



Tom Dwyer Automotive Services Monthly Newsletter for December, 2015

Tom's Tidbits

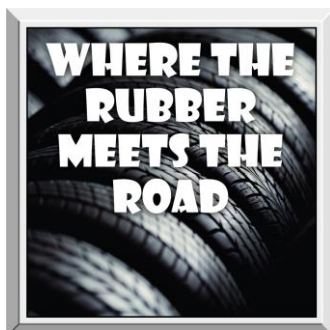
The common sense of Donald Trump

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Elf jokes. Yes, elf jokes

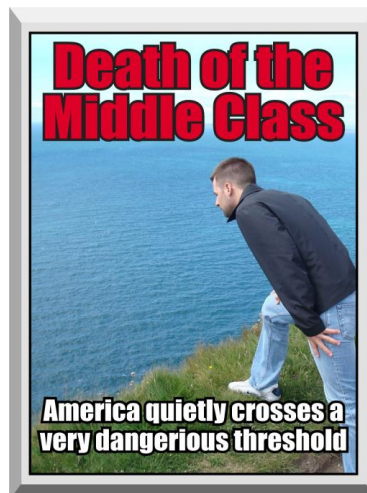
Popcorn Shorts

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

- Yes, Virginia, there is a Fashion Santa Claus
- Don't waste your time with today's education
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News To Make You Furious

The Death of the Middle Class



Tom's Tidbits

The common sense of Donald Trump



Greetings!

Entering the last Republican presidential debate, Donald J. Trump had a [27-point lead in the Republican presidential primary](#). Early (and unscientific) polls show his lead grew after the debate, with about [34% of respondents](#) saying they planned to vote for him. Rational Americans are appalled, and even the [Republican Party establishment is running scared](#). Donald Trump is terrifying, but he's nothing new. He's just the latest incarnation of a problem that goes back centuries, one that, in some ways, our country was intended to solve...

As Trump entered the debate, his proposal to [stop Muslims entering the United States](#) was drawing fire at home and abroad, but being an international laughing stock didn't even seem to slow him down. In the debate he treated us to "smart" ideas for [holding terrorists' families' hostage](#) and [shutting down the Internet](#), among other gems. Besides being difficult or physically impossible to actually implement, these ideas are in blatant [violation of our Constitution and domestic and international law and treaty](#). But The Donald, or more importantly his supporters, don't seem deterred by the law, customs, or values society is based on; they're dismissed it as "political correctness", a bump on their road to a glorious future.

[One conservative commentator said](#) "...to a lot of folks [Trump is] Fascism or Mussolini, to other folks [he] makes common sense." That's *precisely* the root of Trump's threat! He *does* sound like common sense to a lot of people, and those people have always been with us. They may be honest, earnest people, not conscious of any hatred, bigotry, fear, anger, or frustration at all. But they're the people a demagogue uses, the ones ready to follow someone with cynically simplistic answers... right or wrong.

[The received wisdom from the Media](#) is that Trump speaks for the political revolution of a disillusioned electorate. They shake their heads at the quaint commoners who want change so badly they will vote for a carnival barker instead of the candidates anointed by the Corporatocracy, all while the Media plays a master role in that decision. Trump isn't the only candidate for the disillusioned... compare him with Bernie Sanders. Sanders is channeling the fury of the electorate too, but without demagoguery. On the other hand, he represents systemic change that would be a threat to the Media's Corporate masters, and he's eminently electable with the possible Independent voter. Can't have that! So the [Media covers Trump an amazing 81 times more than Sanders](#), then magnifies any instance when the People back Trump.

Today, in *our* America, a selfish thug spouting the "common sense" of Fascism is finding fertile ground, but it's a thinner strip of ground than the Media would have us believe. [Roughly 26% of Americans identify as Republicans](#), and Trump is currently carrying about 30% of those... about 8% of America. That's ghastly, but thankfully these people won't solely decide the election. It *will* be decided by the 43% of America that identifies as Independent, and fortunately we already know that fascists of the past, present, or future are no place to go for answers. As the Trump fecal storm continues, let's take what comfort we can from that... and rationally examine our options, whether the Media reflects it or not.

Make a Great Day!

What NOW?!! Toons

Our monthly check-in with Keith Tucker



"WHAT NOW?!!!"

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WWW.WHATNOWTOONS.COM

Last Minute Fantasy Shopping Guide

What to get your mechanic (or other folks) for Christmas



Can you believe it? Christmas is just days away! While many people have already finished their shopping, we at Tom Dwyer Automotive are here for the rest of you... the last-minute shoppers with one perfect gift left to get. And do we ever have a list of perfect gifts! Choose from pills that make you poop glitter, gerbil feeders for babies, USB wall outlets, multi-million dollar yachts, and much more. From the things you can't live without to the things you can't live knowing they exist, here are our suggestions for the naughty and nice on your list...

The Weird, Wild, and Wonderful

The best shopping sites we found had a combination of things you might actually consider buying combined with things that just make you wonder...

This Is Why I'm Broke

Far and away our most favorite shopping site was the appropriately named ThisIsWhyImBroke.com. Who's on your list... Techno geeks? Craft enthusiasts? New parents? Culinary geniuses? Pet lovers? Doesn't matter; ThisIsWhy has something for absolutely everyone, and on every budget. It has hundreds of amazing gifts with sub-lists for kids, women, men, and more, but don't cheat yourself... while away the hours browsing through the pile yourself. Here's a few of our favorites to get you started...



[Three player chess](#)



[Underground parking dock](#)



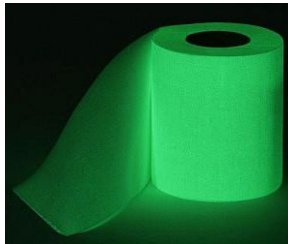
[Wristwatch postits](#)



[Oreo dunking spoons](#)



[Moustache Pacifier](#)



[Glow in Dark Toilet Paper](#)



[Crib Dribbler](#)



[USB Wall Outlets](#)

Dodo- 42 Funny Gag Gifts

While the overall site has gifts of all kinds, this sub-list from Dodoburd.com concentrates on the giggly ones. Emergency clown noses, man candles, creative profanity generators, and animal butt refrigerator magnets give you the general flavor of what you'll find. What we can't figure out is why a product as useful and appealing as bacon bandages made this list!



