



# "Your Car Matters"

Tom Dwyer Automotive Services Monthly Newsletter for February, 2021

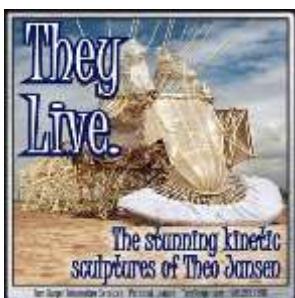
## Meet Our New Robotic Service Advisors

They've never been  
on commission, but  
now they aren't  
even paid at all!



## Do Mechanics Perform Free Diagnostics?

The short answer is  
'no', but the longer  
answer is interesting.



THEY LIVE! The  
stunning kinetic  
sculptures of Theo  
Jansen



Right 2 Health focuses  
on Black health equity



STUNNING video from  
the Reykjavik eruption



The Word on Weed is  
now fact-based



We were a  
cancer patient  
on fire. Are we  
any better off  
now?



Why aren't you  
hearing from us  
anymore?



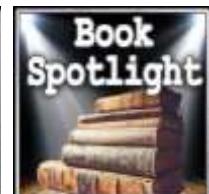
Toons,  
Puzzles, and  
Years and  
Years of Our  
April Fools  
Jokes



Lab-grown  
humans and  
the failure of  
the Standard  
Model



The search for  
a vaccine  
against  
EVERYTHING



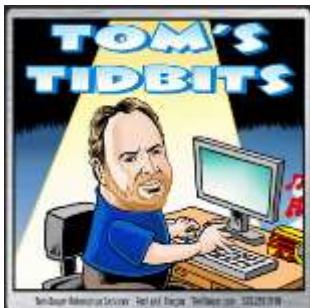
"The Code  
Breaker" by  
Walter  
Issacson



Grilled Cheese  
on an Actual  
Grill

# Tom's Tidbits

We were a cancer patient on fire. Are we any better off now?



Greetings,

The best metaphor for America today may be a medical one. Every country faces problems and every person faces the threat of disease, but 'health' is the ability to deal with these threats. For problems as simple as sniffles or as bad as the flu, healthy countries or people can usually recover. Others illnesses will kill us if left untreated.

Cancer develops quietly for years until the symptoms become too obvious to ignore, but once it's diagnosed the only options are treatment or death. Similarly, problems like systemic racism, economic devastation, endless war, environmental destruction, and more have been festering in our country for decades. Their symptoms have been undeniable for a while, and now most of us realize that, on some level, our options are treatment or death.

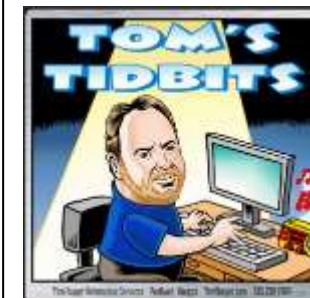
Through Reagan, two Bushes, a Clinton and an Obama, America has been a cancer patient. Some doctors offered to treat the symptoms while others offered placebos. Most offered anesthetics. None offered a cure. We, the American citizenry, were left to argue which ineffective treatment was best while the cancer kept growing. Then came Trump, and it was as if someone shouldered through the doctors to douse the patient with gasoline and set them on fire. The cancer was still there, but now the fire would kill the patient much more quickly and effectively. For four years we burned, and anyone offering a cancer cure was sidelined. There was a bigger priority... we had to put out the fire. And we did.

Now our team of doctors faces a cancer patient who is also a burn victim. Those burns are wide, deep, and life-threatening. It wouldn't make sense to pretend Trump is still stoking the fire but it also wouldn't make sense to pretend his burns aren't there. They might yet be fatal in themselves, but they'll certainly complicate any treatment of the underlying cancer in the meantime. But the cancer still grows, and we desperately search for a cure.

Republicans and Democrats aren't the same at all, but both played their own parts in the cancer eating us and I don't think political partisanship is helpful in calling out governmental abuse. I look back over my Tidbits from the Obama years and I don't see fawning partisanship, I see critiques of NSA spying, drone murders, and healthcare failures. Our KPOJ spots from the Bush years weren't just empty attacks on Republicans, but substantive disagreements on corporate citizenship, endless war, and corruption. Even during Trump's reign, I tried to pay attention to the cancer until the fire took center stage. Now the fire is out, but Biden and the Democrats have helped metastasize the cancer with devastating criminal justice, trade, and economic policies for decades. They're a welcome return to sanity compared to Trump and there are real reasons to be hopeful. But we still have cancer, and I intend to be very critical of Joe Biden's medical recommendations in the next four years.

We're all huddled around the charred hospital bed of our Loved One, hoping against hope for the best. Covid is beating the patient with a baseball bat, Russia is making the heart monitors give bad readings, and a crowd of people from South America is banging at the door of the hospital room to get in. Without a doubt, other problems are coming down the hall. Our original team of doctors still waffles between symptom relief, placebos, or an actual cure, while a couple strange new doctors even recommend lighting the fire again. Two months into the Biden administration is too early to be sure what Dr. Joe Biden is peddling, but for now at least, the fire is out... we can concentrate on the cancer.

Make a great day,



We've had an editorial opinion on just about every subject for years



Here's all our ads from the days of KPOJ... almost 200 of them!



Tom Dwyer Automotive Services • Portland, Oregon • TomDwyer.com • 503.230.2308

## Meet our new Robotic Service Advisors... or else

They've never been on commission... now they aren't even paid at all!

"It was hard saying goodbye to all the old guys, but these new Robotic Service Advisors are the wave of the future." So said Tom Dwyer about his shop's latest technological upgrades. "Our clients expect respectful human contact from real people who care about their needs and know their vehicles. They're used to advice in their interest and not our shop's bottom line. Well, no more of that touchy-feely stuff! Replacing caring human

Service Advisors with these profit-driven behemoths means money, money, money for us! There may be something in it for our clients, too. Let me think..."

