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Tom's Tidbits

Pardon Bush and Cheney?



Greetings!

Every apologist for the Bush/Cheney Torture Report starts with "Let's go back to the fearful days after 9-11..." The implication is "wouldn't *you* do the same thing"? OK, let's play their game... let's go back to when Americans were dying and justly terrified. George W sits behind his desk agonizing over treatment of enemy prisoners, reaches for his pen, and writes "Treat them with humanity, and let them have no reason to complain." George *Washington* responded with humanity and integrity, laying a foundation that served us over 200 years. *Our* George W defiled that legacy and we'll live with the fallout for 200 years to come.

The Revolution wasn't the last time America pondered torture. Lincoln, deciding the fate of Rebel prisoners, concluded: "Military necessity does not admit of cruelty, that is, the infliction of suffering for the sake of revenge, nor of maiming or wounding except in fight, nor of torture to extort confessions." His [General Order 100](#) confirmed this ideal and later influenced the Geneva conventions. We didn't stoop to torture in WWI, we [executed and imprisoned Japanese soldiers](#) who waterboarded in WWII, and we [extended Geneva protections](#) to prisoners in Vietnam. As late as 2006, [military field manuals forbade torture](#) including waterboarding, hooding, forced nakedness, and beatings.

Personalities matter. People of ethics and morals can stand against pressure from the sadistic, but people without that spine can't. Washington's and Lincoln's consciences prevailed over the easy path of torture, but the vacuous George W. Bush said "We had lawyers who said it was legal, so we did it."

Those involved with the torture cabal need to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law; that would be the only way to regain our moral authority. However, I can't rationally expect the criminals behind these atrocities to ever be prosecuted anymore. Obama wants to "move on", there's no appetite for a trial in Congress, and the International Criminal Court is impotent. A meaningless 'censure' of the Bush regime would be an insult to justice, but America CANNOT LET THIS STAND. Is there ANY way left to claw back our national character? Maybe. And, ironically, it's Bush's own idea.

[The ACLU recently suggested](#) the Bush/Cheney cabal should be *pardoned*. The idea was first floated by Conservatives terrified the incoming Obama administration would actually enforce the law. While that hope lived pardons made no sense, but now it may be America's last option to repudiate the Bush administration's crimes. Like Ford's pardon of Nixon, it would confirm crimes did indeed take place without the "long national nightmare" of a trial. It would spare CIA agents who tortured and abused on the orders of their president, and reiterate the values that real Americans have held all along. A pardon wouldn't be justice, but we've learned not to expect justice anymore. Maybe it's the best we have left to hope for in today's political climate.

Take Care and Make a Great Day!

What NOW?!! Toons

Our monthly check in with Keith Tucker



"WHAT NOW?!!!"

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Bet you haven't heard this one...

Stories we just didn't have room to share with you



In writing this newsletter, we scavenge every source we can find for things we hope you will be interested in. We save these ideas through the month, and then sift out the best when it comes time to start typing. This means painful decisions about what to run... is it more important to write about police militarization or environmental abuse? Is it more entertaining to tell you about the Sellwood Concerts or hidden camping destinations? Is it more useful to know about synthetic oil or your car's battery? As you can guess, this process leaves us with a string of trails that seemed interesting but we just couldn't follow to their ends. Now that it's the end of the year, we thought we'd share some of these stories we've collected... some are funny, some are profound, and some will

make you think. But we know you'll find at least one thing to get you talking!

Insane Homeless Policies

Homelessness is endemic in today's America, but there are good ways and bad ways to address it. Here are examples of both...

- [Here's What Happened When One City Gave Homeless People Shelter Instead of Throwing Them in Jail](#)
- [It Costs \\$21,000 More to Ignore the Homeless Than It Does to Give Them a Home](#)
- [Here's What Austin's Newest Housing For the Chronically Homeless Looks Like](#)
- [No Safe Place: How Cities Are Making it Illegal to Be Homeless](#)
- [How America Punishes People for Being Poor](#)
- [Are Tiny Houses a Viable Affordable Housing Solution?](#)

Political Polarization

Why is our society becoming increasingly polarized? Partly because of the media we consume, and partly because research is increasingly showing there are biological differences in conservative and liberal brains.

- [Why Conservatives Opt for Propaganda Over Reality](#)
- [The single most important fact about American politics](#)
- [Political Polarization & Media Habits](#)
- [Fixed vs. Growth: The Two Basic Mindsets That Shape Our Lives](#)
- [The Surprising Brain Differences Between Democrats and Republicans](#)
- [Scientists Are Beginning to Figure Out Why Conservatives Are...Conservative](#)
- [Conservative and liberal brains may be wired differently](#)
- [Secrets of the Right-Wing Brain: New Study Proves Conservatives See a Hostile World](#)
- [You Can't Trust The Supreme Court, Science Proves It!](#)

Remember Democracy?

Snowden's revelations were bad, but they're part of a larger depressing picture. We found many post-mortems on our fondly remembered democracy...

- [An Exceptional Decline for the Exceptional Country?](#)
- [How the 'War on Terror' Became a War on the Constitution](#)
- [Study: US Is Not A Democracy](#)
- [The McCutcheon Decision Is Our Rallying Cry](#)
- [These Americans Are Fighting for an Actual, Legitimate Democracy, By and For the People](#)

BP Gulf Spill Response

The 2010 BP Gulf spill was one of the worst environmental disasters our country has ever experienced. BP has worked tirelessly to clean up the mess from the spill, but unfortunately they've worked harder on the PR mess than the environmental one.

- [BP offers a lesson in how to sugarcoat an environmental disaster](#)
- [How Does the BP Oil Spill Impact Wildlife and Habitat?](#)
- [High Prices, Low Production; Gulf Oysters at Zero Population](#)
- [What BP owes America](#)

Indoctrination Replacing Education

Education came under scrutiny this year as school boards began inserting revisionist history and revisionist science into textbooks. Texas and Colorado were this year's battlefields, but don't worry... the fight will be coming to a much nearer school soon.

- [Proposed Texas Textbooks Deny Climate Change](#)
- [These Biased Ideas Are Presented As Fact In Texas Curriculum Standards](#)
- [Texas Textbook Battle Heats Up With Claims Of Conservative Bias](#)
- [Scholar Reviews Highlight Problems in Proposed Texas Social Studies Textbooks... Exaggerations, Distortions Reflect Flaws in Controversial Curriculum Standards](#)
- [Texas Rewrites History In Our Children's Textbooks](#)
- [Putting Job At Risk, Kindergarten Teacher Refuses to Administer Standardized Test](#)
- [After weeks of student protests, Colorado school board gives a little ground on 'positive' history curriculum](#)
- [Students of Jefferson County Colorado Give the Nation a History Lesson](#)

Ideas That Work

We don't like to just harp on what's wrong with the world; it makes more sense to figure out what to do to change it.

- [How America's Largest Worker Owned Co-Op Lifts People Out of Poverty](#)
- [An Economic Agenda for America: 12 Steps Forward](#)

Endless War

If you're dreaming about a peaceful society that doesn't spend all its blood and treasure on war, then keep dreaming. It's not even that our leaders are particularly evil, but the structure that supports war is now permanent.

- [How We Built the Infrastructure for Disastrous, Permanent War in the Middle East](#)

Online Car Sharing

Car sharing sites are becoming increasingly popular, and drew our notice when one of our clients used the fact that we maintain her car as a selling point for people who want to rent it. Here are links to (and about) Getaround, the service where Stacey S. posts her car.

