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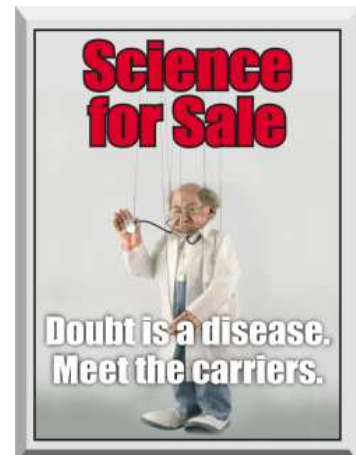
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Tom's Tidbits

Mitch McConnell's slavish devotion to Joe Biden



Greetings!

I never thought I'd see it... Mitch McConnell and the Senate Judiciary Committee have completely caved to the Democrats! They've fought loudly to keep the sacred Constitution safe for all of us, but when it came to doing the duty specified under that Constitution [they collapsed under the power of Democratic rhetoric](#). Mitch and his buddies have decided to elevate Joe Biden's Senate comments about a hypothetical situation to an iron-clad rule of law, the "Biden Rule", that trumps even the Constitution. Mitch does want to hold hearings for the Supreme Court nominee, he really does, but he's so blown away by the radiant truth of Biden's rhetoric that he's just shackled...

Well, here's the thing about the "Biden Rule"... even if such a thing existed outside of Karl Rove's focus groups, it would be wrong. The fictitious "Biden Rule" is based on [Joe Biden's 1992 Senate speech](#), where he said that if a vacancy came up in the Supreme Court that President George W. Bush should wait till the results of the next election before nominating a replacement. Biden was wrong. The speech was even made 3 months closer to the election than we are now, but the fact remains... Biden was wrong. McConnell is too.

Political parties are exactly like opposing attorneys. They'll make the best case they can in support of the position they serve, but it's up to the judge and jury to decide where the truth lies. Democrats in 1992 had partisan motivation to prevent Bush from making a nomination just as the Republicans do today with Obama. But in neither case did their arguments trump the Constitution or functional government. Joe Biden in 1992 and Mitch McConnell today both make cases that would empower their individual factions, but they were wrong then and wrong now. It's up to us, America, to be judge and jury.

The idea that the last year of a President's term somehow doesn't count is absurd. We've [seated many Supreme Court Justices in election years](#), but what if a Justice died with just a week left until the election? A strong argument *could* be made to wait until after the election before filling the seat. The President would still have the right and duty to nominate, but legitimate real-world bureaucracy would make it impossible to rationally consider or approve anyone in the time available. That same logic would apply two weeks from the election, and maybe even a month or two out. But it's an argument based on pragmatism, not some invented notion that The People must participate in judicial nominations. The further we get from the election the less legitimacy even this position has, and with a year left it has no legitimacy at all.

With the changing political horizons, McConnell's position may not even make sense from a pragmatic Republican point of view. As best anyone can tell right now, the next President will be either Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump. Does McConnell think he'll get a better pick (from his point of view) from either of them?

[President Obama has nominated Judge Merrick Garland](#) for the Supreme Court. Judge Garland is widely respected on both sides of the aisle, and seems to be a centrist with things for the [Left to hate](#) and the [Right to love](#). The Senate started their two-week Spring Recess on the day of Garland's nomination, and I hope they'll use this time away for reflection on their Constitutional duty, [aided by loud calls from their constituents](#)! When they come back I hope they're ready to give Judge Merrick the fair, objective hearing that he, President Obama, and certainly the American People deserve. I hope they're ready to [DO THEIR DAMN JOB](#), not hide partisan obstructionism behind the skirts of Democrats. Is all that too much to hope for? We'll find out in April.

Take Care and Make a Great Day!

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

What NOW?!! Toons

Our monthly check in with Keith Tucker



"WHAT NOW?!!"

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WWW.WHATNOWTOONS.COM

How Special Is Your District?

John Oliver schools us all



We love John Oliver. He covers the marquee issues, sure, but he also spends time on smaller issues that don't often see the spotlight. Take his recent rant about Special Districts... the most powerful governments you've never heard of. Special Districts are quasi-governmental agencies usually created for a specific purpose like fire, water, or insect control. They may be small, but there are lots

of them- about 40,000 Special Districts cover the US, and in 2015 alone they took in \$100 *billion* in taxes! Special Districts wield a lot of power, but they also usually operate with minimal oversight and so are ripe for abuse. Sit back, laugh, and learn as John Oliver schools us all on Special Districts, but then cringe as you remember... this lesson on American Civics is brought to us all by a Brit!