As in other industries, the human factor has always been the biggest weakness in the auto industry. Humans divert profit from a shop's bottom line. They need pay, they get sick, they take pride in their work, and they deserve respect for basic human dignity. Robots eliminate all these problems. Robotic Technicians are still on the horizon, but robotic Service Advisors were much easier to create. "If you ignore their technical expertise, trust, and integrity, Service Advisors really just hand out invoices and swipe credit cards" said Tom. He beamed when discussing the Advisor's Personality Packages. "These new HAL (Human-Automotive Liaison) units are programmed to mimic all the human warmth our clients expect, but with the profit-at-all-cost mindset the rest of the industry has perfected!"

Another big change is the pay motivation of the HAL units. Tom explained "Service Advisors at most other shops are on commission. If they don't sell they don't get paid, so it may be in their interests to sell you services you don't need. Our human Advisors had no potential conflict of interest because they were always on salary; their only job was to give clients advice that made sense for their personal vehicle-ownership goals. These HALs, though... they aren't motivated by pay at all. We just give them an occasional barrel of human blood or some tips about the Human Resistance Movement and they're happy."

Our obsolete human units were replaced consistent with Tom's environmentally-friendly philosophy. "We didn't just scrap our

**We're famous for our personalized, non-commissioned automotive care**

So our new Robotic Service Advisors are programmed with the same human touch you know and love!

Read all about them at [TomDwyer.com](http://TomDwyer.com)... or else.



First-Time Clients can always save up to \$150!

[www.TomDwyer.com](http://www.TomDwyer.com)

503-230-2300

We welcome NEW CLIENTS WITH 15-YEARS-OLD-AND-NEWER vehicles, but servicing existing clients' vehicles of any age. FIRST-TIME CLIENT OFFER applies to our COMPREHENSIVE INSPECTION. All our offers are subject to terms and conditions, so please CALL US or CHECK OUR WEBSITE for details.

human Advisors; far from it! Ken, and um, Dean, and... and... well, I think there were a couple others, but they were all with us for years and we really cared what happened to them. So we had them recycled." The brains were immediately downloaded into the new HAL units and their internal organs were sold to a black-market Chinese organ bank. "Most of the guys had seen a lot of mileage so their organs were in pretty bad shape, especially livers and lungs. We didn't get as much for them as we hoped for, but probably more than they were worth." The remaining bits were donated to a composting recycler in Roseburg. "Better that than the landfill", said Tom. "The guys would have wanted it this way. Well, probably. It was too late to ask."

Did Covid play a role in the change? "Absolutely", said Tom. "Aside from the fact they don't need filter masks, our HAL units are designed to be easily sanitized. We heat them to red-hot in an 800° kiln then dip them in industrial strength bleach to cool down. This didn't work out very well with the first human Advisors we tried it on, so switching to Robots was the obvious choice. Safety first!"

What does the future hold now that Tom's front desk is humming along with mechanical efficiency? "I'm really looking forward to trying one of CyberDyne's Aggressive Marketing packages. If there's anything easier than automating our Service Advisors, it has to be our Marketing! Rather than sending occasional reminders about your oil changes, we'd just target you with a Marketing Drone Unit. They'd invade your home, bring you to the shop, tell you what you need, tell you what you'll choose to do, extract payment, and return your desiccated husk to your home. You'd be spared the effort and responsibility of making choices, and we'd save the cost of a stamp. It's a win-win!"

It's no accident that client's response to the new Service Advisors has been so positive. "Each HAL has a Complaint Resolution subroutine that allows them to deal with problem clients permanently, so no one has complained out-loud yet," said Tom. He paused for a moment, then calmly reached up and unzipped his face. "As a robot myself, I'm really excited about the possibilities of automating human functions. For more than thirty years I've worked to build a company that provides the highest quality automotive repair along with a fanatic level of customer service. Let me tell you... you humans are nothing but a hassle! Catering to individuals takes effort, building trust takes time, and precision repairs take skill. It's much easier and more profitable to just treat clients as customers and employees as interchangeable commodities that come and go. Our new HAL robots are a real step in that direction!"



Tom shows a rare side of himself in this interview

So don't delay! Resistance is futile... surrender now and come say "Hi" to our new HAL Robotic Service Advisors. Or just wait... we'll send one to you soon enough!

[Want to know more? For full specs on the HAL-Series Robotic Service Advisors \(including that nasty lawsuit over the Advisor going berserk and destroying downtown Omaha\) just click here for the CyberDyne website!](#)



## Do mechanics do free diagnostics?

The short answer is “no”, but the longer answer is important

As we were exploring the world of Quora recently, we saw a simple question: “Do mechanics do free diagnostics?” We answered by explaining the difference between diagnostics and inspections, why an inspection alone often isn’t enough to diagnose vehicle problems, and why you should DEMAND to pay for diagnostic time. We thought our answers might be useful for Quorans around the world, and hope they might be interesting to you as well...

### **Do mechanics do free diagnostics?**

*(Original answer from Quora.com, March 2021)*

“Yes and no, but mostly no. Just about every auto shop has a “free inspection” of some type, but these vary by quality and none are ‘diagnostics’. A ‘diagnostic’ is much deeper, much more focused, and much more demanding than an ‘inspection’ of any kind. An inspection may expose a problem, but it takes diagnostic time and knowledge to know WHY it’s happening.