- [Yelp reviews for Getaround](#)
- [The 4 Best Car Sharing Companies in Portland](#)
- [Getaround.com](#)
- [Getaround page for Stacey's car](#)

Legalized Marijuana

Legalized marijuana will be coming to Oregon in 2015. We strongly supported this ending of a senseless prohibition, and here are several links that scratch the surface of why...

- [The Media Should Stop Pretending Marijuana's Risks Are a Mystery -- The Science Is Clear](#)
- [Legalizing Medical Marijuana Can Help Prevent People From Overdosing On Painkillers](#)
- [States with medical marijuana have 25 percent fewer prescription overdose deaths](#)
- [Former Undercover Drug Narc on Why Police Don't Bust White People and How He Turned Against Drug War](#)
- [Marijuana doesn't kill brain cells, may help prevent cancer](#)
- [Painkiller Drug Companies Are Funding Anti-Marijuana Research](#)

Goodbye To The Right To Trial

Our Constitution's 6th Amendment guarantees the "right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury" among other things. "Guarantee" and "Right" might not mean what we all think they mean, especially when trials become inconvenient to our corporate overlords...

- [Buy a Box of Cereal, Waive Your Consumer Rights Goodbye](#)
- [Hobby Lobby Allegedly Fired Employee Due to Pregnancy](#)

Can You Hide ANYTHING From Big Data?

We all know we're tracked online by both business and government. But how deep does the tracking go? Here are several stories that will shock you.

- [Meet The Woman Who Did Everything In Her Power To Hide Her Pregnancy From Big Data](#)
- [Google: Yes, we "Read" Your Gmail](#)
- [How Companies Learn Your Secrets](#)

Pathetic Media

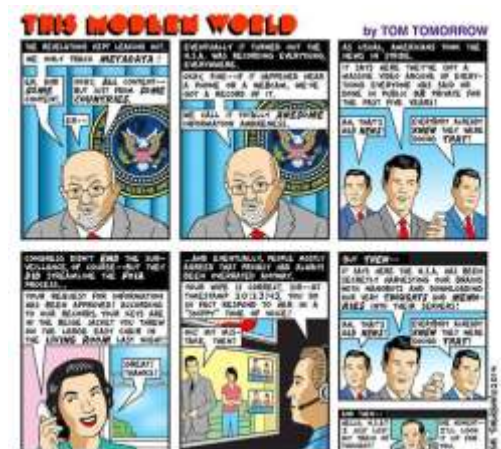
To make rational choices about the world around us, we need accurate information. Long gone is the time where the evidence of our senses told us all we needed to know; now we rely on media instead. And it sucks.

- [Americans' Confidence in News Media Remains Low](#)
- [Outsourcing the News- How covert consolidation is destroying newsrooms and circumventing media ownership rules](#)
- [Hilarious and Depressing Video Exposes How Phony Local TV News Has Become](#)
- [Journatic made 'very poor decisions' about content, say Aggrego founders](#)
- [How The Koch Brothers Are Hacking Science](#)
- [PhRMA's Money Affects Human Lives—and Journalism Too](#)
- [How Sensational News Stories Distract Us From Real Crises](#)
- [The mystery of CNN 2014- How does CNN's new 'infotainment' strategy affect journalism?](#)
- [Only 28 percent of Fox News climate segments are accurate](#)
- [Weekday Broadcast And Cable Evening News Economic Coverage Lacks Context, Economists](#)
- [How To Read Science News](#)

The Edward Snowden Saga Continues

Edward Snowden started dropping his bombshells in 2013, but nothing much has changed over at the NSA since. It's been an issue we've been following, but it seems every time we're ready to write about it another bomb hits. Here are some of the links we've *almost* written about on Snowden and the Deep State.

- [Snowden's Lesson: The Govt. Carries Out the Constitutional Crimes, While the Public Is Legally Powerless](#)
- [Computer Programs Are People, Too- How treating smart programs as legal persons could change privacy as we know it.](#)
- [Anatomy of the Deep State](#)
- [Can the NSA Remotely Turn On Your Mobile Phone?](#)
- [How the FBI Is Creating Terrorists](#)
- [New Cases of Corporate Spying Bolster Troubling Trend: What Is Being Done About It?](#)
- [Timeline of NSA domestic spying](#)
- [Wyden: CIA 'Embedded In A Culture Of Misinformation'](#)
- [Col. Manners Takes Your Top Secret Questions on CIA Practices, Invasion Etiquette and More](#)
- [Are You Ready for Life Under Total Surveillance?](#)
- [Obama to Call for End to N.S.A.'s Bulk Data Collection](#)
- ["We Can't Just Give a Blank Check": Lawmakers Call for Ending Secrecy of U.S. Intel's Black Budget](#)
- [Police Testing New 'Eye In The Sky' Crime Surveillance System](#)
- [No-fly list used by FBI to coerce Muslims into informing, lawsuit claims](#)
- ['Nation' Exclusive: Edward Snowden and Laura Poitras Take on America's Runaway Surveillance State](#)



Brave New Films

"[Brave New Films](#)", brainchild of Robert Greenwald, produces documentaries and investigative videos "to educate, influence, and empower viewers to take action around issues that matter". "Overcriminalized" is just one good example of the high quality they produce. This series of three films cover the [criminalization of homelessness](#), using [prison to treat mental illness](#), and [drug war alternatives that work](#). And these are just the tip of the iceberg.

How Bad Is Corruption?

Corruption in America (and of course, beyond) is nothing new, but the extent and effect are pretty amazing...

- [250 Years of Campaigns, Cash and Corruption- Timeline of corruption in America](#)
- [The 10 most corrupt states in the U.S.](#)
- [The Impact of Public Officials' Corruption on the Size and Allocation of U.S. State Spending](#)

Flying Death Robots

Who doesn't love flying death robots? The current epitome of American technology, these terminators-on-wings project our military power around the world without the messiness of actual war. So much potential for good, yet so much potential for abuse. The subject is bottomless, but here are some of the stories that caught our attention...

- [Death From Above: How American Drone Strikes Are Devastating Yemen](#)
- [Drones podcast: An ethics special](#)
- [Drone News from the Bureau](#)
- [Global drone wars: current combat drones and their proliferation](#)
- [Robots Programmed to Behave 'Morally'?](#)
- [8 Things You Should Know About the Shocking Legal Memo That Justified Assassinating a U.S. Citizen](#)
- [How One New Drone Tech Finally Allows All-Seeing Surveillance](#)
- [John Oliver rips into the secret process used to choose drone strikes' victims](#)

Whistleblowers

In order for business or government to correct any mistakes, we have to know they exist. Here are several stories that show most people would rather live in a comfortable fiction than an uncomfortable reality, and that anyone rocking that illusory boat will pay a heavy price...

- [VA hospital whistleblower tells of shoddy care of veterans](#)
- [Supreme Court Rejects Appeal From Times Reporter Over Refusal to Identify Source](#)
- [The Obama Admin Is the 'Greatest Enemy of Press Freedom' in at Least a Generation: 5 Prime Examples](#)
- [New Whistleblower Organization Launched on Anniversary of Snowden Revelations](#)
- [Rise Up for Risen! Raise the Shield!](#)
- [GM Punished Those Who Spoke For Safety](#)
- [US Condemnation of Press Restrictions Abroad Is Starting to Look Hypocritical](#)
- [We're Living in a Golden Age of Investigative Journalism](#)

The Brave New World Of Science

Not everything is doom and gloom. The world we'll live in tomorrow is being created in the science labs of today. Tomorrow looks pretty amazing!