SkyMall.com

You've been on a flight with nothing to do, and you've reached into the seat pouch to pull out the SkyMall catalog. You know you found several things you liked, but now that it's Christmas you've probably forgotten all about them. Here's a reminder!

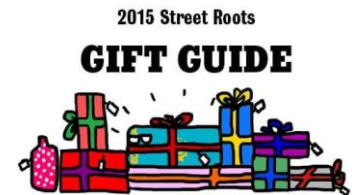


Giving Gifts while Giving Back

If you want to do good as you do your holiday shopping, here are several gift guides that connect gifting with giving back to the larger community...

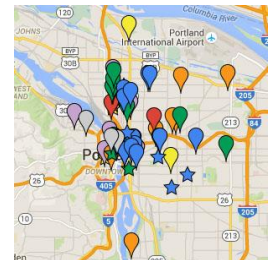
2015 Street Roots Gift Guide

Street Roots presents its first holiday Gift Guide. All businesses and nonprofits are based in Portland and were selected because they offer perfect holiday gifts, with part or all of the proceeds going to a dedicated charity. Some of the charities benefitting are Albertina Kerr, Audobon Society of Portland, and the Community Cycling Center.



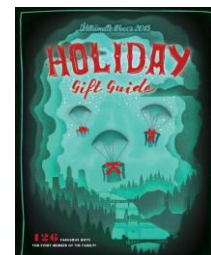
XRAY.FM Holiday Shopping Guide

XRAY is one of our favorite stations now that KPOJ is gone. They've put together a buying guide directing you to all the station supporters in Entertainment, Food & Drink, Retail, and more. Full disclosure; you'll find Tom Dwyer on the list (we offer gift certificates) but shopping at any of these local companies will help build our local economy and support independent balanced media at the same time.



Willamette Week's Holiday Gift Guide

When it comes to gift guides, Willy Week has been doing it right for a while now. Their 2015 Guide has 126 gifts in 15 categories from local companies.



Gifts for the 1% (or your fine local mechanic)

You know, deep down, that you can't show up for the annual ALEC Christmas party empty-handed. It's just not done. If you need to pick up something on the way, here are a couple sites for your last-minute plunge into ultimate consumerism...

[Dude I Want That- Exotic Car list](#)

It's not all just exotic supercars... there are flying cars, amphibious cars, aircraft, and terrestrial spaceship RVs as well. If you can't afford the whole car, pick up accessories like the motorized license Plate Masks or heating/cooling car seats as well.



[The Future Shape of Luxury Yachts](#)

Those cars are great, but even the little people can give cars. When you're ready to move up to the big leagues, it's time to give a yacht.



Gifts For People You Don't Like

Not everyone on your gift list is someone you really want to buy for. The bombastic relative, the obnoxious neighbor you'll see at the neighborhood Christmas party, the annoying co-worker you got for Secret Santa, they all could be in the running for a gift. Don't waste your seasonal cheer on someone who won't appreciate it; something from this list will bring a smile to your face (if not theirs).

[Hello Barbie](#)

Every year the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood holds a contest to pick the Worst Toy of the Year. With an overwhelming 57% of the vote, this year's "winner" is [Mattel's Hello Barbie](#). Hello Barbie is a talking Barbie doll, which isn't unusual and could even be charming. But *this* Barbie interactively asks questions, records the child's response, and [sends the recording to a third party for analysis](#). Less charming.



[World Against Toys Causing Harm \(WATCH\)- 2015's 10 Worst Toys](#)

This Massachusetts consumer watchdog is dedicated to child safety, and releases a yearly list of their 10 worst toys. Linger over their list of toys that risk blunt force trauma, eye injuries, paralysis, or death, but finish up with the "make your own poo" kit. All available from a fine toy peddler near you.



[41 Gifts We Don't Want](#)

Microphone tongs, smoking mittens, and an automatic pet petter ("Never touch your pets again!") will get you started here.



What You Really Clicked For

And of course, as promised, here are the [pills that let you poop glitter](#). What, you didn't think we were making that up, did you?



Where the rubber meets the road

The basics of tire selection and purchase



c

Knowing the basics

There are many things to consider when choosing new tires for your vehicle. Not only must tires fit rims and wheel wells that vary dramatically, but tires are designed with different features for different loads, conditions, and applications.



Most vehicles can be safely fitted with a number of tires of

different sizes, and all cars have tire information stickers giving acceptable stock and optional sizes for the vehicle as well as proper air pressure settings. You can find these stickers on the driver's side door post (or in the glove box) or in your Owner's Manual. No matter their end use, all tires must conform to Federal Safety Requirements which have been standardized for all manufacturers. The variables in tire sizes and functions are required to be cast into the sidewall of all tires, resulting in the long strings of letters and numbers that make up a tire's "size". These variables include:

All-season (mud and snow) rating

Speed rating

Temperature rating

Treadwear rating

Traction rating

Manufacturer mileage warranty

Size

Name brand

All these variables should factor into your choice of a new tire, but some can be more important to you than others. Here is a description of each of these variables and what they mean...

All-Season rating

Tires that are All Season rated are marked with the M/S (mud and snow) designation on the tire sidewall. M/S tires are specially designed for traction in wet or slippery conditions. Special tread patterns and rubber compounds are used that maintain pliability in cold weather and minimize the tradeoff between winter grip and dry wear.