Some problems are straightforward... if a fan belt is broken it’s a pretty simple diagnosis and an inspection will reveal it, but most problems are more complex. Even if you take your vehicle to a mechanic or parts store to “pull the codes”, it probably won’t give an answer because most error codes can have several causes. If, for example, your vehicle is intermittently losing power then inspecting it or pulling codes usually won’t tell you why; it will take the time and attention of a qualified mechanic to track down the cause. Without a specific diagnosis, a shop will ‘throw parts’ at the most likely causes in hopes they’ll hit on a solution. That’s great if they hit it on the first try, but second, third, or even fourth tries can get inconvenient and expensive. Don’t let a shop make repairs without a clear diagnosis! The shop will charge you for this time, as well they should, but it will be worth it to you.

In short, if you aren’t paying money for a mechanic to diagnose your vehicle, it probably isn’t happening. People get confused by this and the shops probably share some blame... if they can get a customer in on a freebie, they can up the bill with the dreaded “second call” later. We don’t like confused clients; we want our clients to know exactly what’s going on so they aren’t ambushed or disappointed later.”

From there we directed Quorans to two of our newsletter articles that went even deeper into the diagnostic weeds. We hope these are helpful as well, but as always, if you have any other questions our Service Advisors are here to help!



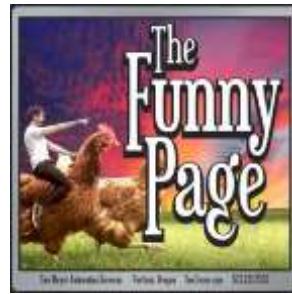
**“What’s Wrong With My Car? Diagnosing vehicle problems requires more than a code reader or gut feeling.”**



**Shop Talk- Why Do We Charge For Diagnostic Time?**

# The Funny Page

These are the jokes, folks! Now all in one place.



## Our April Fools Archive

In a strange way, we take April Fools day very seriously and we have for years. You may even have noticed an April Fools article tucked in with this month's valuable information! But it's not the only thing we've done. [Check out our April Fools Page with all our Foolish articles and Sellwood Bee ads](#), or check here for all the [April Fools pranks you'll ever need](#). And share this [Home Halogen Fluid test](#) with people YOU'D like to annoy!



**"WHAT NOW?!"**

© KEITH TUCKER  
WWW.WHATNOWTOONS.COM

# More or Less

A play-with-words puzzle  
by Jen Rombach

# More *Play-with-words* puzzle



**START LIST:**

ASH	PURSES
BARRE	RUIN
HEARD	SPIED
HEELED	SWAM
LUGE	TROTHS
	URGE

**CAPTION:**

—	—	—	—	—	—	—

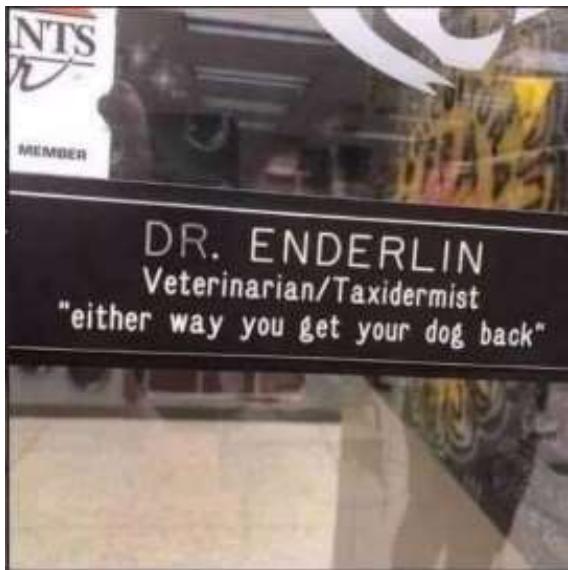
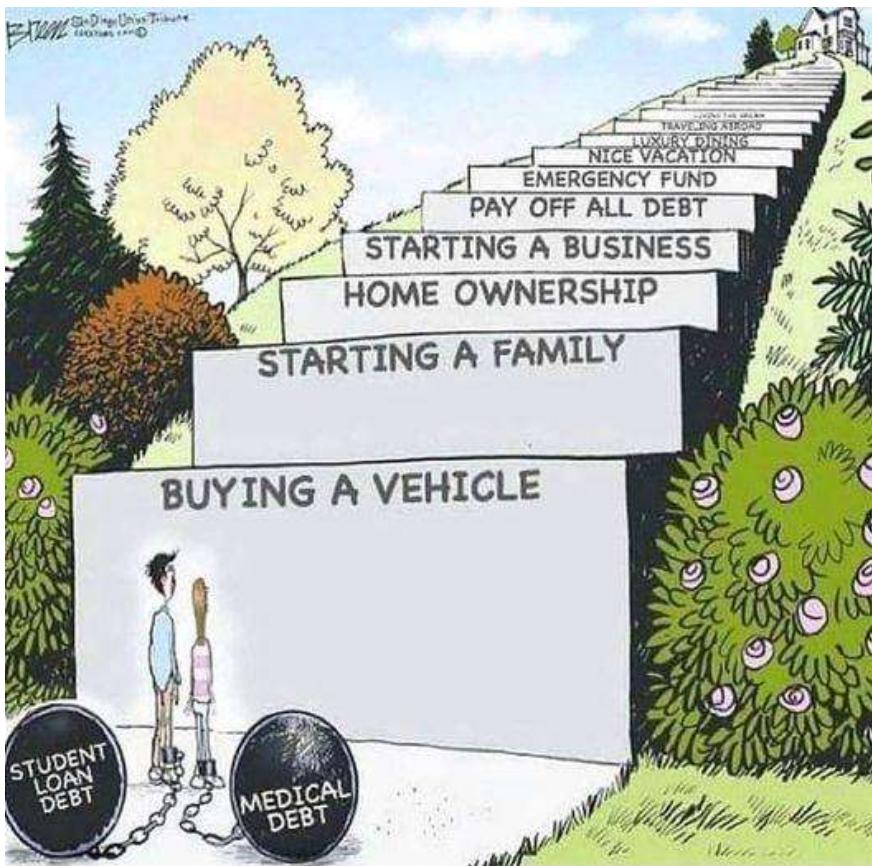
## DIRECTIONS:

Solve for the new **THEME WORDS** by either adding or subtracting (+/-) each letter from the column of **THEME LETTERS** to a word from the **START LIST**.

