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# Tom's Tidbits

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## Truth, Justice, or the American Way



Greetings!

While we're all waiting for the sentence in the Bradley Manning trial, I'd like to tell you a story. It happened long ago, in a different country with radically different values than our own, but I think it still holds lessons for us today.

The story begins on a winter's night, where the warship *Warren* lies at anchor. It sits in a port of a nation at war, a new, poor, and unstable nation with only the barest beginnings of a navy, facing the naval might of one of the most powerful nations on the planet. Deep in the hold, the *Warren's* junior officers huddled around a dim lantern for a secret meeting. They weren't there to discuss military strategy; they had other priorities on that cold night. Their captain, Esek Hopkins, had abused prisoners under his care and it was up to these men to decide what to do. They knew the abuse took place, but they also knew how critical military cohesion is with their nation's very existence at stake. They knew that Hopkins, as captain, would likely retaliate if they came forward. They could face the end of their military careers or even jail. Even if Hopkins didn't act personally against them he came from a rich and powerful family that could act in his place. They understood the risks to their country and to themselves. But they also knew the crime. They decided to report their captain, and Hopkins was removed from his post.

They quickly found their worries were well founded. Hopkins filed a criminal libel suit that landed two of these "whistleblowers", Richard Marven and Samuel Shaw, in jail and a third in front of a national tribunal. Marven and Shaw argued that they were "arrested for doing what they then believed and still believe was nothing but their duty."

With the benefit of hindsight we, today, understand how dangerous these whistleblowers were. It doesn't matter whether criminal acts took place, nothing can justify reporting them. We know that revealing embarrassing facts about a country only empowers its enemies. But this was a new nation without the Constitution and Bill of Rights that protect us, so they reacted differently. The tribunal found "that it is the duty of all persons in the service of the United States to give the earliest information to Congress or other proper authority of any misconduct, frauds, or misdemeanors committed by any officers or persons in the service of these states." The primitive and uneducated Continental Congress then made all records pertaining to Hopkins public and paid for the legal defense of Marven and Shaw, who went on to beat Hopkins in court. This was 1778, and the United States' first whistleblower law.

Since Marven and Shaw, our country has relied on whistleblowers to expose criminality and embarrassing incompetence at every level... Peter Buxtun exposed the Tuskegee syphilis experiments, Daniel Ellsberg exposed malfeasance in Vietnam, and Mark "Deep Throat" Felt exposed the Nixonian circus of criminality, just to name a few.

Despite our leader's protestations, their actions betray our country's modern values. Bradley Manning, whatever the outcome of his sentencing, was *not even allowed to make* a "whistleblower" defense! He's in a "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation where the Army requires soldiers to report

wrongdoing and prosecutes them if they don't, but will also prosecute them if they do. Edward Snowden is now hiding in Russia (Russia, for gods sake!) to escape the wrath of his Big Brother. And Manning and Snowden join a long list of inconvenient truth-tellers as the Obama administration zealously sets new records for prosecuting whistleblowers.

The backwoods yahoos who founded our country felt that people who risk all to expose evil deserve protection more than the people who perpetrate evil. They naively believed that values were more than anesthetic platitudes; they believed that you couldn't build a country on the ideas of courage, truth, and justice without practicing them. Today's United States is indeed a different country with radically different values. Manning's arrest, cruel and unusual detention, inability to access critical defense information, crippling judicial decisions, and secretive trial are eloquent testimony to what our new and sophisticated values are. His sentencing is the only marker left to see exactly how far we've fallen.

Take Care and Make a Great Day!



**PS: Want to read more about Marven and Shaw, or whistleblowers in general? Check out these links...**

[Whistleblower's Handbook Chapter describing history behind the 1778 law](#)

National Whistleblowers Center

[The Whistle-Blowers of 1777](#)

Stephen Kohn, the New York Times

[We're in a Post-Constitutional America: Our Country Is Going Sideways in Plain Sight, and Nobody's Saying Much About It](#)

Peter Van Buren and Tom Engelhardt, Alternet

[Testimony of John Grannis to Congress](#)

Congressional record, reprinted on earlsalisbury.com

[National Whistleblowers Center](#)

...and with Marven and Shaw in mind, read this article on the new "[National Whistleblower Day](#)" and try to think of ANYTHING that could possibly be more cynical.



# What NOW?!! Toons

See it FIRST in *Your Car Matters!*



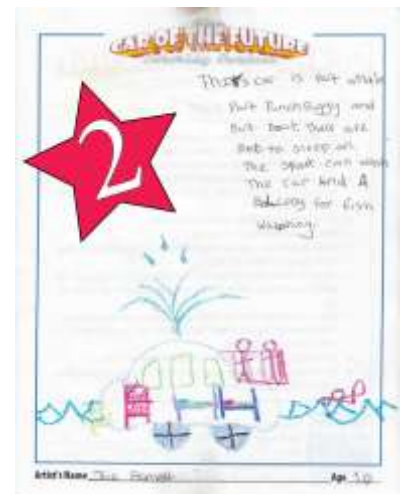
**"WHAT NOW?!!"**

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WWW.WHATNOWTOONS.COM

# Car Of The Future

## Kids designs for future transportation

We hope you got a chance to go to one of the free Sellwood Park Concerts this year. We certainly did; we were there in our Tom Dwyer Booth to meet our neighbors at all five shows. Perfect weather, good friends, excellent food, and great music... a wonderful way to spend a Portland summer. This month we thought we'd share a few pictures from one of our other favorite summer events- our Car of the Future contest. At each concert, we let the kids come and draw what they think cars will look like in the future. We always get fun and imaginative entries and this year was no different. Our three winners featured an eco-car complete with a "trash picker-upper" and an automatic tree planter, a part-whale car with a "trash picker-upper" and an automatic tree planter, a part-whale car with a balcony for watching fish, and an ice skating car. (C'mon, who can resist an ice skating car?) Take a few minutes to look at some of the great ideas these car designers of the future came up with. Detroit, are you listening?

















# Maintain Your Advantage

Keeping your vehicle saves thousands over buying new

The [Green Living Journal](#) “offers solutions to the serious energy, health, and environmental problems facing all of us.” (If you don’t already read it, you’re cheating yourself. The Journal is FREE, and available at [550 locations around Portland.](#)) Each quarterly issue covers topics including gardening, renewable energy, food, education, recycling, and much more. These are the kind of people we root for, so when they asked us to write an article on the importance of maintenance for you and the environment, you know we jumped on it. Here’s a sneak peak at the article coming out in their next issue...



## Regular automotive maintenance is good for you, your wallet, and the environment

### Why should you spend time and money maintaining your vehicle?

The average new car cost \$30,500 in 2012. That’s a pretty steep investment, so it makes sense to squeeze every dime out of it. We asked Tom Dwyer, owner of [Tom Dwyer Automotive Services](#) in Portland, Oregon, for the best way to keep our vehicles on the road for years to come...

“Maintenance.” said Tom. “The absolutely best way to ensure safe and reliable performance is to follow a sensible, proactive maintenance plan. With consistent maintenance, your vehicle can last for many years and hundreds of thousands of miles beyond its warranty period.”

Beyond protecting your investment, Tom gave us other reasons to preventatively maintain your ride...

- **Better for your safety-** The most important reason is the safety of you, your family, and those around you. Every time you drive you trust your vehicle to function safely and

reliably, and scheduled maintenance ensures it will.

- **Better for the environment-** Driving means polluting, but you can reduce the *amount* you pollute. Properly running vehicles reduce pollutants to a minimum, and postpone the day the whole thing is consigned to the junk heap.

Stretching your vehicle’s life makes even



For the best maintenance outcomes find a qualified, capable shop you trust, with service advisors and technicians not paid by commission; have them inspect and evaluate your vehicle’s actual needs, and then follow their advice.

more sense when you consider the often-overlooked [embodied energy](#) of the vehicle; the energy required for manufacture and delivery. Somewhere between 12% and 28% of the carbon produced in your vehicle's lifetime happens here, before you ever drive it. You've already "spent" this carbon, so avoiding a new vehicle means stretching the time until you have to spend it again.

- **Better for your pocketbook**- Maintenance is cheaper than fix-on-fail repair and it's certainly cheaper than a new vehicle. Putting money into your car a bit at a time reduces the chance big expenses will hit all at once.
- **Better for your peace of mind**- Your vehicle should be an asset, not a headache. Mechanical breakdowns ruin vacations, and vehicles with recurring problems can be infuriating. Keep the basics maintained for the best possible driving experience.

