand firm until he asks for more. Then give him that, too. This surreal pattern has already cost us single payer health care and now it's lined up to kill social security. The ostensible reason is deficit reduction, but here's the twist... Social Security is independent from the Federal budget so savings from Social Security CAN'T be used to reduce the deficit! It's well worth your time to look into, and [here's a link to get you started](#).

[86-year-old gymnast on parallel bars](#)



This is one of the rare InterTube videos that doesn't have some ulterior motive or a surprise ending. This lady doesn't scream, curse, fall down, hurt herself, fart, or get naked. She's not doing it for a cause, good or bad. At 86 years old, she does a [43-second gymnastic routine](#) on parallel bars and she does it with grace and dignity. Completely inspirational.

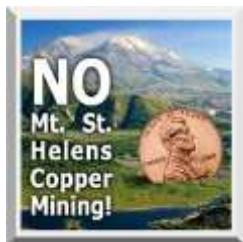
Of course, the dude behind her with the massive biceps probably has his own story.

[PHAME Academy goes I-tech](#)



In this month's article about charitable efficiency, we suggested you give to small groups where you know your help will be appreciated and put to good use. PHAME Academy, an arts and theatre group for people with developmental disabilities, is a perfect example. We've been proud supporters of PHAME for many years, and were excited to hear [this report on OPB about how they are integrating iPads into their program](#). Innovations like this change the lives of the students, and are only possible because of the dedication of the staff and generosity of people like you. Thanks!

[Stop St. Helens mining, and have fun doing it](#)



The Gifford Pinchot Task Force was created to fight potential copper mining near the summit of Mt. St. Helens. They've got several events coming up that you might want to support. Just [click the link](#) to go to their website for more details...

- May 18- Disc Golf Tournament at North Bonneville course
- May 24-26- Mattress Pro Fundraiser
- June 22- Wine and Seafood event at East Fork Cellars
- Sept 28- Forest Gala at Lucy's Garden in Ridgefield

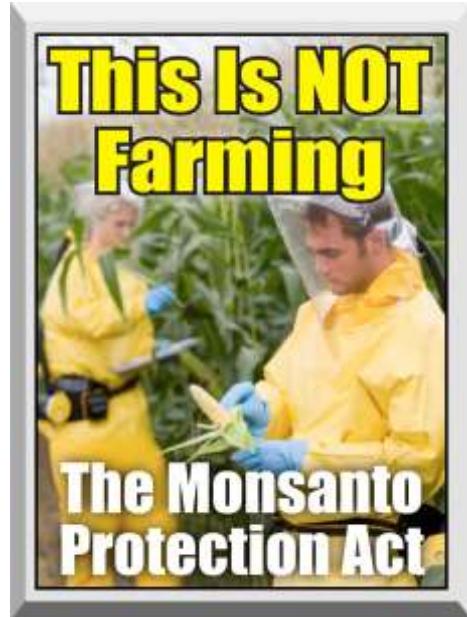
News To Make You Furious

The Monsanto Protection Act



The Agricultural Revolution gave humans the ability to abandon subsistence hunting and gathering. We learned that we could feed ourselves one season and, if we saved enough seed, we could even plant a new crop the next year. This concept is basic to agriculture, even basic to human civilization. But Monsanto has a better idea, and you'll damn well learn to like it.

They haven't fought to have their idea tried by the marketplace. They haven't produced better crops and then sold so much that their competitors went out of business. Instead, they've lied and obfuscated. They've threatened individuals, states, and even countries. Their organized, premeditated thuggery is global and legend, and is too big to get into in this little column. So instead, we decided to concentrate on just one abuse that is threatening our system of government here at home. It's not their lobbying, not even their actual crimes. It's the Monsanto Protection Act, and it will make you Furious all by itself.