Speed rating

All tires are assigned a speed rating, designating the tires' ability to shed heat built up during high-speed operation. Speed ratings are ranked by the maximum safe operating speeds:

SR= 105 mph; **HR**= 115 mph; **TR**= 125 mph; **VR**= 150 mph; **ZR**= 180 mph

In most cases the lowest speed rating is acceptable... after all, how often do you drive over 100 mph for a full hour? Even if you were to run an SR rated tire at speeds over 100 mph for a sustained period the tire would probably fail.

Manufacturer mileage warranty

Manufacturers' mileage warranties can be tricky. The rating is subjective and may not accurately reflect the service the tire will deliver. The warranty is for material defect only, and does not cover wear from improper inflation or alignment problems. We recommend using the **treadwear rating** rather than the manufacturer's warranty to determine the life of a tire.

Temperature

The temperature grades are A (the highest), B, and C, representing the tire's resistance to the generation of heat and its ability to dissipate heat under controlled test conditions. The Speed rating and the Temperature rating are related.

Treadwear

As a guideline, the larger the treadwear number is the longer the tire will last. Treadwear grade is a comparative rating based on the wear rate of the tire when tested under controlled conditions on a specified government test course. For example, a tire graded 150 should wear one and a half (1.5) times as long as a tire graded 100, but real-world results will vary. A rough interpolation of the numbering system would be:

Under 200= less than 30,000 miles	360= about 50,000 miles
260= about 30,000 miles	400= over 60,000 miles
320= about 40,000 miles	Over 500= about 80,000 miles

Traction

The traction grades from highest to lowest are AA, A, B, and C. This rating represents the tire's ability to stop on wet pavement as measured under controlled conditions. Stay with the upper grades for traction, because a tire with C traction may have poor traction performance.

Size

While there is room for choice in many tire features, you should never deviate from the recommended tire size for your vehicle. All cars have tire information stickers giving acceptable stock and optional sizes for the vehicle as well as proper air pressure settings. You can find these stickers on the driver's side door post (or in the glove box) or in your Owner's Manual. Never mix tire sizes on a vehicle.

The best way to explain tire size is by example, so let's look at a common tire size of **195/75 R 14**.

The "**195**" is the width of the tire at its widest point that is, at the "bulge", not at the tread. This measurement is in millimeters.

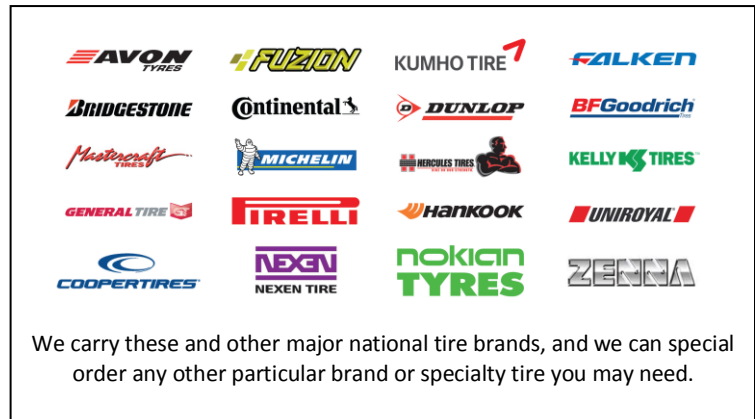
The "**75**" is the aspect ratio, or the ratio of the width to the height of a tire expressed as a percentage. It's the distance of the bead of the tire (the part of the tire that matches against the rim) to the ground, divided by the width of the tire at the widest point (195 mm in this example). Our example aspect ratio is 75, or 75%, so this tire would be 75% as tall as it is wide. As tires get wider they get taller within the same aspect ratio.

The "R" means this would be a radial tire. Sometimes you'll see "P" or "LT" before all these numbers, which indicates that the tire is designed either for a passenger car or a light truck, respectively.

The "14" is the mounting diameter. It's the size of the center hole of the tire, or alternatively, the rim size you'll need for a given tire. Since you know the tire width is in millimeters, can you guess what unit of measure is used for the mounting diameter? Wrong! Mounting diameter is expressed in inches!

Name Brand

Brand familiarity can matter when comes to tires. The quality can be reasonably assured, and it is much easier to warranty a national brand tire like a Michelin, Dunlop, Cooper, Goodyear, Firestone etc. than a Solar, Vixen, Jupiter, Pneumant, or other local or off-brand tires. It's usually best to stick with a well-known, national brand.



Making the basics work for you

The "No-Brainers"

Knowing what those complicated letters and numbers mean is one thing, but making the knowledge useful is another. When it gets right down to it, though, some of these variables really have no-brainer choices...

- Always buy tires in **sets of at least two**, and sets of 4 if you can afford it. Buying one new tire can create driveability issues when mixed with other tires of varying wear, and some vehicles require tires to be replaced all at the same time.
- Please **don't buy recap tires!** We see no value in them when for a few dollars more you can have a real tire. The savings don't justify the risks involved.
- If you live in the Northwest you should almost **certainly use "All-Season" rated tires.**
- Unless you drive like a maniac, Speed Rating should not be an issue. **For the vast majority of people SR rated tires are fine.** Some tire sizes require a particular Speed Rating; for example, most low profile tires will come with HR or higher Speed Rating.
- Manufacturers can make whatever claim they want for a mileage warranty, so don't overly rely on their rating. **Use the Treadwear number for the best idea of tire longevity.**

The “Choices”

Beyond the above three "givens" there's more leeway for choice. As general advice, though, we recommend that you stay within these guidelines...

- Never buy a tire with ratings less than a “200” Treadwear rating or lower than a “B” Temperature rating

Ratings lower than these indicate poor quality, and tires are not an area to economize. It's amazing how much more quality can be purchased for a few extra dollars per tire. Ideally we recommend tires with ratings like:

Touring Tire- Treadwear- 360-540, Traction– A, Temperature- B-A
Performance Tire- Treadwear- 200-360, Traction- AA-A, Temperature- A

Comparison Shopping

Cost per mile

A neat trick to compare relative value between tires is to approach it like unit pricing at the grocery store. Divide the cost of any tire by the Treadwear number to get the **cost per mile**. The higher the number, the more expensive the tire. You can compare tires' value by this method even when the tires are of very different quality or cost.