"Special Districts" sounds like it could be a bad day in Civics class, but Oliver brilliantly explains all the fine details in a way that will leave you both laughing and thinking. When you're done with John, you can dig even deeper with these Special District links...



[Last Week Tonight with John Oliver:
Special Districts](#)

The Basics of Special Districts

[Population of Interest- Special Districts](#)

US Census website, United States Census Bureau, 2012 analysis

[What is a Special District?](#)

MRSC Website, Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC)

[Cash-strapped governments turn to special districts](#)

Melissa Maynard, USA Today, Oct 2013

[An Overview of Special Purpose Taxing Districts \(PDF\)](#)

Froelich and Gallo, National Association of Home Builders, Sep 2014

Get to know Stingray Services

[Questions Arise Over Billion-Dollar MUD Bond In Montgomery County](#)

Kaitlin McCulley on ABC-13 News, Oct 2015 (get to know Stingray Services)

[Developer Uses "Rent A Voter" Service To Approve Bond Elections](#)

Adrian Heath on County Citizen, Oct 2015

[Help Wanted: Voter For Single-Vote Election](#)

K. Herman on Statesman.com, Feb 2012

Special Districts Across the States

[What's So Special About Special Districts? A Citizen's Guide to Special Districts in California](#)

California State Senate Report (4th Edition), Oct 2010

[Reasons Why Special Districts Are Created](#)

DEO Website, Florida Department of Economic Opportunity

[Special District Fact Sheet](#)

California Senate Local Government Committee, Aug 2009

[How 'special districts' spread across Texas with limited oversight and accountability -- but with plenty of power to tax](#)

Jennifer Peebles on Texas Watchdog.org, Feb 2011

[Special districts -- with power to tax -- grow like weeds in Texas](#)

Deena Winter on Watchdog.org, Dec 2015

[Why California Dissolved Its RDAs,](#)

Shirley Svorny in Regulation Magazine, CATO Institute, Summer, 2014

[Special Districts Association of Oregon](#)

SDAO Website, Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO)

[Governor Scott Launches Probe to Examine Special Taxing Districts](#)

Rick Scott Website, Jan 2012

[Florida's Special District Review](#)

Organization Website

[The Misuse And Abuse Of Special Assessments In Michigan \(PDF\)](#)

Citizens Research Council of Michigan, 1983

Special Districts aren't new...

[The Problem of Special Districts in American Government](#)

Report, US Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, May 1964

[The Special Problems of Special Districts : Services: Consolidation of small agencies won't solve them. A better-informed public might.](#)

James Colangelo in the LA Times, Jul 1993

[A Skeptical New Look at Special Tax Districts](#)

John Rather in the New York Times, Mar 2008

“Confessions of a Republican”

52-year old campaign ad painfully relevant today



As Americans, we all feel a little angst as we watch the agonizing battle for the soul of a once-great Party. A resurrected campaign ad from the 1964 Johnson/Goldwater election reminds us this isn't the first time we've been here. The ad depicts a lifelong Republican wrestling with his Party's choice of Goldwater for President, a man who, among other things, was endorsed by the KKK. The ad so presciently expressed the quandary of today's Republicans that many viewers thought it was faked but it is, unfortunately, real. Here's the ad in all its painful irony along with a connection to the Living Room Candidate site, a source for hundreds more vintage campaign ads from back in the day. And one more thing; if the man in the ad looks eerily

familiar, we can tell you why...

The “Confessions of a Republican” ad was created for the 1964 election, but got its recent resurgence when the website [Quartz posted it in early March](#).

The ad was so spot-on to today's Trump situation that many people believed it was faked. Snopes.com, the internet de-bunking site, [did the fact-checking that proved it was legitimate](#).

“Confessions of a Republican” is one of the many ads on [“The Living Room Candidate”](#), a project of the Museum of the Moving Image that archives campaign commercials. From 1952 to 2012, Eisenhower vs. Stevenson to Obama vs. Romney, everything is here. It's easy to get lost in the history, but there is guidance available. You can either click the [Curator's Choice](#) link to see all the ads *they* recommend, or click one of the five ads below to see some of *our* favorites...