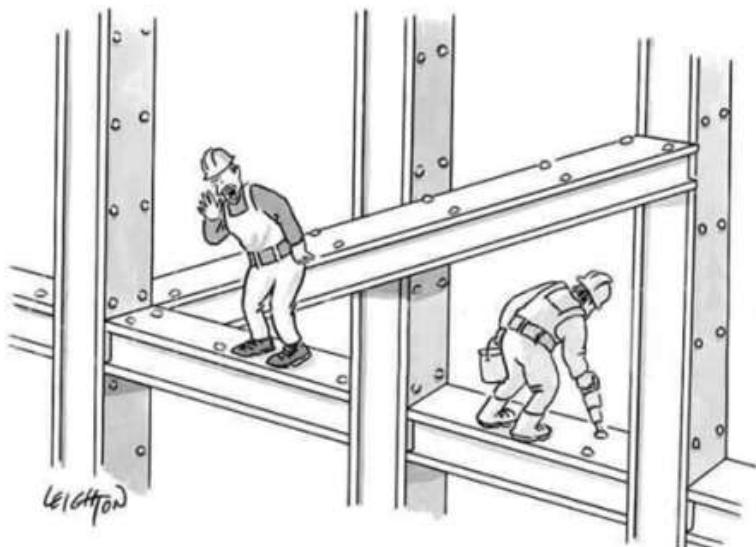
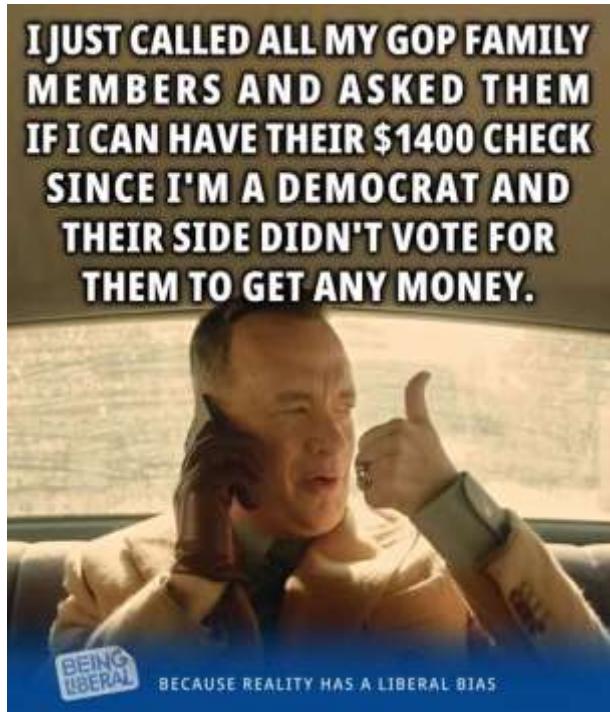
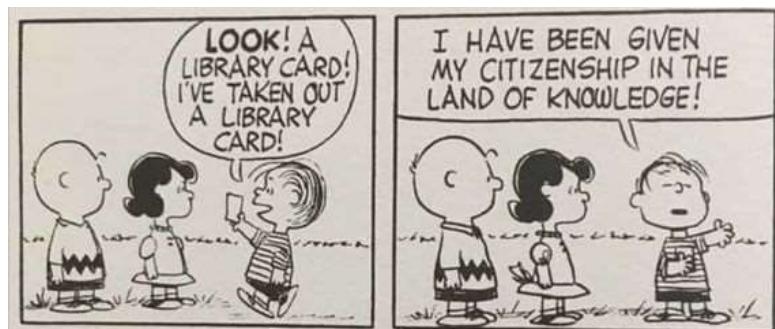
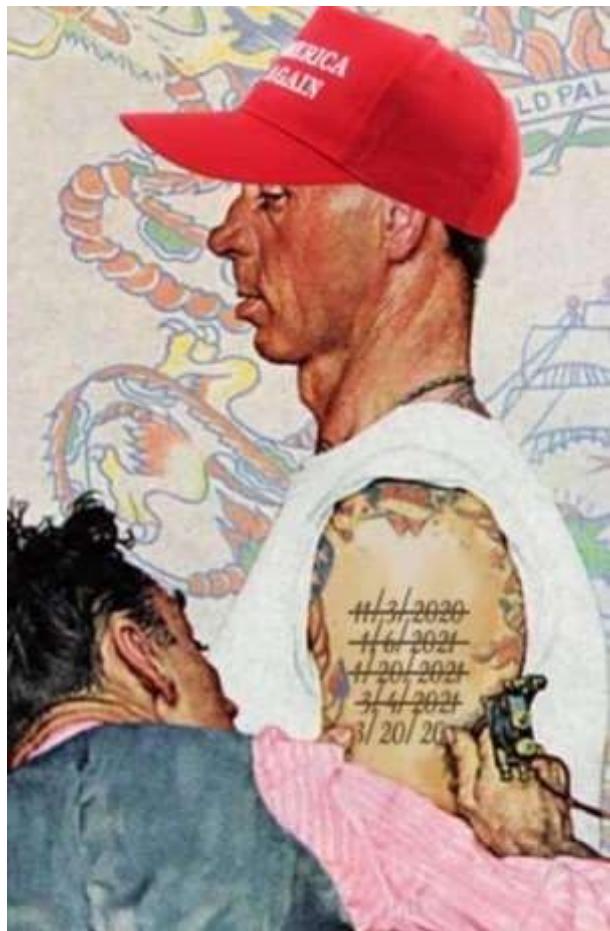
- Answers will fit the **THEME** and go next to the letter used.
- THEME LETTERS** -(+/-)- may go anywhere in the word (beginning / middle / end) to form the new **THEME WORD**.
- Each **THEME LETTER** and each word from the **START LIST** will only be used once. \* (multiples of a same letter within the **THEME LETTERS** each have their own word and only one place in the puzzle.)
- Anagram the boxed letters of the solved **THEME WORDS** to find the related caption that will match up the picture to the **THEME** ....more or less!