### **What is automotive maintenance?**

Tom started off with basic definitions... "Repair" is a fix for a malfunctioning vehicle, but 'maintenance' is planned replacement to avoid malfunction. Maintenance *prevents* repair".



Vehicles maintenance means more than oil changes, but they're a good place to start. The screwdriver above is buried in the sludge of an engine 20,000 miles overdue for its oil change.

Tom told us he hears owners relay things like "It's always been such a good car I've never had to do anything to it. Why Am I having all these problems now?" But, he says, "Proper maintenance includes more than just oil changes". Your vehicle may perform just fine

until it fails without warning, exposing a whole chain of failing components.

### **How much maintenance do I need?**

It's almost as easy to over-maintain as to under-maintain your vehicle. New technology may make much of Dad's maintenance advice obsolete, and "Quick Lube" shops survive by selling maintenance items in their interests, not yours. Your owner's manual is a good place to start, but its guidelines are just that... guidelines. Depending on your driving habits, vehicle usage, climate, type of vehicle, how long you intend to keep the vehicle and other factors you may need to maintain things more or less often than recommended. Sticking too rigidly to the manual menus may not deliver the value you need.

### **Beware of menu-driven services**

"Many shops, particularly dealerships, use menu-driven maintenance", said Tom. "They use vehicle guidelines rather than inspections or records to determine what 'should' be done at specific mileage intervals. They'll do everything on the menu's list, needed or not, then call about other services that you really needed".

"Menus may work for the first 30,000 miles but after that they fail to predict actual needs accurately."

"The use of manufacturer interval recommendations, scheduled inspections and the use of detailed records is the best way to make sure your vehicle is getting exactly the attention it needs."

### **Finding a shop you trust**

"The absolutely best way to keep your vehicle maintained is to find a qualified, certified automotive repair shop you trust and then follow their recommendations", said Tom.

Both sides of that statement- qualified AND trustworthy- are important. Some shops operate without proper training or equipment and may be commission-driven, so their advice may be inaccurate or tainted by a desire to build a paycheck. On the other hand, your uncle's advice



may be well-intentioned but not based on qualified technical knowledge.

Tom had some [pointers to find shops](#) that meet both those criteria:

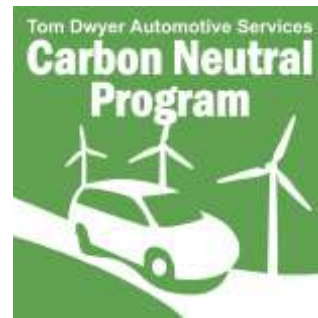
- Ask for referrals from friends or locals. The senior counter person at an auto parts store might be a source if you're in a new town and don't know anyone else.
- Use internet reviews like Angie's List or Yelp. Make sure to check BBB (Better Business Bureau) reports, available online.
- Make sure the shop is organized, equipped, and well-staffed. Look for the shop's certifications, as well as certifications for individual staff members.
- Make sure there is a great warranty. Look for a minimum of 12-month, 12-thousand miles, and 24/24 is better.
- Begin with a small service to test the waters. A small job may be a good guide to how the shop will handle larger repairs.
- Don't miss your opportunity to support green businesses! Even among qualified, trustworthy shops, some are more ecologically responsible than others. Look for any environmental certifications (like Portland's [PPO Certification](#)) or ask about the shop's environmental policies.

### **It's important to stay up-to-date**

Another reason to keep up on your maintenance is your budget. Maintenance is cheaper than repair, but that doesn't make it cheap; staying current spreads those bills out over time, avoiding any one big hit to your pocketbook. Keeping up may be hard, but playing catch-up may be impossible.

### **The payoff**

"Find a qualified automotive shop you trust, and work with them to set a maintenance plan that meets your personal ownership goals. Then, most importantly, stick to the plan! You'll save time and money, and get the most enjoyment from your driving experience." And that's not a bad payoff for any investment!



It's great that more auto shops are recycling, but the truly green shops go farther. Tom Dwyer Automotive created a one-of-a-kind program that gives service discounts to clients who offset their CO2 production. Their Carbon Neutral Program has already prevented over 1.5 million pounds of carbon from entering our environment!

### **Additional Resources**

["How to make your car last 250,000 miles"](#), MSN Auto

["Top 10 car maintenance mistakes"](#)  
MSN Auto

[Is it more efficient to drive your car into the ground or ditch it for a better one?](#)  
The Guardian

[Buy a New Car or Keep the Old: Which is Better for the Environment?](#)  
About.com

# Could You Pass A US Citizenship Test?

Match wits with a Dwyer employee

When (or if) new immigrants finish the labyrinth leading to citizenship, there's one last obstacle facing them that natural born citizens never have to think about: the Naturalization Test. You may think you had a lot on the line in your high school algebra final, but think of what these people have to face... one test, pass or fail, for all the tangible and intangible benefits of US citizenship for themselves and their families for the rest of their lives. No stress!

How would you do if you had to take that test? Could you make the grade if citizenship weren't your birthright, but something you had to earn? [The Christian Science Monitor gives you the chance to find out by actually taking the US Citizenship test.](#)



The actual test consists of 10 questions drawn from a pool of 100 possibles. Applicants must get 6 answers out of 10 in an oral exam to pass the test. According to [US Citizenship and Immigration services](#), 92 percent of applicants pass. The Christian Science Monitor test has 96 of the possible questions, meaning you must get 58 or more correct in order to pass. We gave the test to one of the seditious left-wing moochers here at the shop who got 92 out of 96 correct for a whopping 96%. Can you do better? Can you do well enough to stay in the country?

Bonus points if you give the test to some of your Tea Partier friends!

## Sample Question

4. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?



UPI/Roger L. Wollenberg/Newscom

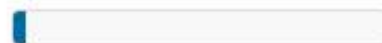
(Read caption)

☐ Hilary Clinton

☐ Robert Byrd

☐ John Boehner

☐ Nancy Pelosi



3% Complete

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Our blockbuster summer is continuing with temps in the 80's and cloudless skies, and this perfect summer is inspiring Drew with another perfect summer treat. This month he brings us a recipe that's a favorite of Tom Trapani of Millbrae, CA for a California crab sandwich. Although the recipe makes 4 servings, take Drew's advice and don't tell your family... savor each bite for yourself!

### **Ingredients**

- 12 oz. shelled cooked crab
- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 2 tbsp. mayonnaise
- 3 green onions, chopped
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. each- kosher salt, pepper, and cayenne
- 8 slices sourdough sandwich bread, toasted
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 1 cup alfalfa sprouts

### **Directions**

- Mix crab, cream cheese, mayonnaise, onions, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and cayenne in a medium bowl.
- Spoon mixture onto 4 slices of bread.
- Top each slice with some avocado and sprouts and another slice of bread, then cut in half.



# Shop Talk

## Goodbye to a friend of many years



### Good luck to Mike Launder in his new, greener pasture

We'd like to take a moment this month to say goodbye to Mike Launder, a friend and co-worker for more than 8 years. Mike is (was) one of our top ASE-Certified Master Mechanics, solving complex vehicle problems affecting drivability, safety, or usability. He earned all 8 A.S.E. Certifications, an L-1 Advanced Engine Certification, and recognition as one of three 1991 Motor Magazine "Techs of the Year".



In his 2010 "Tech Spotlight" article Mike talked about the importance of keeping up with the latest automotive technology, saying he thought the future belonged to the techs and shops that were ready to make the commitment to change with the times. This appreciation of the cutting edge of the automotive world led to his departure... Mike left for a position with Tesla Motors working on the next generation of electric vehicles.

Mike is an excellent tech and has been a valuable member of our team, and we already miss him. We hope the challenges of his new job will be worthy of Mike's amazing talents, and we wish him every success. Good luck, Mike!

### FREE Carwash season is almost over

We can't do it for minor services like oil changes, but for larger services you'll get a free carwash to make up for our dusty lot. Hurry, though, this year's Free Carwash Season ends September 15.

### We need your 2014 calendar nominations!

Believe it or not, we have to start in August in order to have our [annual shop calendar](#) done in time for the holidays. Is there a group you work with, care about, or benefit from that you'd like to see included in our calendar? Nothing against the big national charities, but we're looking for small, unnoticed, local groups that could benefit from letting Portland know about their existence. If you can think of any, please email our Calendar Coordinator Charles at [Charles@tomdwyer.com](mailto:Charles@tomdwyer.com).