LBJ's [“Daisy”](#) ad-
Only aired once



Eisenhower's
[“Man from Abilene”](#)



LBJ's 1964
[“KKK”](#)



Ronald Reagan's
[“Bear In The Woods”](#)



Ronald Reagan's
[“Morning in America”](#)

One thing that bothered us when watching “Confessions” was the “interviewee” himself. The ad itself was a scripted ad, not a man-off-the-street interview, but the agency that created it did require that the actor be a Republican. The man they came up with seems earnest, thoughtful, and approachable, and does a good job conveying the confusion he's dealing with. Yet in watching him, we kept being bothered by the idea that he seemed... familiar, somehow. Turns out there's a reason. The actor's name is Bill Bogert, and he's a character actor still working today at age 80. You may know him from 80's and 90's movies TV shows like Law&Order or Spin City, or perhaps from his role in War Games as Matthew Broderick's dad. Earnestness can take you a long way!



Not All Fuels Are Created Equal

Picking the right fuel matters!



When a client with a gas-engine vehicle complains about performance problems like poor mileage, rough idle, tip-in hesitation, or hard-starts without a 'check engine' light, one of our first questions is about the fuel that client's been using. When the answer is something like "whatever's cheapest", "whatever's closest when I'm on empty" or "whatever; does it matter?" we know we need to help with some basic information about gasoline...

The short story:

Yes, fuel matters.

- Buy quality "top tier" fuel and you will get better mileage and save on repairs.
- Don't buy ARCO or any unbranded fuels (like ARCO) from AM/PM, Space Age, Rocket, Safeway or any other unbranded or Ma and Pa outlet.
- Unless the gas is from a branded station like Chevron, Shell, Texaco, Exxon, or Mobil it is probably ARCO.
- Use fuel with the octane rating that your vehicle manufacture recommends.

The Longer story:

What we know as "gasoline" is now a very complex cocktail that barely resembles fuels from years past. Things have changed since the day of the 'Blender Pumps' that allowed drivers to mix their own "regular" and "premium" to achieve the desired octane rating for their vehicles. Now drivers are less connected, and less concerned about the fuels going into their vehicles. For simplicity's sake, we'll only address issues regarding octane rating and fuel quality in this article.

Regular, Plus, or Premium?

Octane is a measure of a fuel's ability to resist 'knock', otherwise known as ["Ping" or "Pre-ignition"](#). The octane requirement of an engine varies with compression ratio, geometrical and mechanical considerations, and operating conditions. The higher the **octane rating**, the greater the fuel's resistance to knocking or pinging during combustion. Octane ratings vary from Unleaded gas at 87 to Premium at 90 or higher.

The choice here depends on the engine you have. Newer vehicles control fuel mixture, camshaft and ignition timing, and just about every aspect of combustion short of the fuel itself. These vehicles can run on just about any gasoline sold, but that's not the way to treat your vehicle if you expect a good return from it. Every vehicle has a manufacturer's recommended octane rating and will perform best with fuels that meet those recommendations. Some modern high-compression engines need Premium gas for best operation, so follow the recommendation in your Owners Manual (or ask us!). If it recommends Premium, use it. When you run Regular octane rated fuel in a vehicle designed to run Premium you will experience degraded performance and decreased mileage. Cheap gas might seem like a savings but we think those savings are short term at best.

“Top Tier” Gasoline

“[Top Tier](#)” is a set of fuel standards agreed on by BMW, GM, Fiat/Chrysler, Honda, Toyota, VW, Mercedes, and Audi to increase engine cleanliness and performance. Top Tier fuels use a higher level of detergent additives compared to the minimum EPA standards, and they can’t contain metallic additives that can harm the emission system. Stations have to be certified as Top Tier Detergent Gasoline (TTDG) retailers so a station can’t just say they sell Top Tier gas. And, for stations that *are* certified, the Top Tier standards have to apply to all grades of gas they sell. As of 2016, there are 31 Top Tier distributors in the US; mostly the major brands like Chevron, Shell, Texaco, Exxon, or Mobil. A full list is available [here](#).

It’s all about the additives

The main thing that sets Top Tier gas apart from everything else is its additives, and Techron is the first and probably still the best of these. Techron is a patented additive created by Chevron intended to keep impurities and residue from building up in your engine, particularly the delicate and easily-clogged fuel injectors. It really works and it’s worth having. Chevron introduced Techron into their gasoline starting in 1995, and it’s now available at Chevron, Texaco, and Caltex stations in all three grades of gas. It’s also available as a separate product for use with gasoline that doesn’t already have Techron added.