- [Monkey controls limb movements of 'avatar' using its mind](#)
- [FDA panel debates technique that would create embryos with three genetic parents](#)
- [Amazing video shows bio-engineered 'bulletproof' human skin reinforced with spider silk](#)
- [Building heart tissue that beats: Engineered tissue closely mimics natural heart muscle](#)
- [How to erase a memory -- and restore it: Researchers reactivate memories in rats](#)
- [Corn-eating worm evolves to feed on GMO corn designed to kill it](#)
- [Should the Higgs boson have caused our universe to collapse? Findings puzzle cosmologists](#)
- [Liver Stand-In Could Replace Animal Testing](#)
- [How big is space? -- interactive version](#)
- [Is this whale-shaped plane the future of airliners?](#)
- [How pickpockets trick your mind](#)
- [Tomorrow's world: A guide to the next 150 years](#)
- [Why the age of the jetpack may finally be here](#)
- [Tissue engineering: Grow your own smart organs](#)

Getting to the heart of the matter

The underlying issues of Ferguson and beyond



As 2014 draws to a close, America is in agony watching the same scene play out again and again. A white cop brutalizes a black man, it's caught on video, but nothing happens. No matter how blatant the abuse, no matter how apparently unjustified, nothing happens. Why? WHY? Why is there no apparent accountability? More importantly, why is this happening to begin with? And *most* importantly, what can any of us do to stop it?

The first step to solving a problem is defining it, but the wrong definition can lead to wrong solutions. Is the problem [racist cops](#)? While there certainly are racist cops, [white people do get unjustly shot as well](#) and, while it obviously plays a role, racism is probably not the driving force of this problem. Are [police simply bullies and thugs](#)? Some are, yes, but the [countless stories of police heroes](#) say that's probably not the issue.

Besides, that wouldn't explain why these thugs aren't being held accountable for abuses. Is it really the victim's fault because they [shouldn't have resisted](#)? That would let us all off the ethical hook, but it wouldn't explain the people [beaten or killed after they were taken into custody](#). Is it the [flood of military weapons in police hands](#)? That could play a part, but none of these weapons kill unless a human pulls the trigger. The problem is a combination of all these factors and more.

One basic cause is a fundamental misunderstanding of what police are... [A POLICE FORCE IS NOT A TINY ARMY!](#) The military functions by the use of deadly force, and collateral destruction is just the cost of doing business. [Police are charged with keeping the peace in our communities](#), "protecting and serving" life and property. They're our neighbors, friends, and families. If they begin to see themselves (or if they are seen by others) as an occupying force then conflict is sure to follow.

Another even more basic cause may be the [slow death of the American Dream](#). Black and white people alike are watching [income inequality](#) grow, [social mobility fall](#), jobs being [outsourced](#), and [education sliding out of reach](#). It's becoming harder and harder to just survive, and people are faced with either becoming corporate slaves or scavengers on the margins. But everyone, black or white, wants the basic human dignity that they know is becoming almost impossible to find. Our corporate masters know this too, but since they're unable to provide the framework that makes opportunity possible (while still maintaining their profit margin) they're perfectly willing to let thugs use any brutal means as long as the sheep don't get out of line.

So where should accountability start? The same place it ends in a free society... with all of us. Good cops can [come forward about the abuses of their blue brethren](#). Police chiefs can [avoid militarizing their forces](#) through things like [turning down government handouts](#) or [not using SWAT teams for routine contacts](#). Citizens can [know their rights, cooperate with the police where possible, and fight any abuses later in court](#). Judges and prosecutors can make more [reasonable evaluations of which police actions are appropriate](#). Politicians can write laws that strike a better [balance between individual liberty and the legitimate needs of police... body cameras](#) are a good start, but also things like [having police abuses investigated by agencies outside the investigatory targets](#). We can all vote for leaders, police and civic, that will end abuses like [civil asset forfeiture](#), eliminate [for-profit prisons](#), and fight to restore the opportunity and dignity we've lost in our society. And we can all have hope, however slim, that next Christmas we won't be in this same place again.

As this issue continues to dominate the national discussion, there's a flood of fact and opinion from every possible direction. Here are just a few links to some of the more insightful pieces we've found...

“How Our Brains Perceive Race”

Chris Mooney at Moyers&Company

One of the most uncomfortable aspects arising from the police-use-of-force debate is racism. There are arguments about the role it plays in today's problems, but people seem to fall into two camps... those who wallow in their bigotry, and those who insist they have none at all. But are any of us really color blind? Racial biases can lurk deep in the subconscious of anyone, even people who aren't racist at all in their behavior or even their conscious thoughts.

This excellent article by Chris Mooney is a detailed look at these subconscious factors, how they form, and how they can play out in daily life. You'll never look at yourself, and maybe not anyone else, the same way again.



You may not know it, you may not agree, but you have biases concerning race. [Click here to take an IAT](#), a psychological diagnostic test that will show you the ugly side you didn't know you had.

“Why It's Almost Impossible to Indict a Cop”

Chase Madar at Moyers&Company

Americans were stunned when no indictments were issued to the killers of Eric Garner or Michael Brown, but of course, these two cases aren't the only ones where unjustified force has not been held accountable. Are these “no-bill” decisions the result of racism or is there something more going on? It may not be necessary for police, judges, or jurors to be corrupt for things to go wrong. Chase Madar argues, quite convincingly and depressingly, that it's an inevitable result of the structure of the system itself.

“What I've Learned From Two Years Collecting Data on Police Killings”

D. Brian Burghart at Gawker

It's hard to get a handle on the scope of police violence without data, but when Brian Burghart tried to research the subject, he found that there are no collected statistics on the subject. He started a crowdsourced project to fill in this yawning gap, and learned a lot about exactly why the information doesn't exist already.

“This Is What Happens When You Call The Cops”



Are you one of the FOX folks who think the issue of cops gone wild is just media hype? [“This Is What Happens When You Call The Cops”](#), an incredibly powerful video by Rob Hustle, shows exactly why people feel so justified in their anger.

Who are those folks behind the counter?

Here's how our salaried Service Advisors keep us running



Originally posted on [October 31, 2011](#)

Where would you find just one person with all these qualities...

Multi-tasking abilities of an air traffic controller?

Patience and understanding of a therapist?

Problem-solving skills of a rocket scientist?

Decision-making skills of a business executive?

Communication skills of a diplomat?

Research skills of a librarian?

Sensitivity and compassion of Mother Theresa?

Database skills of a cyber geek?

Teamwork of a quarterback?

Mechanical knowledge of an auto-industry veteran?

You can find four of them behind the counters here at Tom Dwyer Automotive Services!

As the sun is just peeking up over the horizon, and sometimes even earlier, our Service Advisors are starting their day. Dark or not, they open the office and shop, turn on the lights, fire up the air compressors, heaters and parts washer, start the coffee, wake up the cars that have been sleeping safe and sound in the shop all night, move them into the parking lot, bring up the computers, process the night drops, retrieve messages... it's busy, but just the start of another typical day. It is not uncommon for clients to arrive as early as 6:15 am and find us here preparing. At 7AM the doors open officially and the phone is usually already ringing. Some clients have just walked down their driveway to find that their trusted automotive buddy won't start and they can't get to work, so they need an appointment NOW. Other clients who need planned maintenance, oil changes, minor tweaks, or major repairs are checking to see if there's an open space on the schedule. Clients who already have appointments scheduled are starting to flow through the door, dropping off their vehicle with the expectation of having it back by the end of the day or even earlier.