### Tell your friends!

Some people incorrectly assume (especially during our busy summer season) that we have all the clients we can handle. Not so! We depend on a constant stream of new clients to maintain a healthy business. If you like what you've found at Tom Dwyer, please tell someone or write a review. Your support and referrals mean the world to us. Thank you!

### Latest Automotive Recalls

Automobiles are just like any other product; occasional flaws in manufacture or design can cause problems once they leave the factory. When an issue is identified the manufacturers and government work hard to bring the vehicles back in for refit or repair, but not all recalls make the front pages. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration maintains a constantly updated list of recalls from every manufacturer. The last month's recalls are below, but clicking the button at right will take you to the full list at the NHTSA website.



- [August 8: 680 various Piaggio motorcycles from 2012-2013](#), Recalled for a manufacturing fault that could cause the rear suspension to suddenly collapse.
- [August 7: 2,864,670 Fastec door handles for recreational vehicles from 2006-2013](#), Recalled for deadbolts that jam, making it impossible to exit the vehicle.
- [August 7: 33,021 Ford C-Max vehicles from 2013](#), Recalled for failure to comply with safety standards for Occupant Protection in Interior Impact. In the event of a crash, an occupant could be at an increased risk of an injury.
- [August 7: 7,782 Nissan Versa Notes from 2014](#), Recalled for rear seat bolts that were possibly manufactured incorrectly.
- [August 7: 7,707 Nissan Versa Notes from 2014](#), Recalled for missing bolts that may compromise the vehicle body's integrity during a rear impact.
- [August 6: 2,561 Suzuki GSX1300RA Hayabusa motorcycles from 2013](#), Recalled for faulty Anti-Lock Brake Systems.
- [August 6: 80 Lotus Evora supercharged vehicles from 2011](#), Recalled for potential rupturing of the engine oil cooler hose, increasing the risk of a fire.
- [August 6: 843 Chevrolet Silverado trucks and GMC Sierra trucks from 2014](#), Recalled for air bags that may not fully inflate.
- [August 6: 652 Honda Trailer Hitch Harness Kits for 2014 Acura MDX vehicles](#), Recalled for incorrect wiring of the trailer brake controller, causing loss of power to the brakes and increasing the risk of a crash.
- [August 5: 150 Winnebago motorhomes from 2011, including the Vista and Itasca Sunstar models](#), Recalled for incorrect tire pressure and wheel rim size labels that could lead to tire failure.
- [August 5: 1,887 various Triumph motorcycles from 2012-2013](#), Recalled for faulty Anti-Lock Brake Systems.
- [July 24: 235 Honda CTX700 motorcycles from 2014](#), Recalled for faulty Anti-Lock Brake System.
- [July 22: 100,000 various Michelin tires](#), Recalled for a perforation in the sidewall which could lead to loss of pressure while in transit.
- [July 22: 305 Mitsubishi Sport Outlanders from 2013](#), Recalled for potential damage to the brake and/or tire line.
- [July 22: 232 Kuryakyn handlebar/risings for Honda Goldwing GL 1800 motorcycles](#), Recalled for screws that may break after installation, causing the handlebars to separate from the motorcycle.
- [July 19: 1,659 Honda Accords with Low Emission Vehicle ratings from 2013](#), Recalled for risk of fire from improper sealing between the fuel pump and the fuel tank.
- [July 19: 3,900 Yamaha XVS950CU \(Bolt\) motorcycles from 2014](#), Recalled for engine stalling from melting wiring harnesses.
- [July 18: 184 Chrysler Town & Country and Dodge Grand Caravans from 2013](#), Recalled for air bags that may not deploy.
- [July 18: 74 Toyota Yaris vehicles from 2012](#), Recalled for a potential short circuit which could disable the power steering assistance, increasing the risk of a crash.
- [July 17: 543 Dutchmen travel trailers from 2013-2014](#), Recalled for risk of fire from propane supply hoses which may leak and start a fire.
- [July 16: 45,961 Chrysler Ram 1500 4x4 trucks from 2013](#), Recalled for a faulty ESC system due to a software malfunction, which could result in a loss of control.
- [July 16: 4,458 Chrysler Grand Cherokees equipped with premium headlights from 2014](#), Recalled for faulty parking lights.
- [July 16: 1,058 Chrysler Ram 4500 and 5500 trucks from 2013](#), Recalled for an incorrect bolt attaching the track bar to the frame, potentially resulting in the vehicle pulling to one side and causing a crash.
- [July 15: 36 Augusta RV FLEX recreational trailers from 2013-2014](#), Recalled for power awning motor assembly screws that may shear and cause the awning to unfurl while in transit.

- [July 11: 870 BMW F700 GS and F800 GS motorcycles from 2013](#), Recalled side stand switches that could remain engaged while riding – increasing the risk of a crash.
- [July 11: 2,250 Monaco RV motorhomes from 2011-2014](#), Recalled for faulty water tank mounting systems that can fail causing water tanks to fall off while in transit and cause a crash.
- [July 9: 12,569 Ford vehicles from 2013, including the Taurus and Explorer](#), Recalled for child safety locks that may deactivate without warning.
- [July 8: 442,481 Chrysler vehicles from 2011-2013, including the Sebring and Jeep Liberty](#), Recalled for the active head restraints not deploying in the case of a rear collision.
- [July 8: 224,254 Chrysler vehicles from 2013, including the Town & Country and Grand Caravan](#), Recalled for a software error that may cause the wrong airbags to deploy in the event of a crash.
- [July 8: 70 Spartan Motors Chassis Metro Star and Gladiator emergency vehicles from 2013](#), Recalled for seat-belt pretensioners and airbags that may inadvertently deploy while in transit.
- [July 8: Eldorado National-Kansas Amerivan Toyota Sienna vans from 2011-2013](#), Recalled for possible damage to the fuel filler neck, which could result in a fire.
- [July 8: GM Chevrolet Volts from 2012](#), Recalled for the front brakes which make lock up and not release during an ABS, ESC, or traction control event.
- [June 24: 1.56 million Chrysler Jeep Grand Cherokees from 1993-1998 and Jeep Libertys from 2002-2007](#), Recalled for fuel tanks at risk for leaking, potentially resulting in a fire.





### Why Life in America Can Literally Drive You Insane

By Bruce Levine on AlterNet, July 30, 2013

In "The Epidemic of Mental Illness: Why?" (New York Review of Books, 2011), Marcia Angell, former editor-in-chief of the New England Journal of Medicine, discusses over-diagnosis of psychiatric disorders, pathologizing of normal behaviors, Big Pharma corruption of psychiatry, and the adverse effects of psychiatric medications. While diagnostic expansionism and Big Pharma certainly deserve a large share of the blame for this epidemic, there is another reason.

A June 2013 Gallup poll revealed that 70% of Americans hate their jobs or have "checked out" of them. Life may or may not suck any more than it did a generation ago, but our belief in "progress" has increased expectations that life should be more satisfying, resulting in mass disappointment. For many of us, society has become increasingly alienating, isolating and insane, and earning a buck means more degrees, compliance, ass-kissing, shit-eating, and inauthenticity. So, we want to rebel. However, many of us feel hopeless about the possibility of either our own escape from societal oppression or that political activism can create societal change. So, many of us, especially young Americans, rebel by what is commonly called mental illness.

While historically some Americans have consciously faked mental illness to rebel from oppressive societal demands (e.g., a young Malcolm X acted crazy to successfully avoid military service), today, the vast majority of Americans who are diagnosed and treated for mental illness are in no way proud malingerers in the fashion of Malcolm X. Many of us, sadly, are ashamed of our inefficiency and nonproductivity and desperately try to fit in. However, try as we might to pay attention, adapt, adjust, and comply with our alienating jobs, boring schools, and sterile society, our humanity gets in the way, and we become anxious, depressed and dysfunctional.

#### **The Mental Illness Epidemic**

Severe, disabling mental illness has dramatically increased in the United States. Marcia Angell, in her 2011 *New York Review of Books* piece, [summarizes](#): "The tally of those who are so disabled by mental disorders that they qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) increased nearly two and a half times between 1987 and 2007—from 1 in 184 Americans to 1 in 76. For children, the rise is even more startling—a thirty-five-fold increase in the same two decades."

Angell also reports that a large survey of adults conducted between 2001 and 2003 sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health found that at some point in their lives, 46% of Americans met the criteria established by the American Psychiatric Association for at least one mental illness.