Stay away from low volume stations

We’re usually fans of small businesses, but when it comes to gas you should stay away from the out of the way “Mom-and-Pop shops”. There are very practical reasons. They probably sell ARCO (unless they’re branded) and the volume of fuel sold could be much lower, taking longer to go through a storage tank of gas. If so, beyond the poor quality of fuel it also may sit much longer, and be subject to separation, sedimentation, and water contamination. These are impurities you shouldn’t risk.

It just isn’t worth it

It may seem to make sense to save a nickel or even a dime per gallon at off-brand stations, or buy gas when and where it is convenient, but we don’t agree. Sure, you save at the pump now but you may pay it back with interest later. On top of protecting fuel injectors, sensors, catalytic converters and exhaust systems, it is really rewarding to have your vehicles performing at their best.

And one final tip...

Modern fuel pumps are electric and expensive! They live in the gas tank and are cooled by fuel. They work much harder and build more heat delivering those last couple of gallons from an almost-empty tank. Don’t drive with your tank continually between 1/4 tank and empty! **Treat 1/4 tank as ‘empty’**. Train yourself to start looking for gas at 1/4 tank instead of when the fuel warning light comes on. It costs just as much to keep the top half of the tank full as the bottom half, and your fuel pump will thank you!

Drew's Kitchen

Pot Roast Like Grandma Used to Make



You can never go wrong with Pot Roast, but you can go extra right. Drew took this classic Pot Roast recipe and adapted it for the crock pot and extra tenderness. If you're a Pot Roast lover, you'll appreciate the difference!

Pot Roast Like Grandma Used To Make

Ingredients:

- 3 pound boneless beef chuck roast
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 3 tbsp canola oil
- 4 tbsp butter
- 2 medium red onions, cut into quarters
- 4 carrots, peeled and cut into 2" pieces
- 3 stalks celery, cut into 2" pieces
- 1 rutabaga, peeled and cut into 12-16 pieces; about a pound
- 8 crimini mushrooms, halved
- 2 parsnips, peeled and cut into 2" pieces
- 1 head garlic, top cut off to expose cloves
- ¾ cup tomato paste
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 sprigs rosemary
- 1 ½" cups red wine, preferably cabernet
- 4 cups beef broth

Preparation:

- Heat oven to 340°. Season meat generously with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven, or other heavy roasting pan with a lid, over medium-high heat. Sear the meat until a dark crust forms, 3-4 minutes per side. Remove meat to a plate.
- Reduce heat to medium and add butter to the pan. Melt the butter and add the vegetables, stirring frequently and scraping the bottom of the pot, until the vegetables start to color, 8-10 minutes.
- Add tomato paste and cook, stirring frequently, until it darkens slightly, about 5 minutes.
- Add bay leaves, rosemary and wine and cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is reduced to a thick gravy consistency, 5-7 minutes
- Transfer meat, broth, and all ingredients from the pot to a crock pot. Cook on low for 3-5 hours. Test meat with a fork for tenderness.
- Let roast sit at room temperature for at least 10 minutes. Remove meat to a cutting board to slice. Discard bay leaves and rosemary stems. Squeeze any garlic cloves remaining in their skins into the stew and discard the skins. Serve slices of meat in shallow bowls along with the vegetables and a generous amount of cooking liquid ladled over the top.

Cooking time 3-5 hours, Serves 8

Shop Talk

Lots of Big Big Winners!



Comment of the Month

Nick S. said "Stop sending junk mail!"

Not the kind of comment we like to hear, but it's a valuable one and you should know exactly what to expect from our client communication. We use both [email](#) and snailmail, and we try to be respectful with both. We generally email about every other week, alternating between our monthly [newsletter](#) and [service offers](#). We also send service reminder letters starting 6 months after your most recent visit, and then every 3 months after that. If we haven't heard from you in 18 months we send a final goodbye letter and move your vehicle to our 'inactive' file. Don't worry, we still have your vehicle records if you ever need them!

If you ever, EVER want to stop receiving communication from us, just tell us and we'll quit! All our emails have an embedded 'unsubscribe' link; just click that and you're done. If you don't want the printed service reminders then just tell your Service Advisor and you'll be off the list!