The most important task of a Service Advisor is to understand exactly what each client expects for their vehicle, when they need their vehicle back, and how much they expect to pay for our services. Communication is everything and assumptions are deadly! The unasked question or the information not offered can cause us to

miss a vehicle's problem or not fill a client's expectations and ruin the best attempt at great service. After getting the client's specific needs and vehicle symptoms, the

information is documented in the system and the Repair Order goes to the shop. It's not out of the Service Advisor's hands yet; they must clearly communicate the client's concerns to the Technician who will actually perform the work. Our ASE-Certified Technicians check the vehicles' service history records, research recalls and technical service bulletins, then scan, poke, prod, inspect, and road test the vehicle to confirm service needs or diagnose problems. They document their findings and talk with the Service Advisor about their recommendations.



After consulting with the Technician and reviewing the client vehicle history and the newly supplied data, the Service Advisor's work continues; estimating the costs and time required for the service that is right for our clients and their individual goals, and contacting vendors for prices and availability for parts. We deal with over 20 different parts vendors, so finding the best part at the right price can be a very time consuming part of the job! Here at TDASI we use parts made by the manufacturer of the original part (OEM or original equipment manufacturer) for the vehicle, or a superior part when one is available. If an OEM part is required but not available to us through the regular parts channels then it's time to start calling around to the dealers in the area (and sometimes outside the area) for the required part to fix the vehicle right the first time. We stand behind our work with a 24-month, 24,000-mile warranty so it is very important to us that we supply the best parts possible. After locating and pricing the parts, the labor costs are estimated by using industry-standard labor guides that provide approximate times required to perform needed services and repairs. This can also prove to be difficult as there are many variables not accounted for by labor guides. Outside forces such as hidden damage, aged brittle plastic, broken bolts, rust or corrosion can also take the best estimates and ruin them in hurry. We always do our best to offer accurate estimates for complete repairs, not the "as low as" estimates so common in the auto repair industry.

So far, we know what is needed and approximately how much it would cost for the repairs. Now comes the part the Service



Advisors like the least.....giving good people bad news. After explaining the needs and conditions of the vehicle and the costs and the time requirements of the repairs, the Service Advisor and Client work together to decide exactly what steps to take. While Service Advisors in other shops are routinely paid straight commission with few or no benefits, frequently have little technical knowledge, and take no personal responsibility for the services they sell, ours are different. The Service Advisors at TDASI take responsibility for the complete process; they understand the services they offer and they are never paid on commission so you can trust that their recommendations will be based on a real understanding of your needs and not their paychecks.

When the Client and Service Advisor have decided on the repairs to be made, the repair order is edited to reflect the final work description, cost estimate, delivery time, and any necessary caveats, and the Technician is given the Repair Order and the authorization to begin work.

We always start by pulling any parts we can from our existing stock. For parts we don't stock, we are at the mercy of vendor inventories and their delivery schedules.

Increasingly over the years vendor inventories are skeletal and even basic parts can be two days away or more. Often we make special runs to pick up parts from vendors when their delivery schedules conflict with our client's needs.

The Technician now carries the responsibility for the critical service work but the Service Advisor stays involved, keeping an eye out for any changes or complications that could affect the repair, delivery time, or cost. When the

vehicle is completed and tested, the Service Advisor documents the services performed and updates the client's vehicle records to reflect what has been done and why, and what still needs to be done and when. The Service Advisor then contacts the client to let them know their vehicle is ready and offers information about pickup options. Finally, when our client picks up their car, they are not directed to "go see the person at the pay window." The Service Advisors take the time to explain what was done and why, explain any precautions or break-in procedures, and offer information as to what might be expected for future services.

The Service process is complex and we are not in control of every variable, but we take responsibility for the problems that may occur. If a problem happens that changes the repairs we planned or if it affects the estimates we provided, we always call the client to get approval before proceeding. If a service is not

completed in the time frame we promised we tell the client as soon as we know and offer rides or rental cars to help our clients keep up with their busy lives.

Maintaining our 97%-plus "on time" and "on estimate" record along with a 99+% customer satisfaction rate is no accident, but our goal is

to deliver 100% client satisfaction! We hope that if our clients are satisfied with our service they tell their friends, co-workers and relatives. If we have missed our goal of 100% satisfaction we want them to tell us, so we can make it right and learn from our mistakes.

We wanted you to know a little about what our Service Advisors do to plan and coordinate your repairs so you can help us provide you with the best client experience possible.



Drew's Kitchen

Drew's Make-Ahead Potatoes



Turkey's overrated. Everyone knows that the fun of Holiday meals revolves around the side dishes! We all have our favorites, but one that makes everyone's Top 5 is the classic mashed potatoes. It's easy to take this staple for granted, but a good recipe for it will go far in making the whole meal special. Please enjoy Drew's recipe for Make-Ahead potatoes, and please accept his wishes for glorious holiday feasting!

Drew's Make-Ahead Potatoes

Ingredients:

- 5 pounds of baking potatoes; cooked, drained, and mashed. (Approx. 8 potatoes)
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2-3 tsp garlic salt OR fresh garlic
- ½ tsp pepper
- 4 Tbsp butter (4 slices)
- Paprika

Preparation:

- Combine cream cheese, sour cream, garlic, and pepper in a bowl.
- Add potatoes and mix thoroughly
- Pour into large baking pan
- Top with butter, sprinkle with paprika
- Cover in refrigerator UP TO 3 DAYS BEFORE YOUR EVENT. 1-2 days is best.
- Before serving, cover with foil and bake at 400° for 50-60 minutes

Shop Talk

Christmas Specials going on now



The Bridge is open and flowing freely!

Just a reminder that although the Sellwood Bridge was closed Nov 19-21, it's open again and traffic is flowing freely. They even polished up the turn onto Tenino, so that's a little easier coming from the east than it has been. If you're thinking about coming to see us, don't let the construction itself stop you. Come on down!

Holiday savings opportunities

How's the holiday shopping going? Yeah, the same with us. If you're counting those pennies for Christmas gifts, need a last minute gift, or have a looming auto repair bill that's crowding your Christmas budget, then our TWO current specials will be particularly interesting...

Gift Certificates are 20% Off!

Share the "peace of mind" service you've found at Tom Dwyer, and at a steep discount! Of course, some restrictions do apply...

- Certificates must be purchased before and used after December 25, 2014
- Certificates cannot be combined with other discount offers
- Gift certificates are good for **LABOR CHARGES ONLY**, not parts
- Certificates can only be used for new clients' 1998-and-newer vehicles, or for existing clients's vehicles of any year.

Save 20% on Labor Charges on outstanding Service Recommendations

Extended to the end of 2014! Here's the fine print...

- Discount applies to labor charges only, not parts
- Discount is capped at \$200 maximum
- Recommendations must have been in your file before November 26, 2014
- You must TELL US you want this offer WHEN YOU SCHEDULE YOUR SERVICE! Offer is VOID AFTER SERVICE IS COMPLETE!
- Service must be scheduled before December 31, 2014

Our Referral Reward program...

The "Season of Giving" may be here, but for our clients the Season started back in March. Why? Because since then, every time a new client gives an existing client's name as a referral source we've made a donation to the non-profit group of their choice (up to \$50). Since March **114 of our clients have donated \$4,493** to the charities and groups they care about! Five more groups received checks this month (so far), including the *fourth* check to Artichoke Music! These groups also become eligible for quarterly and



yearly awards like this month's quarterly award winner. We hope you'll take this chance to share Tom Dwyer Automotive with someone you know, and share a little money with a group that can use it. And, since it IS the Season of Giving, why not take a few minutes to look over this month's groups and see if there is one that could use YOUR help?