In 1998, Martin Seligman, then president of the American Psychological Association, [spoke](#) to the National Press Club about an American depression epidemic: "We discovered two astonishing things about the rate of depression across the century. The first was there is now between ten and twenty times as much of it as there was fifty years ago. And the second is that it has become a young person's problem. When I first started working in depression thirty years ago. . . the average age of which the first onset of depression occurred was 29.5. . . Now the average age is between 14 and 15."

In 2011, the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) reported that antidepressant use in the United States has increased nearly 400% in the last two decades, making antidepressants the most frequently used class of medications by Americans ages 18-44 years. By 2008, 23% of women ages 40-59 years were taking antidepressants.

The CDC, on May 3, 2013, [reported](#) that the suicide rate among Americans ages 35-64 years increased 28.4% between 1999 and 2010 (from 13.7 suicides per 100,000 population in 1999 to 17.6 per 100,000 in 2010).

The [New York Times](#) reported in 2007 that the number of American children and adolescents treated for bipolar disorder had increased 40-fold between 1994 and 2003. In May 2013, CDC reported in “[Mental Health Surveillance Among Children—United States, 2005–2011](#),” the following: “A total of 13%–20% of children living in the United States experience a mental disorder in a given year, and surveillance during 1994–2011 has shown the prevalence of these conditions to be increasing.”

### **Over-Diagnosis, Pathologizing the Normal and Psychiatric Drug Adverse Effects**

Even within mainstream psychiatry, few continue to argue that the increase in mental illness is due to previous under-diagnosis of mental disorders. The most common explanations for the mental illness epidemic include recent over-diagnosis of psychiatric disorders, diagnoses expansionism, and psychiatry’s pathologizing normal behavior.

The first DSM (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*), psychiatry’s diagnostic bible, was published by the American Psychiatric Association in 1952 and listed 106 disorders (initially called “reactions”). DSM-2 was published in 1968, and the number of disorders increased to 182. DSM-3 was published in 1980, and though homosexuality was dropped from it, diagnoses were expanded to 265, with several child disorders added that would soon become popular, including oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). DSM-4, published in 1994, contained 365 diagnoses.

DSM-5 was published in May, 2013. The journal *PLOS Medicine* reported in 2012, “69% of the DSM-5 task force members report having ties to the pharmaceutical industry.” DSM-5 did not add as many [new diagnoses](#) as had previous revisions. However, DSM-5 has been criticized even by some mainstream psychiatrists such as Allen Frances, the former chair of the DSM-4 taskforce, for creating more mental patients by making it easier to qualify for a mental illness, especially for depression. (See Frances’ “[Last Plea To DSM-5: Save Grief From the Drug Companies](#).”)

In the last two decades, there have been a slew of books written by journalists and mental health professionals about the lack of science behind the DSM, the over-diagnosis of psychiatric disorders, and the pathologizing of normal behaviors. A sample of these books includes: Paula Caplan’s *They Say You’re Crazy* (1995), Herb Kutchins and Stuart Kirk’s *Making Us Crazy* (1997), Allan Horwitz and Jerome Wakefield’s *The Loss of Sadness: How Psychiatry Transformed Normal Sorrow into Depressive Disorder* (2007), Christopher Lane’s *Shyness: How Normal Behavior Became a Sickness* (2008), Stuart Kirk, Tomi Gomory, and David Cohen’s *Mad Science: Psychiatric Coercion, Diagnosis, and Drugs* (2013), Gary Greenberg’s *The Book of Woe: The DSM and the Unmaking of Psychiatry* (2013), and Allen Frances’ *Saving Normal* (2013).

Even more remarkable than former chair of the DSM-4 taskforce, Allen Frances, jumping on the DSM-trashing bandwagon has been the [harsh critique](#) of DSM-5 by Thomas Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Insel recently announced that the DSM’s diagnostic categories lack validity, and that “NIMH will be re-orienting its research away from DSM categories.” And psychiatrist Robert Spitzer, former chair of the DSM-3 task force, wrote the foreword to Horwitz and Wakefield’s *The Loss of Sadness* and is [now critical](#) of DSM’s inattention to context in which the symptoms occur which, he points out, can medicalize normal experiences.

So, in just two decades, pointing out the pseudoscience of the DSM has gone from being an “extremist slur of radical anti-psychiatrists” to a mainstream proposition from the former chairs of both the DSM-3 and DSM-4 taskforces and the director of NIMH.

Yet another explanation for the epidemic may also be evolving from radical to mainstream, thanks primarily to the efforts of investigative journalist Robert Whitaker and his book [Anatomy of An Epidemic](#) (2010). Whitaker argues that the adverse effects of psychiatric medications are the primary cause of the epidemic. He reports that these drugs, for many patients, cause episodic and moderate emotional and behavioral problems to become severe, chronic and disabling ones.

Examining the scientific literature that now extends over 50 years, Whitaker discovered that while some psychiatric medications for some people may be effective over the short term, these drugs increase the likelihood that a person will become chronically ill over the long term. Whitaker reports, “The scientific literature shows that many patients treated for a milder problem will worsen in response to a drug—say have a manic episode after taking an antidepressant—and that can lead to a new and more severe diagnosis like bipolar disorder.”

With respect to the dramatic increase of pediatric bipolar disorder, Whitaker points out that, "Once psychiatrists started putting 'hyperactive' children on Ritalin, they started to see prepubertal children with manic symptoms. Same thing happened when psychiatrists started prescribing antidepressants to children and teenagers. A significant percentage had manic or hypomanic reactions to the antidepressants." And then these children and teenagers are put on heavier duty drugs, including drug cocktails, often do not respond favorably to treatment and deteriorate. And that, for Whitaker, is a major reason for the 35-fold increase between 1987 and 2007 of children classified as being disabled by mental disorders. (See my 2010 interview with him, "[Are Prozac and Other Psychiatric Drugs Causing the Astonishing Rise of Mental Illness in America?](#)")

Whitaker's explanation for the epidemic has now, even within mainstream psychiatric institutions, entered into the debate; for example, Whitaker was invited by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI) to speak at their [2013 annual convention](#) that took place last June. While Whitaker concludes that psychiatry's drug-based paradigm of care is the primary cause of the epidemic, he does not rule out the possibility that various cultural factors may also be contributing to the increase in the number of mentally ill.

### **Mental Illness as Rebellion Against Society**

"The most deadly criticism one could make of modern civilization is that apart from its man-made crises and catastrophes, is not humanly interesting. . . . In the end, such a civilization can produce only a mass man: incapable of spontaneous, self-directed activities: at best patient, docile, disciplined to monotonous work to an almost pathetic degree. . . . Ultimately such a society produces only two groups of men: the conditioners and the conditioned, the active and passive barbarians." —Lewis Mumford, 1951

Once it was routine for many respected social critics such as Lewis Mumford and Erich Fromm to express concern about the impact of modern civilization on our mental health. But today the idea that the mental illness epidemic is also being caused by a peculiar rebellion against a dehumanizing society has been, for the most part, removed from the mainstream map. When a societal problem grows to become all encompassing, we often no longer even notice it.

We are today disengaged from our jobs and our schooling. Young people are pressured to accrue increasingly large student-loan debt so as to acquire the credentials to get a job, often one which they will have little enthusiasm about. And increasing numbers of us are completely socially isolated, having nobody who cares about us.

Returning to that June 2013 Gallup survey, "[The State of the American Workplace: Employee Engagement](#)," only 30% of workers "were engaged, or involved in, enthusiastic about, and committed to their workplace." In contrast to this "actively engaged group," 50% were "not engaged," simply going through the motions to get a paycheck, while 20% were classified as "actively disengaged," hating going to work and putting energy into undermining their workplace. Those with higher education levels reported more discontent with their workplace.

How engaged are we with our schooling? Another Gallup poll "[The School Cliff: Student Engagement Drops With Each School Year](#)" (released in January 2013), reported that the longer students stay in school, the less engaged they become. The poll surveyed nearly 500,000 students in 37 states in 2012, and found nearly 80% of elementary students reported being engaged with school, but by high school, only 40% reported being engaged. As the pollsters point out, "If we were doing right by our students and our future, these numbers would be the absolute opposite. For each year a student progresses in school, they should be more engaged, not less."

Life clearly sucks more than it did a generation ago when it comes to student loan debt. According to American Student Assistance's "[Student Debt Loan Statistics](#)," approximately 37 million Americans have student loan debt. The majority of borrowers still paying back their loans are in their 30s or older. Approximately two-thirds of students graduate college with some education debt. Nearly 30% of college students who take out loans drop out of school, and students who drop out of college before earning a degree struggle most with student loans. As of October 2012, the average amount of student loan debt for the Class of 2011 was \$26,600, a 5% increase from 2010. Only about 37% of federal student-loan borrowers between 2004 and 2009 managed to make timely payments without postponing payments or becoming delinquent.