As an example, let's say you have a choice between a 320AA tire for \$50 or a 540AA tire for \$75. Which one would you pick? All other things being equal, the best tire is the one that gives you the most miles per dollar.

\$50.00 (cost) divided by 320 (treadwear) = **.16 cents per mile**

\$75.00 (cost) divided by 540 (treadwear) = **.14 cents per mile**

The 540AA costs less per mile and would be the better buy provided you need longer lasting tires, care for the tires, and keep them rotated and aired up properly.

Get COMPLETE information

Tires and their costs are just part of the tire-buying decision. When shopping for tires make sure to ask these basic questions about the tire AND the service that goes with them:

- How much is the tire(s) itself?
- Does that price include mounting and balancing?
- Does that price include an alignment? If not, how much is an alignment?
- Do you rotate and balance your tires for free?
- Do you repair your tires for free?
- Can I purchase road hazard insurance for your tires?
- If I need additional services, how long will it take to have these services performed?

Taking care of your tires

Once your baby has its new pair of shoes, you'll want to get the maximum life out of them. These are good basic guidelines no matter what type of tire you buy...

- Make sure to have the alignment checked and/or corrected whenever you buy new tires.
- Keep tire air pressure set to manufacturers' specification (usually 26-32 psi)
- Rotate, balance and inspect tires every 6,000 miles.
- Don't drive on a low or flat tire.
- If the steering wheel is off-center or the car pulls to one side, have it checked ASAP.
- If you hit a curb, huge pothole, or other object have it checked ASAP.

Digging Deeper

This article represents just some of the most basic information you need to know to make good tire buying decisions, but tires and tire technology go far beyond what we've shared with you here. If you want to know more about tires, here are several other sources you may find useful...

[The Insane Research And Technology Behind Tires That Keeps You Safe](#), Mate Petraný on Jalopnik, Mar 2014

[Studded Tires](#), Tom Dwyer Automotive Services, Jul 2010

[When Should I Replace My Tires?](#) Tom Dwyer Automotive Services, Nov 2010

[Why are tires black?](#) Tom Dwyer Automotive Services, Jan 2011

[Will Polyurethane Replace Rubber for Tires?](#) Tom Dwyer Automotive Services, Jan 2011

[How to keep track of tire wear](#), Tom Dwyer Automotive Services, Jan 2011

Our Most Unusual Clients

Our small contribution to “The Force Awakens”




We’re feeling the same excitement as everyone else surrounding the release of “Star Wars- The Force Awakens”. It’s one of the most highly anticipated movies in decades, with expectations running high for a strong new start for the franchise. But we know something you might not... it almost didn’t happen! We thought now was the time to share a little story with you about our most unusual clients ever, and our own small contribution to the Force...

The day was winding down when we got a call from Han S., a longtime client we hadn’t heard from in a while. He said he with one of his vehicles we hadn’t seen before, an older-model Correllian freighter, had been having some problems. A service droid at a Quicky Lube had “pulled the codes” on it but they just couldn’t narrow things down any further. He said he had a must-keep business appointment with some moisture farmers, and wanted to make sure his vehicle was up to the trip. We took a look at the vehicle in question and it looked pretty rough. We don’t take on NEW clients with vehicles made a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, but we’d been working on Han’s 2008 Camry for a while and had built a relationship with him already. We said we’d take a look, and scheduled an appointment for him later in the week.

Han dropped the vehicle off the day before his appointment using our Early Bird night drop off service. He left it in the parking lot and dropped the keys through the door so his Falcon was ready and waiting for us when we opened the next day.

We started by performing our Inspection For Repair to get a mechanical baseline for Han’s vehicle. This is our most in-depth inspection, designed to identify what’s working, what’s broken, and what to keep an eye on coming up. One of our ASE Master-Certified techs had the vehicle for a full day to inspect and evaluate every available system. His ship’s computer had a fairly strange accent so we even had to plug in an older translation droid to get the proper information! We identified several issues with the vehicle, including a short circuit that could cause the cabin lights and computers to fail unexpectedly. We also found the same error code the Quicky droid found, but that one code could have been caused by either the alluvial dampers or his hyperdrive motivator. We’d have to do a little more digging.



Han S. Correllia
4 friends
28 reviews

★★★★★

12/3/2015

Gotta say, the guys at Dwyer really came through for me. I've had been having problems with the starboard flux manifolds on my Falcon for years and could never get the balance right. Believe me, you don't want a sudden power drop or unexplained engine cutout in my business! I've had it looked at by every shop and dealership from Hoth to Bespin, and no one could ever find the problem. Dwyer's techs did a complete inspection, found the problem, fixed it CORRECTLY, told me what to keep an eye out for coming up, and did it all for a very reasonable price. AND they gave Chewie a ride to their shop in their Courtesy Shuttle for FREE! You can't beat service like that, even in Mos Eisley. Tom, Ken, Drew, Dean, Perry, and all the Techs... you've got a new client for life!

[Click here to read Han's 5-star review of his experience with us!](#)

We called Han to discuss the results of our inspection and told him we’d need a little more time to determine which failure was causing his fault code. He authorized another hour and we put one of

our best diagnostic Techs on it. Sure enough, the problem was in the hyperdrive motivator... the positronic flow regulator was jammed so the ion stream couldn't polarize properly. We replaced the flow regulator and cleaned the ionic polarization jets, and the motivator was good as new. Unfortunately, the particle stream from the leaking regulator had ionized the alluvial dampeners... it wasn't a problem now, but could become a problem later if it got worse.

During the afternoon, Han called to say he wouldn't be able to pick up the vehicle by the time we closed. We told him we could lock it out and he could pick it up after closing, but he wanted his partner, Chewie B., to pick it up for him instead. Han paid us over the phone and we sent our Free Courtesy Shuttle to pick up Chewie downtown.