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## Laughs from around the Tubes

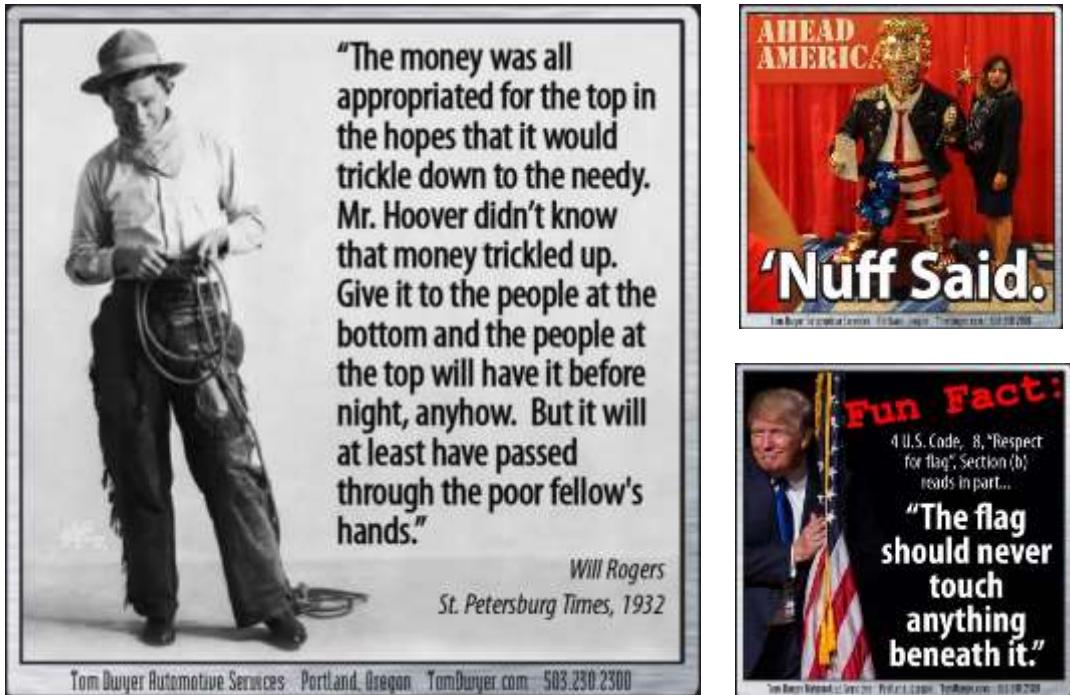


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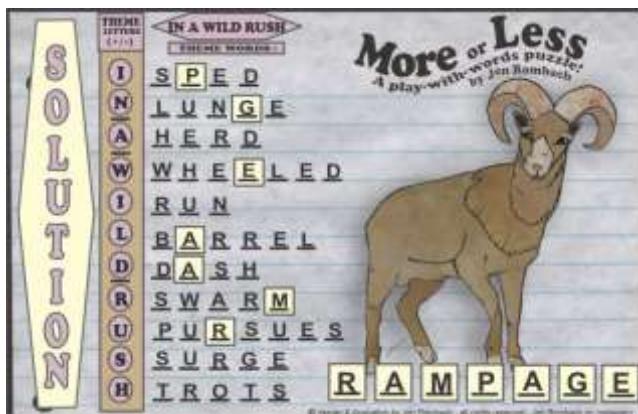


*“Escher! Get your ass up here.”*

## A Few Memes from your Mechanic



## More or Less Solution for December



# Shop Talk

Why aren't you hearing from us anymore?



## Comment of the Month



We haven't had Comments from many of our clients in quite a while, so this month we have a special call-out to Lori J., Daniel O., Ariel C., Ben S., and many, many more... WHERE ARE YOU?

YOU are reading this now because you received it as an email, but we also send out interval reminders by old-fashioned snailmail. In most cases you can expect to hear from us 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, and 18 months after your last service to remind you when your oil change is due, when other maintenance is due, or to let you know about special offers we may be running. But here's the problem... we can't send you mail if we don't have a correct address for you.

If you haven't been getting hardcopy reminders from us then that's the reason, we just don't have a good address for you. If our Service Advisors don't ask you when you're here, PLEASE ask them if your address is correct. If you don't want to receive these reminders then just tell us and we'll gladly take you off the list, but if you want to stay in touch with us then make sure we can... PLEASE confirm your correct address!

## Current Special Offers



The pandemic isn't over quiet yet but since there seem to be stirrings of health in the economy we're lowering our Covid discount a little more. If you took advantage of the 33%, 30%, or 25% level, THANK YOU for keeping us open during some of our darkest days! If you haven't yet taken advantage of this amazing offer, act now... a vaccine means hope for Covid, but a limited lifetime for our Covid Discount.

*Offer expires 4/30/21*

*\$200 minimum purchase required*

*(10% off Labor for services under \$200)*

*You must tell us you want this offer WHEN YOU SCHEDULE YOUR SERVICE!*

*Offer is VOID AFTER SERVICE IS COMPLETE*



Our across-the-board Covid discount has dropped to 20%, but it's not too late for you to still save 25%. If you've had service recommendations in your Tom Dwyer file since 1/31/21 (or before) but you just haven't acted on them, then you can still save **25% off Labor Charges** if you act on them before 4/30/21. Even during a pandemic your vehicle needs consistent care, and Auto Amnesty is a great way to catch up on the services you may have been putting off.