Here are the groups who benefitted in December...

[Madison High School](#)
[All Classical Public Radio](#)

[Boys and Girls Aid Society](#)
[Street Roots](#)

[Artichoke Community Music \(4th award\)](#)

And our THIRD Quarterly winner is...

Madison High School

(from Wikipedia) James Madison High School, named after the fourth US President and co-author of the Constitution, was founded in 1957. It serves neighborhood students and many transfer students grades 9-12. James Madison High School offers a full range of college preparatory core content classes as well as unique elective options in the areas of Mathematics, Performing & Visual Arts, Science, Social Science, and World Languages. Students may challenge themselves by enrolling in Advanced Placement and Dual Credit courses. Dual Credit courses are taught by Madison faculty who work in partnership with Portland Community College. Two movies have been filmed at the school: *Paranoid Park* (2007) and *Twilight* (2008). Notable alumni include Paul De Muniz, the first Hispanic Chief Justice of the Oregon Supreme Court, and Major League Baseball players Rick Wise, Kent Bottenfield, and Rob Dressler.

Madison joins Janus Youth Programs and Artichoke Music, our first two quarterly awardees. Just like Janus and Artichoke, Madison High School will receive a check for \$250 and be in the running for our yearly award as well. One reason we chose Madison High School, aside from the fact that they deserve it, is that we want you to be aware that ANY non-profit group is eligible for our Referral Reward Program. If you want to participate, we will gladly make a contribution to support the school of your choice!

Your reviews and referrals matter

We are constantly grateful for the supportive and loyal clients we have developed over the years. Your comments and appreciation keep us on the right road to providing the superior automotive service you deserve. Your reviews and referrals are not only the highest compliments we can receive, but they're the lifeblood of our new business. If you like what you've found at Tom Dwyer Automotive Services, please tell a friend or take a minute to write a review on [Yelp](#), [Angieslist](#), [Google](#), or the review site of your choice. 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.

November 19: 442,000 Volkswagen vehicles from 2011-2013, including Jetta and Beetle models, Recalled for the trailing arm which may have reduced durability, causing a loss of vehicle control.

November 18: 28,037 Range Rover vehicles from 2013-2014, Recalled for the Tire Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS) which may fail to locate the sensor, increasing the risk of tire failure.

November 18: 5,805 MINI Cooper Hardtop vehicles from 2014, Recalled for the spare wheel which may separate from the vehicle while driving.

November 18: 491 Tiffin Motorhomes from 2013-2015, Recalled for incorrect labels regarding gross axle weight, which could result in the motorhome being overloaded and may cause tire failure.

November 18: 38 Entegra Coach motorhomes from 2015, Recalled for potential engine stalling.

November 14: 393 Volkswagen Jetta and Passat vehicles from 2015, Recalled for potential unexpected movement of the driver's seatback due to a bracket which may not engage correctly.

November 14: 230 Campagna motorcycles from 2007-2013, Recalled for the engine oil pan which may hit the road or an object in the road.

November 13: 561 Newmar motorhomes from 2007-2012, including Dutch Star and Mountain Aire models, Recalled for a circuit breaker that may be incorrect for the amperage need, increasing the risk of a fire.

November 12: 1,509 Mercedes-Benz C300 and C400 4Matic vehicles from 2015, Recalled for the sliding shaft which may disengage from the steering column, resulting in a loss of steering control.

November 12: 122 Polaris motorcycles from 2015, including High-Ball and Vegas Eightball models, Recalled for the transmission shift drum detent roller spring which may have been incorrectly installed.

November 10: 52,738 Nissan vehicles from 2003-2006, Recalled for the air bag inflator which may rupture upon deployment of the air bags.

November 10: Honda vehicles from 2002-2006, Recalled for the air bag inflator which may rupture upon deployment of the air bags.

November 5: 101,938 Audi vehicles from 2013-2015, including Allroad and A3 models, Recalled for the front air bags which may not deploy in the event of a secondary impact.

November 5: 6,562 Infiniti vehicles from 2013-2015, including Q70 and M35 hybrid models, Recalled for a

potential software error which may cause unexpected acceleration.

November 5: 135 Pierce emergency vehicles from 2009-2013, including Quantum and Velocity models, Recalled for front lower control arms that may crack and fracture.

November 4: 5,412 Infiniti hybrid vehicles from 2014, including Q50 and Q70 models, Recalled for a software error which may cause the electric motor to stop working.

November 4: 817 Infiniti hybrid vehicles from 2014, including Q50 and Q70 models, Recalled for potentially damaged transmission housings which could crack and disable the vehicle.

October 31: 20,000 Toyota vehicles from 2014-2015, including Toyota Sienna and Lexus RX350 models, Recalled for a potential fuel leak, increasing the risk of a fire.

October 31: 1,848 Infiniti QX56 and QX80 vehicles from 2013-2014, Recalled for the air bag inflator which may have been manufactured with an incorrect part, causing the inflator to rupture.

October 30: 23,053 Chrysler Ram ProMaster vehicles from 2014, Recalled for the Tire Pressure Monitoring System which may not notify drivers of low tire pressure.

October 29: 314,704 Chrysler vehicles from 2010-2014, including Ram 2500 and 5500 models, Recalled for the electrical connectors of the diesel fuel heater which may overheat, causing a leak in the fuel heater.

October 29: 132,223 Chrysler vehicles from 2014, including Dodge Durango and Jeep Grand Cherokee models, Recalled for an issue with software that may disable the Electronic Stability Control.

October 28: 126,772 Chrysler vehicles from 2014, including Dodge Durango and Jeep Grand Cherokee models, Recalled for a fault in the Occupant Restraint Control that may disable the front airbags, seat belt pretensioners, and side airbags.

October 28: 37,145 Mitsubishi Outlander vehicles from 2007-2009, Recalled for the brake light switch which may malfunction, causing the brake lights to not illuminate.

October 24: 202,346 Evenflo Embrace 35 child restraints, Recalled for the harness buckle which may be difficult to unlatch.

October 24: 783 Chevrolet Corvette vehicles from 2015, Recalled for the parking brake which may only

be operating on one rear parking brake drums, causing the vehicle to potentially roll away.

[October 24: 89 Chevrolet Corvette vehicles from 2015](#), Recalled for the driver air bag which could separate from the steering wheel upon deployment.

[October 24: 87 RevZilla size large motorcycle helmets, including Roadster PG and Window PG models](#), Recalled for not being adequately labeled with the correct size information.

[October 24: 29 Halcore Horton ambulances from 2014](#), Recalled for the suspension fluid tank which may separate from the chassis.

[October 20: 434,581 Chrysler vehicles from 2011-2014, including Dodge Charger and Durango models](#), Recalled for the alternator which may fail, causing the engine to stall.

[October 20: 313,236 Jeep Wrangler vehicles from 2011-2013](#), Recalled for a potential electrical short in the heated power mirrors, increasing the risk of a fire.

[October 20: 97,540 GM vehicles from 2013-2014, including Chevrolet Impala and Buick Enclave models](#), Recalled for a potential electrical short, causing the engine to stall.

[October 20: 23,073 Suzuki motorcycles from 2009-2014, including GSX-R750 and GSX-R1000 models](#), Recalled for gears that may miss during shifting, causing damage to the drive chain adjuster and removing power to the rear wheel.