In addition to the pain of jobs, school, and debt, there is increasingly more pain of social isolation. A major study reported in the *American Sociological Review* in 2006, "[Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks Over Two Decades](#)," examined Americans' core network of confidants (those people in our lives we consider close enough to trust with personal information and whom we rely on as a sounding board). Authors reported that in

1985, 10% of Americans said that they had no confidants in their lives; but by 2004, 25% of Americans stated they had no confidants in their lives. This study confirmed the continuation of trends that came to public attention in sociologist Robert Putnam's 2000 book *Bowling Alone*.

Underlying many of psychiatry's nearly 400 diagnoses is the experience of helplessness, hopelessness, passivity, boredom, fear, isolation, and dehumanization—culminating in a loss of autonomy and community-connectedness. Do our societal institutions promote:

Enthusiasm—or passivity?  
Respectful personal relationships—or manipulative impersonal ones?  
Community, trust, and confidence—or isolation, fear and paranoia?  
Empowerment—or helplessness?  
Autonomy (self-direction)—or heteronomy (institutional-direction)?  
Participatory democracy—or authoritarian hierarchies?  
Diversity and stimulation—or homogeneity and boredom?

Research (that I documented in [Commonsense Rebellion](#)) shows that those labeled with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) do worst in environments that are boring, repetitive, and externally controlled; and that ADHD-labeled children are indistinguishable from “normals” when they have chosen their learning activities and are interested in them. Thus, the standard classroom could not be more imperfectly designed to meet the learning needs of young people who are labeled with ADHD.

As I discussed last year in AlterNet in “[Would We Have Drugged Up Einstein? How Anti-Authoritarianism Is Deemed a Mental Health Problem](#),” there is a fundamental bias in mental health professionals for interpreting inattention and noncompliance as a mental disorder. Those with extended schooling have lived for many years in a world where all pay attention to much that is unstimulating. In this world, one routinely complies with the demands of authorities. Thus for many M.D.s and Ph.D.s, people who rebel against this attentional and behavioral compliance appear to be from another world—a diagnosable one.

The reality is that with enough helplessness, hopelessness, passivity, boredom, fear, isolation, and dehumanization, we rebel and refuse to comply. Some of us rebel by becoming inattentive. Others become aggressive. In large numbers we eat, drink and gamble too much. Still others become addicted to drugs, illicit and prescription. Millions work slavishly at dissatisfying jobs, become depressed and passive aggressive, while no small number of us can't cut it and become homeless and appear crazy. Feeling misunderstood and uncared about, millions of us ultimately rebel against societal demands, however, given our wherewithal, our rebellions are often passive and disorganized, and routinely futile and self-destructive.

When we have hope, energy and friends, we can choose to rebel against societal oppression with, for example, a wildcat strike or a back-to-the-land commune. But when we lack hope, energy and friends, we routinely rebel without consciousness of rebellion and in a manner in which we today commonly call mental illness.

For some Americans, no doubt, the conscious goal is to get classified as mentally disabled so as to receive disability payments ([averaging \\$700 to 1,400 per month](#)). But isn't that too a withdrawal of cooperation with society and a rebellion of sorts, based on the judgment that this is the best paying and least miserable financial option?



# Sellwood Bridge Update

Three big changes you need to know about



The first thing to know is that the bridge is open and safe, and Multnomah County continues to do a magnificent job making sure that the inevitable traffic disruptions are kept to the barest minimum. If you're planning to visit our shop, there's no reason the bridge construction should hamper you at all. However, there are two other things going on this month that you should be aware of. Here are two stories from Multnomah County's weekly updates...

## Taylor's Ferry U-Turn

Next week the contractor will place asphalt for the new U-turn that will allow northbound traffic on Hwy. 43 to make a U-turn at Taylor's Ferry Road. The U-turn is needed because the ramp from the Sellwood Bridge to southbound Hwy. 43 will close permanently in about a month, so that the contractor can build the new interchange. **When the ramp closes, drivers will need to travel north to Taylor's Ferry to turn around and head back south on Hwy. 43 toward Lake Oswego.**

## Bicycles and Pedestrians on the Cemetery Trail

The Sellwood Bridge project has accommodated requests from the public to maintain access for bicyclists and pedestrians during construction of a new entrance to River View Cemetery from Hwy. 43. A path will be maintained through the work zone for bicyclists and pedestrians only during the work from August 12 through September.

Keeping the road open to bicyclists and pedestrians will require the cooperation of trail users who will be passing through an active construction zone. Important details of the plan include:

- The construction zone includes about 100 yards of the road in a steep, curving section above the funeral home near the entrance from Hwy. 43 (see red line in attached graphic).
- A narrow path (3 – 4 feet wide) will be maintained along the edge of the work zone. The path surface will shift from pavement to gravel, surface conditions will change daily, and heavy construction traffic will be nearby.
- During work hours (typically from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays), flaggers will direct traffic at each end of the work zone. Bicyclists will need to dismount and walk their bike through the work zone for safety.
- The trail will be open during some non-work hours. Trail users should use caution when passing through the area at non-work times, especially at night. The cemetery closes the road in the late evening.
- The cemetery road remains closed to all motorized traffic above the funeral home from August 12 until late September. The funeral home can be accessed from Hwy. 43 during construction.

Typically, public access would not be permitted inside a work zone. The cemetery and project team are willing to maintain public access to trail users as long as users comply with these safety rules and follow the direction of flaggers and traffic control devices. If users do not comply, the trail will need to be closed for public safety. We appreciate everyone's cooperation so that we can keep the trail open.

Don't forget that Multnomah County maintains the definitive website on everything related to the Sellwood Bridge Replacement project, <http://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](mailto:mike.j.pullen@multco.us), 503-209-4111) or visit <http://www.sellwoodbridge.org/>.

Here's our monthly status update pictures in glorious color! (And you might also be interested in [this photo series from the Oregonian](#))



Fun continues unabated at Sellwood Riverfront Park



Concrete pour for the eastside bridge landing



South side construction area showing all seven active construction cranes



A view onto the Westside temporary construction deck



We have no idea what this thing is, but it's big and it's cool



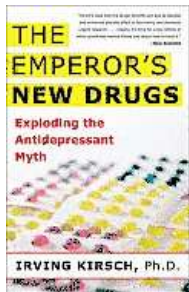
A view of the forest of construction equipment necessary for a project this big

## Book Spotlight

# Crazy for reading




Health Notes this month gave you a small taste of how and why insanity is becoming one of our newest national products. Our Book Spotlight will give you three ways to bite off a little more on the subject. As always, just click the link to be taken to the Powell's Books website for the book.

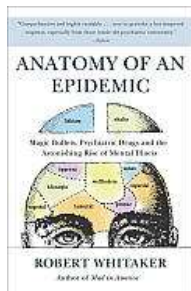


## The Emperor's New Drugs: Exploding the Antidepressant Myth

by Irving Kirsch

Clinical psychologist Irving Kirsch has the world doubting the efficacy of antidepressants. Based on fifteen years of research, *The Emperor's New Drugs* makes an overwhelming case that what the medical community considered a cornerstone of psychiatric treatment is little more than a faulty consensus. But Kirsch does more than just criticize: He offers a path society can follow to stop popping pills and start proper treatment.

 Kirsch draws on his research to relate how most improvements shown by depressed patients are due to the placebo effect, not antidepressants. He describes how he and one of his postgraduate students investigated the placebo effect in depression, which transformed his views about antidepressants, concluding that they don't work. He details how many patients improved when given a placebo and how clinical trials that failed to show a benefit from taking antidepressants were withheld from publication. He also addresses the chemical-imbalance theory and lack of scientific evidence to support it, and alternatives to medication and the evidence for their effectiveness, to help patients and clinicians become better informed when making treatment choices.



## Anatomy of an Epidemic: Magic Bullets, Psychiatric Drugs, and the Astonishing Rise of Mental Illness in America

by Robert Whitaker

In this astonishing and startling book, award-winning science and history writer Robert Whitaker investigates a medical mystery: Why has the number of disabled mentally ill in the United States tripled over the past two decades? Every day, 1,100 adults and children are added to the government disability rolls because they have become newly disabled by mental illness, with this epidemic spreading most rapidly among our nation's children.