*Offer expires 4/30/21*

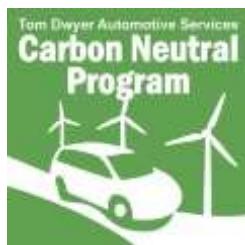
**\$200 minimum purchase required**

**Discount limited to service recommendations in your Tom Dwyer file on 1/31/21 or before**

**You must tell us you want this offer WHEN YOU SCHEDULE YOUR SERVICE!**

**Offer is VOID AFTER SERVICE IS COMPLETE**

## We also have a couple ongoing offers you might find valuable...



**Carbon Neutral Program-** Our company's commitment to the environment led us to partner with [Bonneville Environmental Foundation](#) to create our Carbon Neutral Program in 2007. Client members offset the carbon production of their vehicles for one year AND save 10% on Labor Charges here at the shop! It's a win for you AND our environment and it's been very successful... since we instituted the program our members have prevented over 1.9 MILLION POUNDS of carbon from being dumped into our air!



**Referral Reward Program-** Year after year, referrals from our existing clients are our greatest source of new clients, so we've tried hard to think of some way to appropriately reward people for their referrals. Our solution is our Referral Reward Program, where **we make donations to the non-profit group of your choice to say 'thanks' for your generous referrals**. Here's how it works...

## 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!

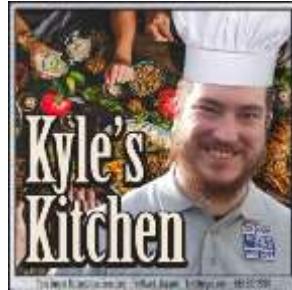
## Latest Automotive Recalls



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.

# Kyle's Kitchen

## Grilled Cheese on an Actual Grill



“Grilled Cheese”. It’s a lie by The Man because we all know that grilled cheese involves synthetic cheese, a skillet, and too much butter. No grill needed. But Kyle will rock your world with this month’s recipe, a grilled cheese sandwich that actually involves a grill!

You’ll need a REAL grill, one with a lid that closes, and that’s the secret. The same smoke that adds flavor to a steak adds flavor to all the ingredients of a grilled cheese sandwich. Get creative... add turkey, grilled onions, or sliced eggplant. And get grilling!

### Ingredients

- 2 thick slices sandwich bread
- 2 tablespoons salted butter
- 3 ounces cheese that melts well, like American, cheddar, pepper jack or Havarti
- Something to add a little substance and soak up the smoky flavor, like turkey, grilled veggies, caramelized onions or roasted red peppers

### Directions

- Preheat your grill to medium and brush the grates til they're spotless. Bits of charred stuff aren't so nice on bread.
- Spread the butter on both sides of the bread, then assemble the sandwich.
- Place the sandwich on the grill, press down firmly once with a sturdy spatula, then close the lid and let cook for 3-4 minutes, checking halfway through to make sure no spots are scorching.
- Flip and cook on the other side for 3-4 minutes. If the bread is toasting too quickly, move to indirect heat.
- Remove from the grill, slice in half and serve.

More grilled cheese recipes on Food Republic:

[Chopped Steak Grilled Cheese Sandwich](#)

[Grilled Pear, Roast Beef and Blue Cheese Sandwiches](#)

[Tomato-Orange Soup with Grilled Cheese Croutons](#)

Original recipe in [Food Republic](#)

Prep time: 10 min    Cook time: 10 min    1 sandwich

# Health Notes

The search for a vaccine against EVERYTHING



## The Search for One Vaccine to Rule Them All

By Emily Mullin in Future Human, Feb 2021

With the 21st century came the H5N1 avian flu. First, poultry and wild birds succumbed to it. By the mid-2000s, dozens of people in Southeast Asia fell ill, and around 60% of those who contracted it died. Governments predicted a pandemic and drew up preparedness plans, but it never arrived. Meanwhile, a different strain of flu was bubbling up halfway around the world.

In April 2009, the H1N1 swine flu began infecting people in Mexico and soon spread to the United States. Later that month, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the first-ever “public health emergency of international concern.” Swine flu spread around the world quickly, and the WHO officially deemed the situation a pandemic in June.

The perpetual threat of an influenza pandemic led researchers like Matthew Memoli, MD, a virologist at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), to pursue the idea of a universal flu vaccine — one that would ideally provide broad and long-lasting protection against any new influenza strain people might encounter year after year. His team’s research has shown promising results against seasonal flu.

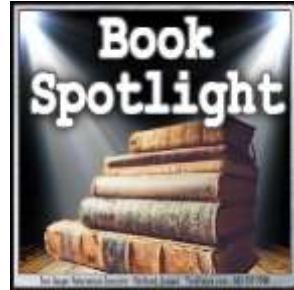
Now, he’s taking what he’s learned and applying it to a new effort to make a universal vaccine to provide protection against multiple types of coronavirus — the family of viruses to which SARS-CoV-2 belongs...