What does the Act do? It effectively bars federal courts from being able to halt the sale or planting of genetically modified seeds, no matter what health issues may appear from GMOs in the future. The provision's language was apparently written with Monsanto's input, and many members of Congress were unaware that the Act even existed within the Bill they were voting on. The President didn't slow it down either, quietly signing it. The message it sends is that corporations can get around consumer safety protections if they get Congress on their side.

The Act is buried deep in Section 735 of the "Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013," or [H.R. 933](#), an appropriations bill that President Obama has already signed into law. The bill was necessary to prevent another government shutdown, so it naturally drew a few quiet additions that wouldn't have stood up well to broad examination. The rider was inserted anonymously but Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo) later said he "worked with" Monsanto to get the rider. It's so egregious that even the Tea Party is mad about it. Here are a few links to stories around the web about it, along with a petition to repeal it.

[Monsanto Protection Act put GM companies above the federal courts](#)- (*The Guardian*) Campaigners say that not even the US government can now stop the sale, planting, harvest or distribution of any GM seed

[Full Text of the just-passed Monsanto Protection Act](#)- (*WhiteOut Press*) Includes some reporting on the roles of Senators Blunt and Mikulski in the act.

[The Real Monsanto Protection Act: How The GMO Giant Corrupts Regulators And Consolidates Its Power](#)- (*Think Progress*) Concise article with extensive hyperlinks for in-depth information

[Petition to Repeal the "Monsanto Protection Act" \(Section 735 of HR 933\)](#) (*MoveOn.org*)

[**Center for Food Safety Denounces Dangerous "Biotech" Earmark in Senate-passed Spending Bill**](#) (Center for Food Safety)

[**Corporate Giant Gets Immunity**](#) - (Tea Party Patriots) A rare chance to agree with the Tea Partiers.

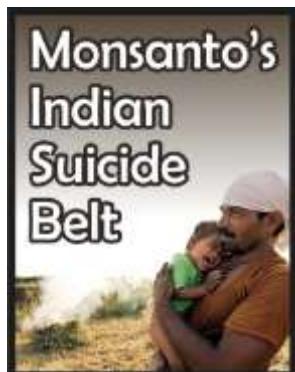
[**Monsanto Protection Act Signed By Obama, GMO Bill "Written By Monsanto" Signed Into Law**](#) (Global Research)

[**Jon Stewart explains the 'Monsanto Protection Act'**](#) - He has a real talent for putting the most complex ideas into a form we can all understand.

Blood-Boiling Bonus!

We couldn't let this look at Monsanto's abuses be limited to just the corruption of our justice system. Here are a couple more stories that will keep you cursing far into the night...

[**Monsanto's Indian Suicide Belt**](#)



We wrote this "News To Make You Furious" article in June, 2011, about Monsanto's activities in India. Monsanto targeted its patented BT Cotton to the poverty-stricken illiterate rural farmers of India, convincing them to take out loans at extortionate rates to pay for seeds costing 1000 times more than conventional varieties. The first problem occurred when pests and disease destroyed much of the crop that was guaranteed pest-and-disease resistant. The second problem occurred when the crops failed because Monsanto neglected to mention that their seeds required up to 50 TIMES the water of natural varieties, and on a rigid schedule. This was an insurmountable problem for rural farmers without artificial irrigation systems who depend on rain to irrigate their crops. Although Monsanto weathered the massive crop losses the farmers were not so lucky. Faced with the loss of everything they had, and looking at families condemned to a life of begging with no way out, a wave of suicides has been sweeping through the Indian farm belt.

The predominant method of choice? The same insecticide that proved so useless on the Monsanto cotton.

[**Argentina—A Poster Child for the Health Hazards of GMO Crops**](#)



Roundup Ready soy is now being cultivated on a massive scale across the globe, along with the exponentially increasing use of the herbicide Roundup. It's a win-win for Monsanto. But it's a loss for just about everyone else. Argentina's population is being sickened by massive spraying of herbicides on its genetically engineered soya fields. Glyphosate, the main ingredient in Roundup, is blamed for the dramatic increase in devastating birth defects as well as cancer. Sterility and miscarriages are also increasing...