## What is going on?

Anatomy of an Epidemic challenges readers to think through that question themselves. First, Whitaker investigates what is known today about the biological causes of mental disorders. Do psychiatric medications fix “chemical imbalances” in the brain, or do they, in fact, create them? Researchers spent decades studying that question, and by the late 1980s, they had their answer. Readers will be startled—and dismayed—to discover what was reported in the scientific journals.

Then comes the scientific query at the heart of this book: During the past fifty years, when investigators looked at how psychiatric drugs affected long-term outcomes, what did they find? Did they discover that the drugs help people stay well? Function better? Enjoy good physical health? Or did they find that these medications, for some paradoxical reason, increase the likelihood that people will become chronically ill, less able to function well, more prone to physical illness?

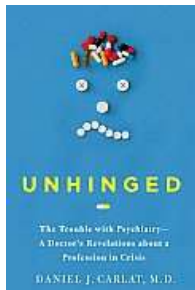
This is the first book to look at the merits of psychiatric medications through the prism of long-term results. Are long-term recovery rates higher for medicated or unmedicated schizophrenia patients? Does taking an antidepressant decrease or increase the risk that a depressed person will become disabled by the disorder?



Do bipolar patients fare better today than they did forty years ago, or much worse? When the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) studied the long-term outcomes of children with ADHD, did they determine that stimulants provide any benefit?

By the end of this review of the outcomes literature, readers are certain to have a haunting question of their own: Why have the results from these long-term studies—all of which point to the same startling conclusion—been kept from the public?

In this compelling history, Whitaker also tells the personal stories of children and adults swept up in this epidemic. Finally, he reports on innovative programs of psychiatric care in Europe and the United States that are producing good long-term outcomes. Our nation has been hit by an epidemic of disabling mental illness, and yet, as *Anatomy of an Epidemic* reveals, the medical blueprints for curbing that epidemic have already been drawn up.



## **Unhinged: The Trouble With Psychiatry- A Doctor's Revelations About A Profession In Crisis**

by Daniel Carlat

In this stirring and beautifully written wake-up call, psychiatrist Daniel Carlat exposes deeply disturbing problems plaguing his profession, revealing the ways it has abandoned its essential purpose: to understand the mind, so that psychiatrists can heal mental illness and not just treat symptoms. He writes with bracing honesty about how psychiatry has so largely forsaken the practice of talk therapy for the seductive and more lucrative

practice of simply prescribing drugs, with a host of deeply troubling consequences.

Psychiatrists have settled for treating symptoms rather than causes, embracing the apparent medical rigor of DSM diagnoses and prescription in place of learning the more challenging craft of therapeutic counseling, gaining only limited understanding of their patients' lives. Talk therapy takes time, whereas the fifteen-minute "med check" allows for more patients and more insurance company reimbursement. Yet DSM diagnoses, he shows, are premised on a good deal less science than we would think.

Dr. Carlat shares a wealth of stories from his own practice and those of others that demonstrate the glaring shortcomings of the standard fifteen-minute patient visit. He also reveals the dangers of rampant diagnoses of bipolar disorder, ADHD, and other "popular" psychiatric disorders, and exposes the risks of the cocktails of medications so many patients are put on. Especially disturbing are the terrible consequences of overprescription of drugs to children of ever younger ages. Taking us on a tour of the world of pharmaceutical marketing, he also reveals the inner workings of collusion between psychiatrists and drug companies.

Concluding with a road map for exactly how the profession should be reformed, *Unhinged* is vital reading for all those in treatment or considering it, as well as a stirring call to action for the large community of psychiatrists themselves. As physicians and drug companies continue to work together in disquieting and harmful ways, and as diagnoses and misdiagnoses of mental disorders skyrocket, it's essential that Dr. Carlat's bold call for reform is heeded.



# Humorousness

Jokes that make you go “Hmmm...”



The best jokes don't just make you laugh, they make you think as well. This month's slice of Humorousness is a selection of jokes with morals; exactly the kind of jokes that make you think. Admittedly, some of them don't make you think very hard, but then they're jokes and not philosophical treatises. By the way, did you know the best philosophical treatises don't just make you think, they make you laugh as well? No? Never mind, then. Just enjoy these little nuggets of comic wisdom. (If you want more, these jokes come from a thread a [Quora.com](https://www.quora.com). Just keep scrolling down the page and it will keep loading more. If there's a point where it stops, we didn't find it.)

A city boy, Raju, moved to the country and bought a donkey from an old farmer for \$ 100.00. The farmer agreed to deliver the donkey the next day.

The next day the farmer drove up and said, "Sorry son, but I have some bad news, the donkey died last night."

Raju replied: "Well then, just give me my money back."

The farmer said: "Can't do that. I went and spent it already."

Raju said: "OK then, just unload the donkey.."

The farmer asked: "What ya gonna do with him?"

Raju: "I'm going to raffle him off."

Farmer: "You can't raffle off a dead donkey!"

Raju: "Sure I can. Watch me. I just won't tell anybody he's dead."

A month later the farmer met up with Raju and asked, "What happened with that dead donkey?" Raju: "I raffled him off. I sold 500 tickets at two rupees a piece and made a profit of Rs. 898.00."

Farmer: "Didn't anyone complain?"

Raju: "Just the guy who won. So I gave him back his two rupees."

An MIT linguistics professor was lecturing his class the other day. "In English," he said, "a double negative forms a positive. However, in some languages, such as Russian, a double negative remains a negative. But there isn't a single language, not one, in which a double positive can express a negative."

A voice from the back of the room piped up, "Yeah, right."

A man is getting into the shower just as his wife is finishing up her shower when the doorbell rings. The wife quickly wraps herself in a towel and runs downstairs. When she opens the door, there stands Bob, the next door neighbor. Before she says a word, Bob says, "I'll give you \$800 to drop that towel." After thinking for a moment, the woman drops her towel and stands naked in front of Bob.

After a few seconds, Bob hands her \$800 dollars and leaves. The woman wraps back up in the towel and goes back upstairs. When she gets to the bathroom, her husband asks,...

"Who was that?" "It was Bob the next door neighbor," she replies. "Great!" the husband says, "Did he say anything about the \$800 he owes me?"

Moral of the story: If you share critical information pertaining to credit and risk with your shareholders in time, you may be in a position to prevent avoidable exposure.

A Mafia Godfather finds out that his bookkeeper, Enzo, has cheated him out of 10 million bucks. His bookkeeper is deaf; that was the reason he got the job in the first place. It was assumed that Enzo would hear nothing that he might have to testify about in court.

When the Godfather goes to confront Enzo about his missing \$10 million, he takes along his lawyer who knows sign language. The Godfather tells the lawyer, "Ask him where the 10 million bucks is that he embezzled from me."

The lawyer, using sign language, asks Enzo where the money is.

Enzo signs back, "I don't know what you are talking about."

The lawyer tells the Godfather, "He says he doesn't know what you are talking about."

The Godfather pulls out a pistol, puts it to Enzo's temple and says, "Ask him again!"

The lawyer signs to Enzo, "He'll kill you if you don't tell him."

Enzo signs back, "OK. You win! The money is in a brown briefcase, buried behind the shed in my cousin Bruno's backyard in Woodbridge!"

The Godfather asks the lawyer, "What did he say?"

The lawyer replies, "He says you don't have the balls to pull the trigger."

Once upon a time in a village, a man announced to the villagers that he would buy monkeys for \$ 10. The villagers, seeing that there were many monkeys around, went out to the forest and started catching them. The man bought thousands at \$ 10 and as supply started to diminish, the villagers stopped their effort.

He further announced that he would now buy at \$ 20. This renewed the efforts of the villagers and they started catching monkeys again. Soon the supply diminished even further and people started going back to their farms. The offer rate increased to \$ 25 and the supply of monkeys became so little that it was an effort to even see a monkey, let alone catch it!

The man now announced that he would buy monkeys at \$ 50! However, since he had to go to the city on some business, his assistant would now buy on behalf of him. In the absence of the man, the assistant told the villagers, "Look at all these monkeys in the big cage that the man has collected. I will sell them to you at \$ 35 and when the man returns from the city, you can sell it to him for \$ 50."

The villagers squeezed up with all their savings and bought all the monkeys. Then they never saw the man nor his assistant, only monkeys everywhere!

How many Freudian analysts does it take to change a light bulb?

Two. One to change it, and the other to hold the penis. Ladder! I meant ladder!