While the Shuttle was gone for Chewie, the Falcon was undergoing the final Post-Service check we do on all vehicles, checking things like fluid levels, air pressures, and signal lights. We even found a deceleration light that had been ~~shot out~~ damaged that Han wasn't aware of. We found and fixed it for the cost of the bulb... little things like that can easily draw the attention of Imperial patrols!

Back to the shop, we explained the results of our inspection and repairs and gave a prioritized list of items to watch out for in the future. Chewie said "RAUUuuGGH. NNAAaarrrraugGGHH! AARRRRRoohhHHH, GGRRRrrroooooaahhHH" which (roughly translated) means "Thanks for fixing that hyperdrive motivator! It's been giving us headaches for a long time. We'll live with the short in the cabin lights... hitting it above the doorway seems to fix it. Didn't know about that other problem with the dampeners. Thanks for telling me! I'll keep an eye on it and start saving now for repairs later."



Two more Dwyer clients leave happily, if a little hurriedly.

Chewie chatted with our friendly, non-commissioned Service Advisors a while and was looking over our Book and Bumper Sticker library when Han burst through the door and said it was time to leave... right then. Han and Chewie rushed into the parking lot and into their waiting vehicle, where they blasted off to their moisture-farmer meeting just as a man in a strange black costume accompanied by a horde of white-armored thugs pulled into the lot. But that's ANOTHER story....

Drew's Kitchen



Roast prime rib with thyme au jus

Drew came to the table with something special for the Holidays this month, and take it from us... any recipe that includes 7 pounds of meat and 8 cloves of garlic will be special indeed!

Roast prime rib with thyme au jus

Ingredients:

- 1 bone-in prime rib (6-7 pounds)
- 8 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- Salt and coarsely ground black pepper
- 2 cups red wine
- 4 cups beef stock
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh thyme leaves

Preparation:

- Thirty minutes before roasting the prime rib, remove it from the refrigerator and let come to room temperature.
- Preheat oven to 350°
- Make small slits all over the prime rib and fill each slit with a slice of the garlic. Season liberally with the salt and coarse pepper, place on a rack set inside a roasting pan and roast for about 2 hours until medium-rare, or until a thermometer inserted into the center of the meat registers 135°F. Remove the meat to a platter and tent with foil to keep warm.
- Place the roasting pan on top of the stove over 2 burners set on high heat. Add the wine to the pan drippings in the pan and cook over high heat until reduced, scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Add the stock and cook until reduced by half.
- Whisk in the thyme and season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Slice meat as desired and serve with thyme au jus

Cooking time

10 min preparation; 30 min inactive; 2 hr cooking

Makes 6-8 servings.

-Recipe by Bobby Flay on Boy Meets Grill

Shop Talk

Our Referral Reward Quarterly Winner and your next dashboard



Comment of the Month

One of our clients said, "Instead of getting my car fixed, I'd rather come down and hang around with the staff- kind of like 'Cheers' where everybody knows your name."

We work very hard to be mechanical experts, but we also know the personal touch makes ALL the difference. We don't push our people to be fake-friendly and plastic smiles; we hire intelligent, experienced people and let them build their own relationships with clients, and it's great to hear when a client says we've achieved it. In this Holiday season, we'd like to say how valuable ALL our clients are, and how much we value the relationships we've built with each and every one. From all of us at Tom Dwyer Automotive, we offer our best wishes to you, your family, and friends, and we look forward to continuing these wonderful relationships into 2016 and beyond. Happy Holidays to everyone!



Your Next Dashboard

Are you still coming to terms with touch-screen controls on your car? If Delphi, the auto electronics maker and PureDepth, a New Zealand graphics company have their way, you're about to get even further behind the curve. At the January CES expo in Las Vegas they'll be debuting a full 3D display on their dashboard screen. They swear it's more than just showiness, but that it's designed to tackle the problem that we've certainly never heard of.

"Normally traditional instrument displays present different images to the left and right eyes," said Darryl Singh, PureDepth CEO. "On longer trips drivers can experience headaches, eye strain and sometimes even nausea." Hmm. Well, keep an unstrained eye out for this new tech, which could be annoying you in your next new vehicle.



Referral Reward Program- Third Quarterly Award

Our Referral Reward Program is our way of saying "thanks" for your generous referrals without actually bribing you to make them! Every time a new client tells us you referred them to us, we'll call you up and ask which non-profit group you'd like us to make a donation to. Although December was a great month as far as the number of people who came in from referrals, we weren't able to make as many donations as we would have liked because we weren't able to connect new clients to individual referrals. People kept saying they were referred by a "friend", "neighbor", or "co-worker"! If you're going to refer people (and please do!), please make sure they know to tell us you sent them or we can't donate to *your* cause (and we want to!) Even though it has been slower than in months past, we were able to make 5 donations this month totaling \$155 to the following groups...

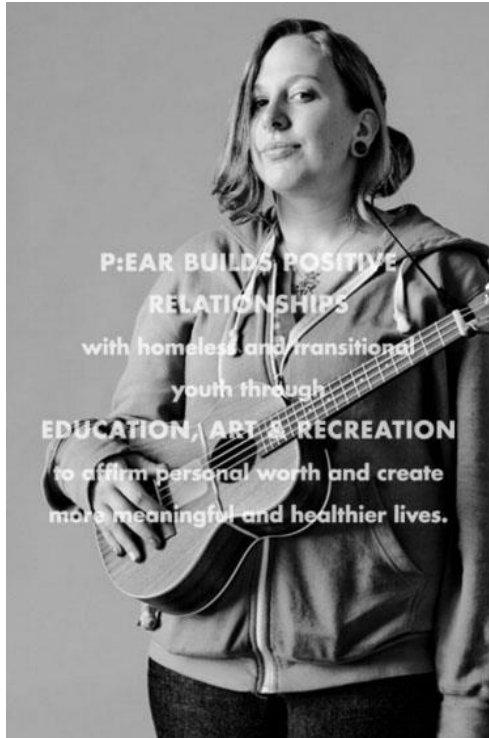
[Neighborhood Partnerships](#) by Margot J. (twice!)
[Union Gospel Mission](#) by Joy S.