[October 20: 423 Mazda Tribute Hybrid vehicles from 2008](#), Recalled for the coolant pump which may fail, resulting in a stall-like condition.

[October 20: 189 Acura TLX AWD vehicles from 2015](#), Recalled for incorrect labels regarding weight, which could potentially result in tire failure.

Health Notes

Tips to beat holiday stress and gluttony



The Holiday Season is known for many things, but your health isn't one of them. The stress alone can cause health problems long before the feasting gives you those extra five pounds you've been dreading, but stress and food combined? That can spell a horrendous holiday. Here are tips to beat them both, and leave you savoring the holidays for many years to come...

Christmas tips to reduce the stress-

From [Better Health Channel](#) (Australia)

Christmas is typically one of the most stressful events of the year. The expense of buying gifts, the pressure of last minute shopping, and the heightened expectations of family togetherness can all combine to undermine our best intentions. Here are some practical suggestions can help you reduce your 'Christmas stress'...

Budgeting for Christmas

For many of us, the Christmas aftermath includes massive credit card bills that can take months to clear. Christmas doesn't have to be a financial headache if you plan ahead. Stress reduction strategies include:

- Work out a rough budget of expected Christmas costs as early as possible. This includes 'hidden' expenses such as food bills and overseas telephone charges.
- Calculate how much disposable income you have between now and Christmas. A certain percentage of this can be dedicated each week (or fortnight or month) to covering your expected Christmas costs. Don't be discouraged if the amount seems small. If you save \$5, \$10, or \$20 per week over a year, it can provide you with a hefty nest egg.
- If your nest egg isn't enough to cover your estimated expenses, consider recalculating your Christmas budget to a more realistic amount.
- If you have trouble keeping your hands off your Christmas nest egg, consider opening a 'Christmas Club' account.

Presents

If you have a large circle of extended family or friends to buy gifts for, it can be very costly. You might be able to reduce the stress and cost of Christmas for everyone if you suggest a change in the way your family and friends give presents. For example, you could suggest that your group:

- Buy presents only for the children.

- Have a Kris Kringle, where everyone draws a name out of a hat and buys a present only for that person.
- Set a limit on the cost of presents for each person

Christmas shopping

According to a recent study by Roy Morgan Research, around 60 per cent of Australians dislike Christmas shopping, just 20 per cent plan their shopping expeditions, and the majority of us (nearly 75 per cent) often come home without a single purchase for our efforts. Stress reduction strategies for successful Christmas shopping include:

- Make a list of all the gifts you wish to buy before you go shopping. If you wait for inspiration to strike, you could be wandering aimlessly around the shopping centre for hours. Perhaps you could get to know the interests of family and friends to help you when choosing gifts (remember money is also a great gift as it allows people to choose what they want).
- Cross people off the list as you buy to avoid duplication
- Buy a few extras, such as chocolates, just in case you forget somebody or you have unexpected guests bearing gifts.
- If possible, do your Christmas shopping early – in the first week of December or even in November. Some well-organised people do their Christmas shopping gradually over the course of the year, starting with the post-Christmas sales.
- Buy your gifts by mail catalogue or over the Internet. Some companies will also gift-wrap and post your presents for a small additional fee.

The Christmas lunch (or dinner)

Preparing a meal for family and friends can be enjoyable but tiring and stressful at the same time. Some tips to reduce the stress of Christmas cooking include:

- If you are cooking lunch at home, delegate tasks. You don't need to do everything yourself.
- Consider keeping it simple – for instance, you could always arrange for a 'buffet' lunch, where everybody brings a platter.
- Make a list of food and ingredients needed. Buy as many non-perishable food items as you can in advance – supermarkets on Christmas Eve are generally extremely busy.
- Write a Christmas Day timetable. For example, 11.30am – put turkey in the oven.
- You may need to order particular food items (such as turkeys) from your supermarket by a certain date. Check to avoid disappointment.
- Consider doing your food shopping online. The store will deliver your groceries to your door. (Keep in mind this option is more expensive than visiting the supermarket yourself.)
- Book well in advance if you plan to have lunch at a restaurant. Some restaurants may be fully booked for months before Christmas, so don't wait till the last minute.

Relationships

Stress, anxiety, and depression are common during the festive season. If nothing else, reassure yourself that these feelings are normal. Stress reduction strategies include:

- Don't expect miracles. If you and certain family members bicker all year long, you can be sure there'll be tension at Christmas gatherings.
- Avoid known triggers. For example, if politics is a touchy subject in your family, don't talk about it. If someone brings up the topic, use distraction and quickly move on to something else to talk about.
- Use relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing or focusing on your breath to cope with anxiety or tension.
- Family members involved in after-lunch activities (such as cricket on the back lawn) are less likely to get into arguments. Plan for something to do as a group after lunch if necessary.
- People under stress tend to 'self-medicate' with alcohol, cigarettes and other drugs. Try to remember that drugs can't solve problems or alleviate stress in the long term.

The little extras

Other ways you might be able to reduce the stress include:

- Write up a Christmas card list and keep it in a safe place so that you can refer to it (and add or delete names) year after year.
- Plan to write your Christmas cards in early December. Book a date in your diary so you don't forget.
- Christmas cards with 'Card only' marked on the envelope can be posted at a reduced rate during November and December.
- Overseas mail at Christmas time takes longer to arrive. Arrange to send cards or presents in the first half of December to avoid disappointments (and long queues at the post office).
- For great savings, buy Christmas necessities (such as cards, wrapping paper, ribbons and decorations) at post-Christmas sales.

General health and wellbeing

Some other ways to keep your stress levels down include:

- Try to be moderate – it may be the season to be jolly, but too much food and alcohol is harmful. Drink driving is a real danger and is illegal. If you can't (or don't want to) step off the social merry-go-round, at least try to eat and drink in moderation.
- Get enough sleep – plan for as many early nights as you can.
- Keep moving – keeping up your regular exercise routine can give you the fitness and stamina to make it through the demands of the festive season.

Where to get help

- Your doctor
- Financial planner
- Your local community health centre

Things to remember

- Save a percentage of your disposable income throughout the year to provide a nest egg for Christmas expenses.
- Make a list of all the gifts and food you wish to buy and shop early.
- Don't expect miracles – if you and certain family members bicker all year long, you can be sure there'll be tension at Christmas gatherings.

Sellwood Bridge Update

What happened during the closure



In our last Update, we were a week away from an impending three-day closure of the Bridge. Now, we're about two weeks after the closure and the Bridge is open again and traffic is flowing smoothly. They even polished up the turn onto Tenino, so that's a little easier coming from the east than it has been. If you're thinking about coming to see us, don't let the construction itself stop you. Come on down!

To keep you Updated this month we'll bring you up to speed on the closure itself, and the best documentation of that came in the form of a [photo essay from the Oregonian](#). Just click the link at right to see their excellent pictures!

Also, we thought you'd enjoy the picture below from the [Bridge Project's photo archive](#). It's slightly before the latest closure, but will help orient you to see the changes resulting from the closure. Plus, it's really cool.