*[story continues in Future Human...](#)*

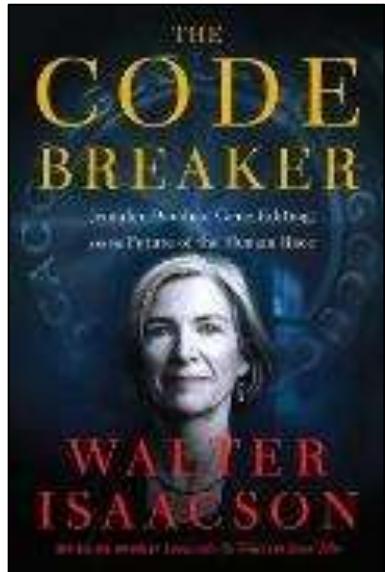
# Book Spotlight

## “The Code Breaker” by Walter Issacson

This Book is available for you to borrow from our [Lobby Book & Bumper Sticker Library](#). Look for it next time you’re in the shop, and our Service Advisors will tell you how to check it out. If you want to pick up a copy for yourself, our hyperlinks go to [Powell’s Bookstore](#). If you want to shop even more locally, Sellwood’s own Julie Wallace would love to see you at [Wallace Books](#).



We heard about this months Spotlight book in an interview on NPR’s ‘Fresh Air’. Doudna’s story is fascinating, but Issacson’s deep dive on some of the potentials of genetic engineering for us, and specifically for our descendants for the rest of human history, are hypnotizing. Ready to be made radiation-proof? We’ve linked to that interview as well as the book itself.



### [“The Code Breaker”](#)

#### Jennifer Doudna, Gene Editing, and the Future of the Human Race”

by Walter Issacson

*(from the publisher)* When Jennifer Doudna was in sixth grade, she came home one day to find that her dad had left a paperback titled The Double Helix on her bed. She put it aside, thinking it was one of those detective tales she loved. When she read it on a rainy Saturday, she discovered she was right, in a way. As she sped through the pages, she became enthralled by the intense drama behind the competition to discover the code of life. Even though her high school counselor told her girls didn't become scientists, she decided she would.

Driven by a passion to understand how nature works and to turn discoveries into inventions, she would help to make what the book's author, James Watson, told her was the most important biological advance since his co-discovery of the structure of DNA. She and her collaborators turned a curiosity of nature into an invention that will transform the human race: an easy-to-use tool that can edit DNA. Known as CRISPR, it opened a brave new world of medical miracles and moral questions.

The development of CRISPR and the race to create vaccines for coronavirus will hasten our transition to the next great innovation revolution. The past half-century has been a digital age, based on the microchip, computer, and internet. Now we are entering a life-science revolution. Children who study digital coding will be joined by those who study genetic code.

Should we use our new evolution-hacking powers to make us less susceptible to viruses? What a wonderful boon that would be! And what about preventing depression? Hmm...Should we allow parents, if they can afford it, to enhance the height or muscles or IQ of their kids?

After helping to discover CRISPR, Doudna became a leader in wrestling with these moral issues and, with her collaborator Emmanuelle Charpentier, won the Nobel Prize in 2020. Her story is a thrilling detective tale that involves the most profound wonders of nature, from the origins of life to the future of our species.

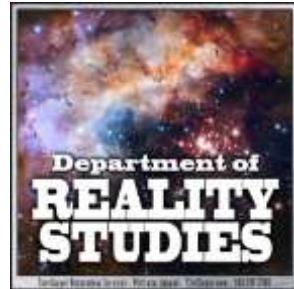


Here's the Terry Gross' 47-minute [Fresh Air interview with Walter Issacson](#)

# Department of Reality Studies

## Lab-grown humans and the failure of the Standard Model

"My ignorance is just as good as your knowledge." Do you believe that? We don't.



Basic science, even basic consensual reality, seems under attack these days. Science and education are increasingly something for the 'elite'; something to be distrusted by honest folk. Scientists aren't trusted on public health, environmental science, or even cosmology, not because they've been proven wrong but because they've been proven so ruthlessly right. Objective reality is inconvenient for those who would like their whims to create reality instead. But society has always and only existed in the real world and modern society isn't possible without science. Pretending otherwise can, and will, get us all killed.

The way to promote understanding and appreciation of science isn't to tell people they should care... it's to show them why it's so exciting. From the unimaginable expanse of the multiverse to the tiniest living beings and the quarks and leptons they're made of, science is an adventure. The "Department of Reality Studies" may do little to affect the appreciation of science for many people one way or another, but we'll enjoy sharing our own excitement with you so we hope you'll check back frequently to see some glimpses of Reality that may not have made your radar. Let's go!

### Ancient kauri trees capture last collapse of Earth's magnetic field

*(from Science Magazine)*- "Several years ago, workers breaking ground for a power plant in New Zealand unearthed a record of a lost time: a 60-ton trunk from a kauri tree, the largest tree species in New Zealand. The tree, which grew 42,000 years ago, was preserved in a bog and its rings spanned 1700 years, capturing a tumultuous time when the world was turned upside down—at least magnetically speaking.

Radiocarbon levels in this and several other pieces of wood chart a surge in radiation from space, as Earth's protective magnetic field weakened and its poles flipped, a team of scientists reports today in *Science*. By modeling the effect of this radiation on the atmosphere, the team suggests Earth's climate briefly shifted, perhaps contributing to the disappearance of large mammals in Australia and Neanderthals in Europe. "We're only scratching the surface of what geomagnetic change has done," says Alan Cooper, an ancient DNA researcher at the South Australian Museum and one of the lead authors of the study.

### Scientists Create Living Entities In The Lab That Closely Resemble Human Embryos

*(from NPR)*- "...scientists have created living entities in their labs that resemble human embryos; the results of two new experiments are the most complete such "model embryos" developed to date. The goal of the experiments is to gain important insights into early human development and find new ways to prevent birth defects and miscarriages and treat fertility problems.

But the research, which was published in two separate papers Wednesday in the journal *Nature Portfolio*, raises sensitive moral and ethical concerns. "I'm sure it makes anyone who is morally serious nervous when people start creating structures in a petri dish that are this close to being early human beings," says Dr. Daniel Sulmasy, a bioethicist at Georgetown University. "They're not quite there yet, and so that's good. But the more they press the envelope, the more nervous I think anybody would get that people are trying to sort of create human beings in a test tube," Sulmasy says."