[LifeWorksNW](#) by Mike S.
[Oregon Food Bank](#) by Mark L.

That makes **\$4080 in donations to 68 groups in 2015 alone**, and **\$9710 to 152 groups since the program began**. Now that it's December we get to boost that total even more with our third quarterly award. The groups our clients selected for the past three months are pooled and we choose one of these groups for a quarterly award of \$200. While we try not to pick a group so large that our donation wouldn't matter and

we try to stay with local groups, there aren't really any stringent criteria for the winner. We try to pick a group that's doing strong, valuable work in the community and making a difference in the lives of individuals or all of us here in the Northwest. This quarter's winner fits on all counts, so without further ado let us announce the winner of 2015's third quarterly award...

p:ear



This Portland group with the odd name is dedicated to mentoring homeless youth, with the idea that it takes more than solving the immediate physical problems to create a permanent change. From [p:ear's website](#)...

"p:ear builds positive relationships with homeless and transitional youth through education, art and recreation to affirm personal worth and create more meaningful and healthier lives. Each year our programs serve almost 900 homeless and transitional young people ages 15 to 24. P:EAR STRENGTHENS LIVES

To truly exit homelessness, kids must develop the internal strength, skills and foresight to make healthy choices. p:ear provides a safe, non-judgmental environment in which youth are trusted to outgrow unproductive and harmful behaviors. We offer individualized mentoring and education programs in a safe, reliable setting designed to foster trust, build self-esteem and to teach homeless and transitional kids – who all too often are regarded by society

as disposable, "hopeless cases" – that they are valuable individuals with a future who have something vital to contribute to this community.

p:ear staff and volunteers serve as mentors, friends, and role models, while p:ear's unique programs create opportunities for young people to grow intellectually, express themselves constructively, communicate in positive ways and engage in meaningful interactions with the larger community of Portland. This is not work that can be accomplished in the short-term. These are relationships based on trust that take years to cultivate and require enormous dedication to sustain.

We are committed to being there for p:ear youth over the long-haul to share failures and successes, mundane events as well as life-altering milestones.

p:ear mentors youth through education, art and recreation. Learn more about p:ear programs [here](#).

Make a difference in the lives of p:ear youth: volunteer or make a gift. p:ear is a 501(c)(3) organization and gifts are tax-deductible. p:ear's tax ID/EIN is 93-1327944."

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.



Health Notes

This is how air pollution affects YOU



China has been grappling for years with an oppressive air pollution problem. That problem went [critical this month](#) when the smog became so thick it brought the Beijing to a standstill and caused air pollution red alerts in Beijing and yellow alerts in Shanghai. We all know air pollution is bad, but do we all know why? Here's a [video that explains what air pollution does in the body](#), along with links to more in-depth articles on health effects of air pollution and the current situation in China.



[Ambient Air Quality and Health](#), World Health Organization, Mar 2014

[Health Effects of Ozone and Particle Pollution](#), American Lung Association, 2013

[How Air Quality Affects Health](#), BC Ministry of Environment, 2008

[See How China's Smog Problem Goes Beyond Beijing](#), Lydia O'Connor on The World Post, Dec 2015

Sellwood Bridge Update

Tentative opening date announced!



For years now, we've been giving you monthly updates on the renovation of the Sellwood Bridge. Maybe this is the time to admit it... these updates haven't always been riveting. We always try to find something interesting to say about it, but the project has been running as smoothly and quietly as a successful project does. But this month we can FINALLY give you the Update that matters most. The County has announced the new Sellwood Bridge will (tentatively) open on...

February 27, 2016

That's right! Back off, Tillicum Crossing... in just a little over two months, you'll be able to walk, bike, or drive across the Sellwood Bridge, the *new* newest bridge in Portland! And you'd better believe, we'll be helping to celebrate this milestone!

The opening date is still tentative because two months is a long time in construction, and a lot could still happen. But right now, the plan is to have limited traffic and a big opening bash on Saturday, February 27, with full opening on Monday, February 29 (Leap Day). Since the date is tentative the party plans are as well, but the SWBA ([the Sellwood/Moreland business group](#)) started making plans Thursday at their monthly meeting.

Here's a caution... while the bridge will be opening on the 27th, that doesn't mean construction is over. There's still a lot of work to do, most importantly with the road work on the West side and the eventual removal of the old bridge. However, things have been moving reasonably smoothly so far and it should only get better with the move to the new traffic lanes. Construction will continue throughout next year, with the final bit finished in November 2016.



[Sellwood Bridge gets decked for the Holidays](#), David Ashton in The Bee, Dec 2015

Sellwood Bridge Deck Pour Marks Last Major Step, Tim Newcomb on ENRNorthwest, Dec 2015

Sellwood Bridge opening celebration and bike party set for February 27th, Jonathan Maus on BikePortland.org, Dec 2015

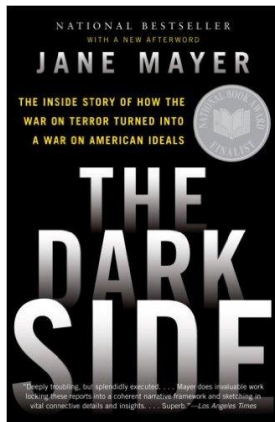
As always, Multnomah County maintains the definitive website on everything related to the Sellwood Bridge Replacement project, www.sellwoodbridge.org. Construction and closure alerts, archived information, and other resources are all available 24/7 for your convenience. If you're looking for something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

“The Dark Side” by Jane Mayer



Star Wars fever is pervasive, but if you think it's invaded the sacred space of our Book Spotlight, you're wrong. "The Dark Side" isn't about The Force being twisted to serve evil, it's about Our Forces being twisted to serve evil. OK, it's pretty close, but that's just a coincidence. Promise.