View looking east, 11/12/2014



[View looking east during the closure, from the Oregonian](#)

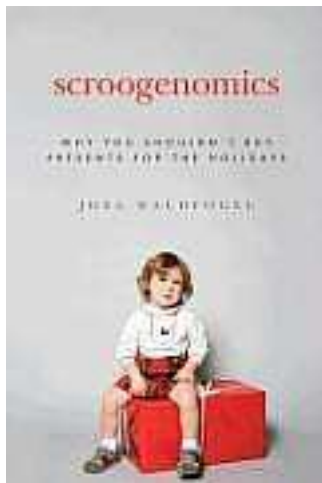
As always, Multnomah County maintains the definitive website on everything related to the Sellwood Bridge Replacement project, www.sellwoodbridge.org. Construction and closure alerts, archived information, and other resources are all available 24/7 for your convenience. If you're looking for something 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

“Scroogenomics: Why You Shouldn’t Buy Presents for the Holiday” By Joel Waldfogel



If it's true that "it's the thought that counts", then there is no better gift than a book. You can spend hours searching for the exact title to show your giftee that you know them like no one else. Books fit any budget, they don't spoil, they're always the right size, they last for years, they don't need feeding, and they're even cheap to ship to relatives across the country. We think that's the kind of thinking that should go into a Christmas gift but as this month's Book Spotlight points out, that's not usually what we do. Fortunately, author Joel Waldfogel, while criticizing our wasteful holiday spending, also has alternatives to thoughtless Christmas gifts that won't break the bank...



Scroogenomics: Why You Shouldn't Buy Presents for the Holiday

By Joel Waldfogel

Christmas is a time of seasonal cheer, family get-togethers, holiday parties, and gift giving. Lots and lots--and lots--of gift giving. It's hard to imagine any Christmas without this time-honored custom. But let's stop to consider the gifts we receive--the rooster sweater from Grandma or the singing fish from Uncle Mike. How many of us get gifts we like? How many of us give gifts not knowing what recipients want? Did your cousin really look excited about that jumping alarm clock? Lively and informed, *Scroogenomics* illustrates how our consumer spending generates vast amounts of economic waste--to the shocking tune of eighty-five billion dollars each winter. Economist Joel Waldfogel provides solid explanations to show us why it's time to stop the madness and think twice before buying gifts for the holidays.

When we buy for ourselves, every dollar we spend produces at least a dollar in satisfaction, because we shop carefully and purchase items that are worth more than they cost. Gift giving is different. We make less-informed choices, max out on credit to buy gifts worth less than the money spent, and leave recipients less than satisfied, creating what Waldfogel calls "deadweight loss." Waldfogel indicates that this waste isn't confined to Americans--most major economies share in this orgy of wealth destruction. While recognizing the difficulties of altering current trends, Waldfogel offers viable gift-giving alternatives.

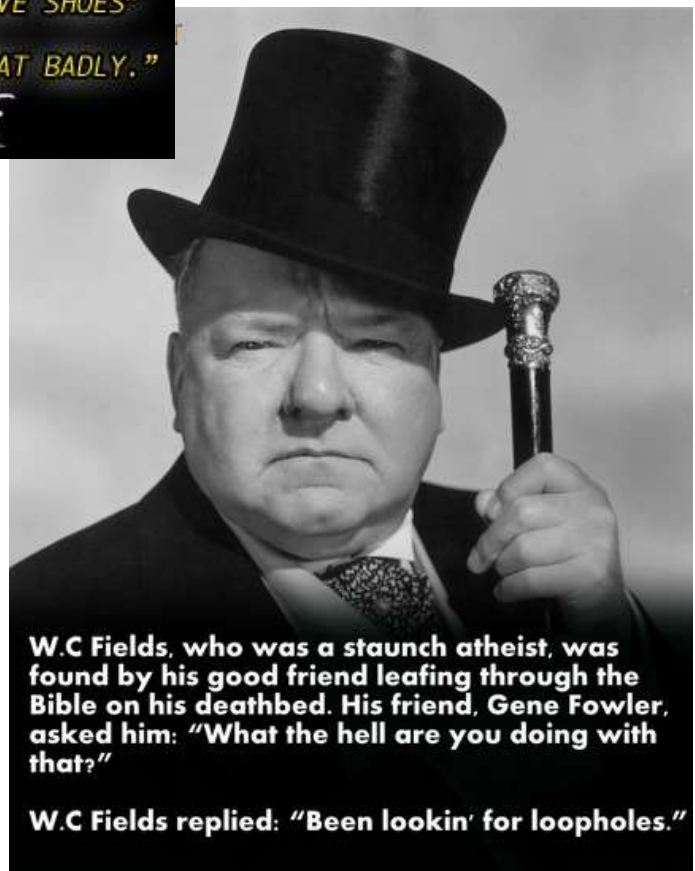
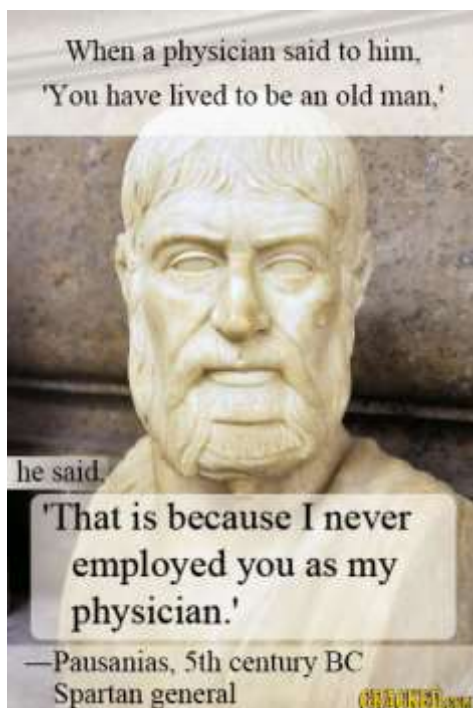
By reprioritizing our gift-giving habits, *Scroogenomics* proves that we can still maintain the economy without gouging our wallets, and reclaim the true spirit of the holiday season.

Humorousness

Things you wish you woulda said



Ahh, the Christmas Season. You'll soon be spending your time at parties with friends and enemies, family and antagonists, frenemies and famtagonists. You know, you just KNOW, that some slight argument will develop and you'll think of EXACTLY the right thing you SHOULD have said when you're heading back home. (See our Popcorn Shorts this month... the Yiddish word for this is "Trepverter"). Well, Humorousness is here to help. This link will take you to ["The 21 Wittiest Comebacks Ever To End An Argument"](#); just follow their examples and you'll be fine. Here are four of our favorites...



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 racism you don't know you have



One of the most uncomfortable aspects arising from the police-use-of-force debate is racism. There are arguments about the role it plays in today's problems, but people seem to fall into two camps... those who wallow in their bigotry, and those who insist they have none at all. But are any of us really color blind? Implicit Association Tests (IATs) aren't silly Facebook quizzes, they're professional psychological tools designed to expose subconscious attitudes. [This IAT from Harvard is designed to expose your own deep-seated racial attitudes](#). Take a few minutes to try it... you may find yourself as surprised and as uncomfortable as we were.

Pictures worth many thousand words



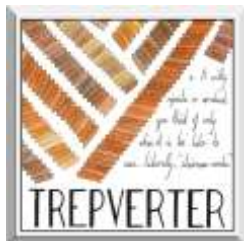
Photography can tell a complex story instantly. One of the sites we frequently check is Quora.com, a site primarily for tech geeks that has forums on every possible subject you can imagine. A recent poster asked ["What images will change the way a person sees the world after viewing them?"](#) The responses were breathtaking. From children living in bullet-riddled apartments in Gaza, to glimpses of the most tender side of humanity, to the selfie taken by the Curiosity rover on Mars, this is an assemblage of pictures that will truly move you. The picture showing before-and-after Hiroshima from the air is worth the time by itself.