A sales rep, an administration clerk, and the manager are walking to lunch when they find an antique oil lamp. They rub it and a Genie comes out. The Genie says, "I'll give each of you just one wish" "Me first! Me first!" says the administration clerk. "I want to be in the Bahamas, driving a speedboat, without a care in the world." Poof! She's gone. "Me next! Me next!" says the sales rep. "I want to be in Hawaii, relaxing on the beach with my personal masseuse, an endless supply of Pina Coladas and the love of my life." Poof! He's gone. "OK, you're up," the Genie says to the manager. The manager says, "I want those two back in the office after lunch." Moral of the story: Always let your boss have the first say.

A priest offered a lift to a Nun. She got in and crossed her legs, forcing her gown to reveal a leg. The priest nearly had an accident. After controlling the car, he stealthily slid his hand up her leg. The nun said, "Father, remember Psalm 129?" The priest removed his hand. But, changing gears, he let his hand slide up her leg again. The nun once again said, "Father, remember Psalm 129?" The priest apologized "Sorry sister but the flesh is weak." Arriving at the convent, the nun went on her way. On his arrival at the church, the priest rushed to look up Psalm 129. It said, "Go forth and seek, further up, you will find glory." Moral of the story: If you are not well informed in your job, you might miss a great opportunity.

A crow was sitting on a tree, doing nothing all day. A rabbit asked him, "Can I also sit like you and do nothing all day long?" The crow answered: "Sure, why not." So, the rabbit sat on the ground below the crow, and rested. A fox jumped on the rabbit and ate it. Moral of the story: To be sitting and doing nothing, you must be sitting very high up.

A turkey was chatting with a bull "I would love to be able to get to the top of that tree," sighed the turkey, but I haven't got the energy." "Well, why don't you nibble on my droppings?" replied the bull. "They're packed with nutrients." The turkey pecked at a lump of dung and found that it gave him enough strength to reach the lowest branch of the tree. The next day, after eating some more dung, he reached the second branch. Finally after a fourth night, there he was proudly perched at the top of the tree. Soon he was spotted by a farmer, who shot the turkey out of the tree. Moral of the story: Bullshit might get you to the top, but it won't keep you there.

An American businessman was at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellowfin tuna. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish and asked how long it took to catch them. The Mexican replied, that it only took a little while. The American then asked why didn't he stay out longer and catch more fish. The Mexican said he had enough to support his family's immediate needs.

The American then asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

The Mexican fisherman said, "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take siesta with my wife Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos. I have a full and busy life, señor."

The American scoffed. "I am a Wharton MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds, buy a bigger boat. With the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats. Eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the processor, eventually opening your own cannery. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then LA and eventually NYC where you will run your expanding enterprise."

The Mexican fisherman asked, "But señor, how long will this all take?"

To which the American replied, "Fifteen or twenty years."

"But what then, señor?"

The American laughed and said, "That's the best part. When the time is right you would announce an IPO and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich, you would make millions."

"Millions, señor? Then what?"

The American said, "Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos."

A wealthy man decided to go on a safari in Africa. He took his faithful pet dog along for company. One day the dog starts chasing butterflies and before long the dog discovers that he is lost.

So, wandering about he notices a leopard heading rapidly in his direction with the obvious intention of having lunch. The dog thinks, "Ok no! I'm in deep doodoo now!" Then he noticed some bones on the ground close by, and immediately settles down to chew on the bones with his back to the approaching cat.

Just as the leopard is about to leap, the dog exclaims loudly, "Wow, that was one delicious leopard. I wonder if there are any more around here?"

Hearing this the leopard halts his attack in mid-stride, as a look of terror comes over him, and slinks away into the trees. "Whew", says the leopard. "That was close. That dog nearly had me."

Meanwhile, a monkey who had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree figures he can put this knowledge to good use and trade it for protection from the leopard. So, off he goes. But the dog saw him heading after the leopard with great speed, and figured that something must be up.

The monkey soon catches up with the leopard, spills the beans and strikes a deal for himself with the leopard. The leopard is furious at being made a fool of and says, "Here monkey, hop on my back and see what's going to happen to that conniving canine sunnuvabitch."

Now the dog sees the leopard coming with the monkey on his back, and thinks, "What am I going to do now?" But instead of running, the dog sits down with his back to his attackers pretending he

hasn't seen them yet ... and just when they get close enough to hear, the dog says, "Where's that damn monkey? I just can never trust him. I sent him off half an hour ago to bring me another leopard, and he's still not back!!"

The CIA receives a serious bomb threat to Air Force One. Taking no chances, they call in a security consultant. After much deliberation he hands over a bag and requests that it is always present on the plane. This, he says, would reduce the risk. This trick seems to work so the CIA decide to open the bag. They discover a bomb in his bag. The partner explains. "Statistics show that the probability of a bomb being on an airplane is 1/1000. However, the chance that there are two bombs on one plane is 1/1000000. So, plane is much safer..."

The maid asked for a raise, and the wife was upset.  
She asked, "Now, Helen, why do you think you deserve a pay increase?"  
Helen: "There are three reasons. The first is that I iron better than you."  
Wife: "Who said that?"  
Helen: "Your husband."  
Wife: "Oh."  
Helen: "The second reason is that I am a better cook than you."  
Wife: "Who said that?"  
Helen: "Your husband."  
Wife: "Oh."  
Helen: "The third reason is that I am better at sex than you."  
Wife: "Did my husband say that as well?"  
Helen: "No, the gardener did."  
Wife: "How much do you want?"

A man commits suicide and is surprised to find himself in heaven.  
"Wow," he says to God, "you know I didn't expect to be here. I thought you're not supposed to go to heaven if you kill yourself."  
"No, it's okay," says God. "I've thought about suicide myself."  
"Really?" asks the man. "Why?"  
"Well," God says, "what if this is all there is?"

A man dies and goes to hell. Once there, he finds there is a different hell for each country, so he tries to seek out the least painful one.  
At the door to German Hell, he is told: "First they put you in an electric chair for an hour. Then they lay you on a bed of nails for another hour. Then the German devil comes in and whips you for the rest of the day."  
He does not like the sound of that, so he checks out American Hell, Russian Hell and many more. They are all similarly gruesome. However, at Nigerian Hell a long line of people is waiting to get in. Amazed, he asks, "What do they do here?"  
He is told: "First they put you in an electric chair for an hour. Then they lay you on a bed of nails for another hour. Then the Nigerian devil comes in and whips you for the rest of the day."  
"But that's the same as the others," says the man. "Why are so many people waiting to get in?"  
"Because of the power cuts, the electric chair does not work. The nails were paid for but never supplied, so the bed is comfortable. And the Nigerian devil used to be a civil servant, so he comes in, signs his time sheet and goes back home for private business."



# 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!



## **The only ads you'll ever WANT to see**



You may remember the once-a-year special about the CLIO awards, recognizing the most creative ads from around the world. It's been a while since that's been on, but despite the daily evidence the people working in advertising remain very creative. This [series of ads on Quora.com](#) covers print, billboards, video, and some other venues that defy categorization. There are hundreds of funny and thought-provoking ads for you to flip through, and we promise you'll leave laughing.

## **If the Feds won't help, maybe local government can**



The feeble prods of the Feds did nothing to make banks write down underwater mortgages. People face foreclosure, neighbors face neighborhood blight, and cities face tax vacuums and crime magnets. A new movement would use the power of eminent domain to help. Cities would use eminent domain to force sales at current market value, and then resell them to the owner at current market price and mortgage. Everyone wins but the banks, who can only recoup the fair value of the house instead of the fraudulently inflated one. Read the Bill Moyers report [here](#).

## **A settlement that even embarrassed Halliburton**



Oh so quietly, the BP Apocalypse court battle is continuing. Halliburton recently decided to plead guilty to destroying evidence (although as we pointed out in our Facebook post, no individuals are being held responsible) and received a \$200,000 fine. If you're keeping track, that's about .0007% of their 2012 revenues, or about a \$.28 fine for someone making \$40K. This was so obviously insignificant that Cheney's alma mater company added a "voluntary" donation to the National Fish and Wildlife Service of \$55 million... about \$77 for a \$40k individual. Read all about it [here](#).

## **An amazing new world for wheelchair users**



Wheelchairs are an old technology, going all the way back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. You might think they haven't changed much because there's not much change to be made, but take a look at this [radical rethink by Matia Robotics](#). The video shows a person paralyzed from the chest down rising from their bed, getting easily into the "wheelchair" by themselves, and then doing all the things we take for granted... shopping, cooking, cleaning, going to the bathroom, interacting with friends, and more. Matia is taking orders now for shipment at the end of 2013.