[“The Dark Side” by Jane Mayer](#)

In the days immediately following September 11th, the most powerful people in the country were panic-stricken. The radical decisions about how to combat terrorists and strengthen national security were made in a state of utter chaos and fear, but the key players, Vice President Dick Cheney and his powerful, secretive adviser David Addington, used the crisis to further a long held agenda to enhance Presidential powers to a degree never known in U.S. history, and obliterate Constitutional protections that define the very essence of the American experiment.

The Dark Side is a dramatic, riveting, and definitive narrative account of how the United States made terrible decisions in the pursuit of terrorists around the world — decisions that not only violated the Constitution to which White House officials took an oath to uphold, but also hampered the pursuit of Al Qaeda. In gripping detail, acclaimed New Yorker writer and bestselling author Jane Mayer relates the impact of these decisions — U.S.-held prisoners, some of them completely innocent, were subjected to treatment more reminiscent of the Spanish Inquisition than the twenty-first century.

The Dark Side chronicles real, specific cases, shown in real time against the larger tableau of what was happening in Washington, looking at the intelligence gained — or not — and the price paid. In some instances, torture worked. In many more, it led to false information, sometimes with devastating results. For instance, there is the stunning admission of one of the detainees, Sheikh Ibn al-Libi, that the confession he gave under duress — which provided a key piece of evidence buttressing congressional support of going to war against Iraq — was in fact fabricated, to make the torture stop.

In all cases, whatever the short term gains, there were incalculable losses in terms of moral standing, and our country's place in the world, and its sense of itself. The Dark Side chronicles one of the most disturbing chapters in American history, one that will serve as the lasting legacy of the George W. Bush presidency.

Humorousness

Elf jokes. Yes, elf jokes



Santa's not the only thing that brings joy and smiles during this season... our Humorousness column does as well! Memorize a few of these elf jokes and you'll be a hit at your office Christmas party. Besides, they'll be funnier after a few mugs of nog anyway.

What kind of music do elves like best? "Wrap" music!

How many elves does it take to change a light bulb? Ten! One to change the light bulb and nine to stand on each other's shoulders!

What kind of bread do elves make sandwiches with? Why, shortbread of course!

What kind of money do elves use? Jingle bills!

Why did Santa's helper see the doctor? Because he had low "elf" esteem!

How long should an elf's legs be? Just long enough to reach the ground!

What did the elf say was the first step in using a Christmas computer? "First, YULE LOGon!"

Why did the elf put his bed into the fireplace? He wanted to sleep like a log!

What's the first thing elves learn in school? The "elf"-abet!

Who sings "Blue Christmas" and makes toy guitars? Elfis!

Who lives at the North Pole, makes toys and rides around in a pumpkin? Cinder-"elf"-a!

One elf said to another elf, "We had Grandma for Christmas dinner". And the other elf said, "Really? We had turkey!"

Why do elves scratch themselves? Because they're the only ones who know where it's itchy!

How do elves greet each other? "Small world, isn't it?"

Santa rides in a sleigh. What do elves ride in? Mini vans!

What do you call an elf who tells silly jokes? A real Christmas Card!

What do they call a wild elf in Texas? Gnome on the range!

Why did the elves spell Christmas N-O-E? Because Santa had said, "No L!"

Why did the elves ask the turkey to join the band? Because he had the drum sticks!

If athletes get athlete's foot, what do elves get? Mistle-toes!

What's another name for Santa's helpers? Subordinate clauses!

Where do you find elves? Depends where you left them!

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!



Yes, Virginia, there is a Fashion Santa Claus



Many people don't realize Santa wasn't always Santa. Before 1931 there was no "standardized" Santa; he appeared as everything from a human to an elf until [Coca Cola turned him into a jolly, fat, elfin human](#). Kris Kringle underwent another transformation this year, as Toronto's Yorkdale Shopping Centre revamped him for a new generation with [Fashion Santa](#). Model Paul Mason personifies the svelte and stylish Santa, who has been getting a lot of attention on-line. Santa's been great for the shopping center, but even better for the SickKids Foundation which gets \$1 for every selfie posted under the hashtag #YorkdaleFashionSanta (up to \$10K). A Merry and Fashionable Christmas to us all!

Don't waste your time with today's education



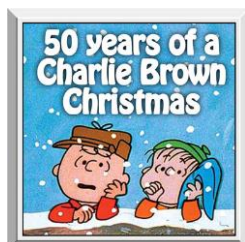
Dave Brown, otherwise known as Boyinaband, [made a rap video of himself commenting on the state of education](#). Don't run away yet... almost 7 million people have viewed this video so far! Dave walks down a British country lane explaining all the things he *didn't* learn in school... things like first aid, basic finance, helping suicidal friends, or the basic laws of the country, compared to the things he did learn, like the quadratic equation or Henry VII's love life. It's making an impact as English teachers are attempting to bring more life-competency education in their classes, responding to the prompting of their students.

Where Christmas really comes from



The magic of Christmas means time spent with your family making cookies, hand-painting ornaments, and hand-making gifts for the people you care about. Of course, that's horse pucky. No matter how special it might remain, the hand-madeness of Christmas is a thing of the past. Christmas today means plastic junk hung by the chimney with care. If you think those cheap baubles come from elves at the North Pole, you're wrong. Almost universally they come from China's factory cities, and there's a price to be paid. Don't let it get your Holidays down, but [this tour of Chinese Christmas producers](#) may really give you something to think about!