The Vice-President takes on the Fascists



Once upon a time our political leaders occasionally took principled, well-thought-out positions, sometimes even at odds with rich people! [Henry Wallace, VP under FDR during the war years, was asked "What is a fascist?"](#) How many are there? How dangerous are they?" Wallace understood the Fascist threat, knew what Fascists were, knew exactly where to find them in America, and laid the whole thing out in a New York Times editorial. Even in the midst of WWII he wasn't as concerned about the Nazis as he was about the threats at home, but if he was right in his analysis, the threat has gotten much worse today.

If you don't have the words, these folks do



Do you know the word for "the witty riposte you think of only when it is too late?" It's the Yiddish word "trepverter", literally "staircase words". Did you know the Italian verb "Commuovere" means "a story that moved you to tears?" English may have the most words, [but languages around the world have words for things English never even thought of](#). Do you know that "Tsundoku" is a Japanese word for a greivous sin that you yourself have probably committed? You'll just have to [click this link](#) to find out what that sin is, and learn about many more words without English equivalents.

News To Make You Furious

Incompetence where it matters



One of the most infuriating phrases you'll hear is "I'm not a scientist, BUT..." This usually precedes some appallingly ill-informed dismissal of a scientific opinion that only people who *are* scientists would be qualified to make. In a rational world, the only context in which we would ever hear this phrase would be "I'm not a scientist, BUT... here's someone who *is* a scientist so I'll shut up while they talk." Unfortunately, it seems we don't live in a rational world.

Since global society is built on science and billions would die if that carpet was pulled from under our feet, it's probably a good thing that the US House of Representatives has a permanent [committee on Science, Space, and Technology](#). Who should be in a group tasked with such monumentally important oversight? Apparently, people who don't understand science and think it should be shoehorned into an ideological mold instead of the other way around. When the new

"By denying scientific principles, one may maintain any paradox."
Galileo Galilei

Congress starts in 2015 they'll be bringing back the same fine folks who've formed the Science Committee for the last two years, but this

time with the Congressional votes to give their flamboyant idiocy some teeth. To get your blood boiling this month we bring you a look at five of the people who decide how our national science budget is spent, their dismal understanding of the subject they'll control, and their already appalling plans for what they'll do. Get ready to get livid... and scared.

Let's start with some words from some of the committee members. Remember, these aren't citizens-at-large or even general Congress members- these are the people on the actual Science and Technology Committee.



Paul Broun (R- GA)- "All that stuff I was taught about evolution and embryology and the big bang theory, all that is lies straight from the pit of Hell. It's lies to try to keep me and all the folks who were taught that from understanding that they need a savior. You see, there are a lot of scientific data that I've found out as a scientist that actually show that this is really a young Earth. I don't believe that the earth's but about 9,000 years old. I believe it was created in six days as we know them. That's what the Bible says." (Thankfully, Paul lost his re-election bid and won't be back in 2015)



Mo Brooks (R- AL)- "I'm also old enough to remember when the same left-wing part of our society was creating a global cooling scare in order to generate funds for their pet projects. So 30-some years ago the big scare was global cooling, and once they drained that [topic], they shifted to global warming. So I'm approaching the issue with a healthy degree of skepticism. If the evidence is there to prove it, then so be it."



Jim Sensenbrenner (R- IL)- doesn't believe Earth is warming (he thinks it's been cooling over the past 10 years) but he does believe Mars is warming at a similar rate to Earth, which isn't warming at all. He believes global warming will help crop yields go up, making it "easier to feed 7 billion people". Sensenbrenner also rejects the fact that genetics influence weight, telling the obese to "Look in the mirror because you are the one to blame."



Dana Rohrbacher (R- CA) "In my lifetime there's been no greater example of this threat...than the insidious coalition of research science and political largess, a coalition that has conducted an unrelenting crusade to convince the American People that their health and safety, and yes the very survival of our planet, is at risk due to man-made global warming. The purpose of this greatest of all propaganda campaigns is to enlist public support for, if not just acquiescence to, dramatic mandated change of our society, and to our way of life." See also Dana's "[dinosaur flatulence](#)" theory.



And now, please meet returning chairman Lamar Smith. He has [his own problems with science](#), one of the many politicians who's [convinced that climate change is a scam](#). However, Lamar's not here for his shining ignorance... he's here to tell us what Science will look like in the hands of political hacks and scientific incompetents who will run it. If you haven't surfed over to the [Science Committee website](#) lately (and who has?) then you may not know what science looks like these days. The website's rotating banner has 5 slides. The first three are "[Map shows EPA land grab](#)", "[Committee approves bill to prohibit EPA from using secret science](#)", and "[Future to NSF: Stop wasting money](#)." The other two slides are links to a live interview with astronauts (Lamar's quote on the subject- "Space inspires future generations to dream big and work hard.") and a plea to follow the demise of science on Twitter.

Lamar is pushing two showpiece bills. The first, "[The High Quality Research Act](#)", would change the way the National Science Foundation allocates research money, making it justify grants according to standards set by Congress. The second, the "[Secret Science Reform Act of 2014](#)", would make it harder for the EPA to use the expertise of academic scientists, but easier to use that of industry-affiliated ones. We'll just focus on the NSF funding bill, because that should be enough to make you apoplectic on its own...

Scientific research gets about two thirds of its funding from the research and development departments of private industry, about a third from the government (through universities and specialized departments), and a very small percentage from charitable foundations. Most of the government funding is distributed by the [National Science Foundation](#), which for years has been the gold standard for science funding around the world. Since it's been working fine, Lamar wants to fix it. He wants the NSF to certify, before any award, that the research is

- 1) "... in the interests of the United States to advance the national health, prosperity, or welfare, and to secure the national defense by promoting the progress of science;
- 2) "... the finest quality, is groundbreaking, and answers questions or solves problems that are of utmost importance to society at large; and
- 3) "... not duplicative of other research projects being funded by the Foundation or other Federal science agencies."

Sounds good, but a person competent in science wouldn't have come up with that list. Why? Science covers, and NSF funds, far more than these narrow areas. It is impossible to tell in advance which fields of research will yield the next breakthroughs, new industries, or life-changing technologies, and it's criminally stupid to restrict science in this way. They wouldn't help the advancement of science at all, but what these rules would do is give Congress (and the Pubs) control over what science gets funded. Don't like the science of climate change? Just don't fund it!

Now, we aren't scientists, BUT... here are people who *are* scientists (and a couple non-scientists) so we'll shut up while they talk...

[Mandating Scientific Discovery Never Works](#)- Lawrence Krauss, physicist and cosmologist, Arizona State University

[The House of Representatives Committee on Science is turning into a national embarrassment](#)- Ashutosh Jogalekar in [Scientific American](#) magazine

U.S. Lawmaker Proposes New Criteria for Choosing NSF Grants- Jeffrey Mervis in [Science](#), the magazine of the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#)

What Representative Lamar Smith Is Really Trying to Do at NSF- Jeffrey Mervis in [Science](#), the magazine of the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#)

Battle between NSF and House science committee escalates: How did it get this bad?- Jeffrey Mervis in [Science](#), the magazine of the [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#)

Letter from Eddie Bernice Johnson to Lamar Smith re: NSF Funding

Taking Research for Granted- Texas Republican Lamar Smith continues his crusade against independence in science- Tim McDonnell in Slate Magazine

Lamar Smith, GOP Push Politicization Of Scientific Research- Michael McAuliff and Ryan Grim, Huff Post Politics