# News To Make You Furious

## The Dumbing Down Of America

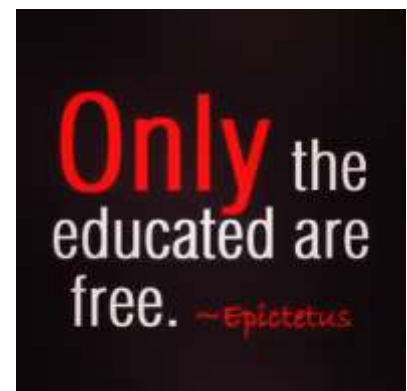


Where does the word “idiot” come from? It goes back to the inventors of democracy, the Greeks, who coined the term to describe people who didn’t (or couldn’t) participate in public life. Athenian “idiots” lived under laws and rules written by others, whether or not they were in the interest of the idiot in question. Note, though, that idiots didn’t participate in *public* life. They were quite happy, and the public was quite happy, for them to continue to live and work quietly under the rules they didn’t write.

Thomas Jefferson understood the importance of education to democracy- “Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves, therefore, are its only safe depositories. And to render them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree.” This idea of an educated citizenry was one of the pillars of our country, both for the ideals of freedom and for our free market economy. The idea that we could (or should)

better our lives through education, that learning had real impact on our daily lives, was implicit. At one time people valued an informed vote, and felt some responsibility to learn about a subject before offering their opinion. But no longer. Now, education is held in suspicion. Stupidity is seen as a virtue, intellectualism as a hindrance. “We need a leader, not a reader” said Herman Cain as he proclaimed information unnecessary for making decisions. The Congressional Committee on Science and Technology is filled with congressmen who deny evolution, global warming, and other science basics. Sarah Palin is considering a run for Senate.

But why? Why are the intellectual achievements glorified by our ancestors denigrated today? Maybe one reason more people are “idiots” is that very few of us are stupid. When you see people around you getting educated but not benefitting, then there’s little reason to pursue formal education yourself. In our current world college means heavy debt with few opportunities for jobs that can repay it. Why push for an education that won’t be useful? And if you aren’t going to push for a real education, there’s little reason to dabble with learning enough to cast an informed vote.

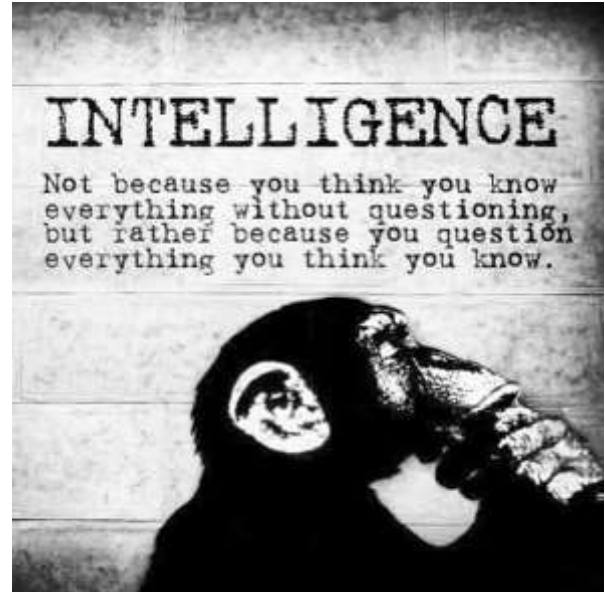


Maybe another reason our education system is failing is that our people are being educated for the wrong goals. In our research for this article, source after source mentioned the goal of educating people to “take their place in our economy”, but none mentioned the goal of making intelligent decisions about public life... In America, education is not for a nation of kings, but a nation of idiots.

We don't believe it's an accident that this is happening. Idiots are easily led, both politically and economically. They can be told that something is in their best interests, and if they have no critical thinking skills and an indoctrinated inclination to trust authority, they'll take the authority's word for it. Global warming? Not happening, because Ted Cruz says it isn't. Don't trust the legions of people who spent their lives proving it is true. Don't think about what happens to your cost of living when food can't be produced in America's drought-ridden ex-breadbasket, or what happens when stronger storms and floods threaten your life or property. It just isn't happening. Now shut up and buy something.

Perhaps the worst thing about the dumbing down of America is that it doesn't depend on a conspiracy of evil people to happen. As the Edmund Burke said, "The only thing necessary for evil to prosper is for good men to do nothing." To correct him a little, if evil men like where the situation is going they don't have to help it along, they just have to wait. We used to put a huge value on education, not just for individuals but for *the whole society*. That's where the idea of public education came from. We realized that living in a nation of idiots was a bad thing, even if the idiots weren't our own kids. No longer; now if you can privately educate your child that's enough. To hell with the inner city schools, or the rural schools, or the reservation schools, or anything else. Or you can homeschool your kid, indoctrinate him with your own ridiculous ideas, and never risk that he'll critically examine them. You'll be happier, but your kid's horizons will be smaller. And either way, private school or home school, the people who depend on idiots will be satisfied.

So let's get Furious. If you're one of the few remaining people that isn't content to be an idiot, here are some links that will feed your brain. And, if you're so inclined, pass them on to someone you know who's also hungry for knowledge...



#### [Why The Education System Has Failed to Succeed](#)

Sarah Christina on Hub Pages

#### [The Failure of American Schools](#)

Joel Klein in the Atlantic

#### [What Passes for Education In America Is Often Just Indoctrination](#)

Elliot Sperber on Alternet

#### [The Other Economic Crisis: The Failure of Education and Its Consequences](#)

Michael Albada in the Stanford Progressive

#### [The Real Reason America's Schools Stink](#)

Charles Kenny on Bloomberg Businessweek

#### [Sarah Palin and the Dumbing-Down of America](#)

Bonnie Marcus on Forbes

#### [Dumbing Down of America Exposed in Florida Schools](#)

Douglas Gibbs in Canada Free Press

#### [Fighting Back Against the Dumbing Down of America](#)

Nikhil Goyal in Psychology Today

#### [Public Knowledge of Current Affairs Little Changed by News and Information Revolutions](#)

Pew Research Center for the People and the Press

#### [Holding Schools 'Harmless,' State Lowers Bar on FCAT Writing Scores](#)

Kenric Ward in Sunshine State News

#### [The Nations Report Card](#)

National Assessment of Educational Progress

[Report: Half of U.S. schools fail federal standards](#)  
USA Today

[Failure Rate of Schools Overstated, Study Says](#)  
Sam Dillon in the New York Times

[Stacks of statistics and reports from the National Center for Education Statistics](#)  
Institute of Education Sciences

[SAT scores decline because of No Child Left Behind, critic says](#)  
Lee Shearer on OnlineAthens

[The News IQ Quiz- Do you know more about the news than the average American?](#)

[From Classroom to Voting Booth: The Effect of High School Civic Education on Turnout](#)  
Jennifer Bachner, Harvard.edu

[Flunking Civics: Why America's Kids Know So Little](#)  
Mark Hansen in ABA Journal

[How the Supreme Court ruined your child's civics education](#)  
Jimmy Zuma on Smart v. Stupid

[The United States Is Awash in Public Stupidity, and Critical Thought Is Under Assault](#)  
Henry Giroux on AlterNet

[How U.S. graduation rates compare with the rest of the world](#)  
John Cookson on CNN

[U.S. Students Still Lag Globally in Math and Science, Tests Show](#)  
Motoko Rich in the New York Times

[Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling](#)  
John Taylor Gatto

[Report: Half of U.S. schools fail federal standards](#)  
USA Today

[Global grade: How do U.S. students compare?](#)  
Marian Wilde on GreatSchools

[U.S. Education Spending and Performance vs. The World \[INFOGRAPHIC\]](#)  
USC Rossier Online staff

[Pew Research Center for the People and the Press](#)

Many in-depth reports on education

- [Public's Knowledge of Science and Technology](#)
- [What the Public Knows – In Pictures, Maps, Graphs and Symbols](#)
- [What the Public Knows about the Political Parties](#)
- [What the Public Knows – In Words and Pictures](#)
- [Well Known: Clinton and Gadhafi; Little Known: Who Controls Congress](#)
- [Public Knows Basic Facts about Politics, Economics, But Struggles with Specifics](#)
- [Test Your News IQ](#)