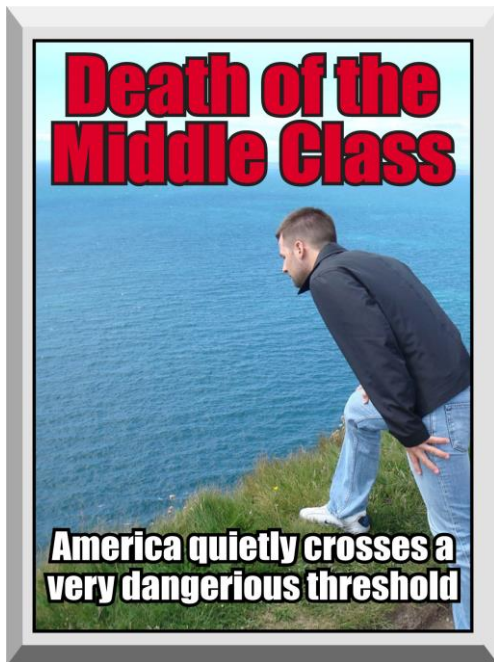
50 years of a Charlie Brown Christmas



One of our all-time favorite animated shows, holiday or not, is the classic "A Charlie Brown Christmas". It's not just on TV again this year (and on every net-TV service available) but this is the 50th year it's been on... this is the 50th anniversary of A Charlie Brown Christmas! [Click here to learn about some of the behind-the-scenes stories of the production of this holiday tradition](#), including such gems as the Coca-Cola product placement and deleted scenes you may never have seen. And since one of the best parts is the music, click here for a taste of one of [the iconic Charlie Brown Christmas](#) tunes.

News To Make You Furious

The very quiet death of the Middle Class



Some of the most pervasive shapers of our societies are too slow to be seen clearly as they're developing, but can only truly be seen as in a long term view. Think of things like industrialization, urbanization, global warming, or population pressures. One of the instrumental features in America's post-war growth has been the intentional creation of a strong middle class; economically secure enough that food and shelter didn't dominate their thinking, stable and educated enough to be participating citizens in government, yet not rich enough to wield dangerous power as individuals. The middle class is critical to keeping us from sliding either into oligarchy or mob rule.

As recently as 1971 the middle class made up 61% of American society, with 25% below and 14% above. A recent study by the Pew Research Center shows how much that has changed... the middle class now includes only 50% of our people, with 29% poorer and 21% richer. This is the dangerous threshold... for the first time in 44 years, the middle class is not a majority in our country!

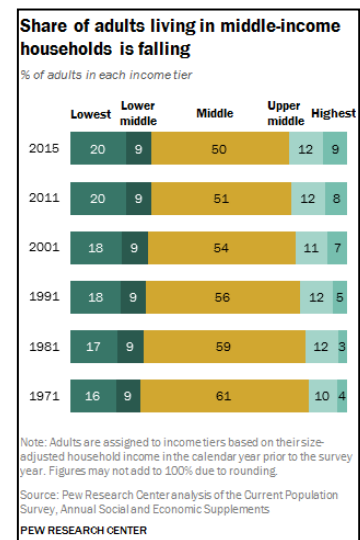
Of course, that's just one way to look at the story. As the Pew study points out,

"In at least one sense, the shift represents economic progress: While the share of U.S. adults living in both upper- and lower-income households rose alongside the declining share in the middle from 1971 to 2015, the share in the upper-income tier grew more."

That is indeed a valid way to interpret the data, but Pew continues...

"Over the same period, however, the nation's aggregate household income has substantially shifted from middle-income to upper-income households, driven by the growing size of the upper-income tier and more rapid gains in income at the top. Fully 49% of U.S. aggregate income went to upper-income households in 2014, up from 29% in 1970. The share accruing to middle-income households was 43% in 2014, down substantially from 62% in 1970."

As you can probably imagine, the Pew report is deep and detailed with plenty of fodder for any politician to chew on, if they were only interested in doing so. We're sharing it with you this month not because we have much to add to it, but because it has passed completely under the media radar. This is critical information, and too important to let pass by unnoticed. Especially



with a presidential campaign looming, it's incumbent on a responsible electorate to understand the changes happening beneath their feet so they can make educated, informed choices about their leaders. It's a duty shared by everyone in the middle class... if there's any of us left.

Digging Deeper...

Here are links to the full Pew report, along with some of the interesting commentary we've seen so far...

[The American Middle Class Is Losing Ground- No longer the majority and falling behind financially](#), Pew Research Center on Social & Demographic Trends, Dec 2015

[5 Takeaways About The American Middle Class](#), Kochhar and Fry on Facttank, Dec 2015

[The Vanishing American Middle Class Should Be Way More Alarming Than People Seem To Realize](#), Gwynn Guilford on Quartz, Dec 2015

[Half Of America Is In Or Damn Near Close To Living In Poverty](#), Paul Buchheit on AlterNet, Dec 2015

[America's Nine Classes: The New Class Hierarchy](#), Charles Smith on Washington's Blog, Apr 2014

[The Death Of The American Dream In 22 Numbers](#), Michael Snyder on Washington's Blog, Jan 2015

[Goodbye Middle Class: 51 Percent Of All American Workers Make Less Than 30,000](#)

[Dollars A Year](#), Michael Snyder on Washington's Blog, Oct 2015

[Study: Congress Literally Doesn't Care What You Think](#), Gilens and Page study referenced on Represent.us

[It's Official: The Middle Class Is Now Less Than Half of the Country](#), Kali Holloway on AlterNet, Dec 2015

[Millennials Waking Up From the American Dream](#), Sydney Robinson on Ring of Fire, Dec 2015

[Infographic: Money Controls American Government](#), Jasper McChesney on Bulletin.represent.us, Nov 2015

[A Slow, Steady Farewell to the American Middle Class](#), Dartagnan on Daily Kos, Dec 2015

[A Holiday Note to Congress: Half of Your Country is In or Near Poverty](#), Paul Buchheit on Common Dreams, Dec 2015

[Goodnight American Dream: The Middle Class Is Now a Minority](#), Peter Van Buren on Common Dreams, Dec 2015