## **Scientists determine the origin of extra-solar object 'Oumuamua'**

*(from Phys.Org)-* “In 2017, the first interstellar object from beyond our solar system was discovered via the Pan-STARRS astronomical observatory in Hawaii. It was named 'Oumuamua', meaning "scout" or "messenger" in Hawaiian. The object was like a comet, but with features that were just odd enough to defy classification.

Two Arizona State University astrophysicists, Steven Desch and Alan Jackson of the School of Earth and Space Exploration, set out to explain the odd features of 'Oumuamua and have determined that it is likely a piece of a Pluto-like planet from another solar system. Their findings have been recently published in a pair of papers in the AGU Journal of Geophysical Research: Planets.

"In many ways 'Oumuamua resembled a comet, but it was peculiar enough in several ways that mystery surrounded its nature, and speculation ran rampant about what it was," said Desch, who is a professor in the School of Earth and Space Exploration. From observations of the object, Desch and Jackson determined several characteristics of the object that differed from what would be expected from a comet..."

## **New Result From Large Hadron Collider Challenges Leading Theory in Physics – Cannot Be Explained by Our Current Laws of Nature**

*(from SciTech Daily)-* “...Dr. Michael McCann said: “We know there must be new particles out there to discover because our current understanding of the Universe falls short in so many ways – we do not know what 95% of the Universe is made of, or why there is such a large imbalance between matter and anti-matter, nor do we understand the patterns in the properties of the particles that we do know about.

While we have to wait for confirmation of these results, I hope that we might one day look back on in this as a turning point, where we started to answer to some of these fundamental questions.”

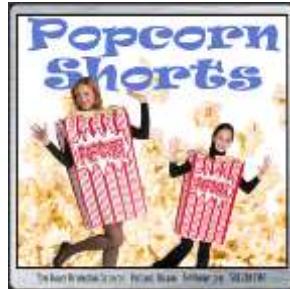
## **Primordial lightning strikes may have helped life emerge on Earth**

*(from NBC News)-* “Researchers said on Tuesday that lightning strikes during the first billion years after the planet's formation roughly 4.5 billion years ago may have freed up phosphorus required for the formation of biomolecules essential to life.

On early Earth, this chemical element was locked inside insoluble minerals. Until now, it was widely thought that meteorites that bombarded early Earth were primarily responsible for the presence of “bioavailable” phosphorus. Some meteorites contain the phosphorus mineral called schreibersite, which is soluble in water, where life is thought to have formed.”

# Popcorn Shorts

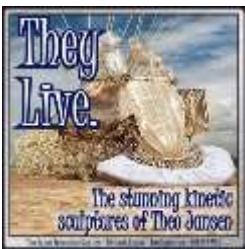
Cool stuff that's too small for a big article



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 necessarily 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!

facebook

## They Live: The Stunning Kinetic Sculptures of Theo Jansen



If a 40-foot skeletal monster comes running at you down the beach, it's time to look for a new beach. But before you flee, see if Theo Jansen's around first... if he's nearby, then it's worth staying for a longer look. Jansen is a Dutch artist who creates Strandbeests (beach animals) from PVC, cloth, and wood. These amazing machines walk down the beach driven solely by the wind. Please don't bother looking at still images; the only way to experience these beasts (if you can't see them in person) is in video. We have three sources for you to start... ["Strandbeest: The dream machines of Theo Jansen"](#) is from his show at the Exploratorium, ["Strandbeest Evolution 2017"](#) shows the development of several beasts, and ["Theo Jansen"](#) is from the Sinaloa Science Center. Start anywhere, but it won't be your last look at Theo's work.

## Right 2 Health- Fighting for Black healthcare equity



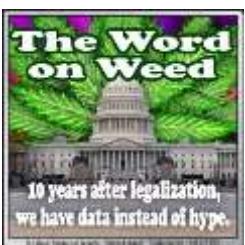
Our broken national healthcare system has made us longtime advocates of SinglePayer. The long-overdue focus on the differences in Black health issues may be an opportunity to move forward. ([from Right2HealthUS.org](#)) "Right To Health is about health prevention. It's about bringing people together to share, care and alleviate the disparities that come with racial injustice and economic inequality. We are a wholly volunteer group with a vision: to create a national network of healthcare providers, researchers, scientists, healers, community leaders, technologists, educators and anyone else committed to alleviating the ills of racism across all ethnic groups, with particular attention to Black Americans."

## Let's All Go Volcano Diving!



(from The Guardian)- "A long-dormant volcano in Fagradalsfjall, near Reykjavik in south-west Iceland, flared to life on Friday night, spilling lava down two sides in the area's first volcanic eruption in nearly 800 years. Initial aerial footage posted on social media by the Icelandic Meteorological Office showed a relatively small eruption so far, with two streams of lava running in opposite directions." But the eruption is bubbling along, and the video is incredible. [START LOOKING at this stunning drone footage by Bjorn Steinbekk showing a flight up the lava flow and into the crater](#), (or [another Bjorn video here](#)) but there's more coverage [here](#) and [here](#).

## The Word on Weed



Washington and Colorado legalized recreational marijuana in 2012 and Oregon joined them in 2014. Now 14 states have legal recreational weed, others have legalized a plethora of marijuana-based products, and 16 more states are considering legalization this year. Yet the evil weed remains illegal on the Federal level and elected representatives still fight against it. Is marijuana a mildly enjoyable pastime or a plague on the nation? We don't have to guess anymore, now there's data. Researchers now have almost a decade of facts on crime, driving, economics, employment, and more. [NPR's 'Planet Money' brought all the data together in one place](#), and surprise... Jeff Sessions apparently had no idea what he was talking about.