If you DO want to hear from us, we need a proper email and home address for you, including apartment number if any. Just tell your Service Advisor and they'll get you in the books.

Portland Airport Carpet Floormats- STEPHANIE IS A WINNER!



We were at the big [Sellwood Bridge Grand Opening](#) in February, enjoying the day and meeting our neighbors. We were taking entries for a set of auto floor mats made from the old PDX Airport carpet, with the promise to announce the winner in our March newsletter. Hey, whaddya know, it's March! **Our winner is Stephanie R. of Portland**, and we'll contact her about getting the rugs to her. Thanks to everyone who entered! If you're not Stephanie and still want a set of these for yourself, they're available at the Carpet Mill Outlet, 2000 SE Milport Rd, Portland, OR 97222.

Referral Reward Program- EVERYONE'S A WINNER!



Our [Referral Reward Program](#) is our way of saying "thanks" for your valuable-as-gold referrals of new clients to our shop. It's pretty simple... when a new client comes in based on your referral, we make a donation to the non-profit group of your choice. had another great month to cap off our second great year. **Since we started the program in 2014, our clients have made it possible for us to donate \$10,342 to 162 deserving groups.** Our awards are in three levels...

1) Individual Donations

We make our first donation, the Individual Donation, when the client you referred comes in. We get the name of the person who referred them, and then call to ask where the Referral Reward check should go. We will donate to virtually any (legal) group the client wants to donate to. Donations vary from \$10 to \$50 depending on the new client's initial purchases. We were able to make **5 individual donations this month totaling \$127** to these groups...

[PONGO Fund Pet Food Bank](#) by Hillary B.

[Health Care For All Oregon](#) by Mary P.

[ReBuild Center](#) by Jim P.

[Neighbors for Clean Air](#) by Anne R.

[Doctors Without Borders](#) by Walter R.

2) Quarterly Awards

Every three months, our individual donation groups are put into a pool for **Quarterly Awards**. We have very loose criteria for a Quarterly Award winner, but we try pick groups that are local, helping individuals where possible, and who are small enough that our **\$200 Quarterly Award** money will be meaningful to them. Our **first three Quarterly Award Winners in 2015** were...

[p:ear](#), creatively mentoring homeless youth,
[Medical Teams International](#), a local group doing medical work in poor areas worldwide, and
[Randall Children's Hospital](#), a downtown Portland hospital serving kids across the region

And this month we announce our **final quarterly award winner for 2015...**

Health Care for All Oregon



Health Care for all Oregon's mission is to work for an equitable, affordable, comprehensive, high quality, publicly funded universal health care system serving everyone in Oregon and the United States.

Their vision is a health care system that ensures comprehensive, high-quality health care to all; provides care based on patients' needs rather than profits, focusing on prevention, effective treatment, and improved medical outcomes; and that is publicly financed, directing resources to medical care and minimizing administrative expenses and waste. HCAO recognizes health care as a human right. They seek to create a health care system based on the principles of Universality, Equity, Accountability, Transparency Participation, and health care as a Public Good...

Universality: As a human right, health care must be accessible to everyone, without exception.

Equity: Health care resources and services must be distributed and accessed according to people's needs. Health, wealth, employment, age, race, gender, immigration status, and other factors should not result in any barriers to health care or disparities in health outcomes.

Accountability: The health care system must be accountable to the people it serves. It must ensure effective delivery of care and stewardship of resources that improve individual and population health and provide means to uphold and enforce human rights standards in care.

Transparency: The health care system must be open with regard to information, decision-making, and management.

Participation: The health care system must enable meaningful public participation in all decisions affecting people's right to health care.

Public Good: Health care, as a fundamental element of a just society, must not be rationed by cost as a commodity in private markets, but be secured to the people on an equitable basis by public means, similar to education, public safety, and public utilities.

3) Yearly Awards

Our final level is the **\$500 Yearly Award**, which is open to all the Individual Donation groups from the year. We picked our own winner last year, the Oregon Food Bank, but this year we decided to let our clients and friends pick the winner instead. 57 people combined to pick 26 different groups,

and though voting was tight we did have a clear winner. That's a phrase we hope to hear again in 8 months, because this year's Yearly Award goes to...

[THE BERNIE SANDERS FOR PRESIDENT CAMPAIGN!](#)

It's no secret that we like Bernie Sanders, but **our clients, not us, selected Bernie Sanders as our Yearly Winner.** We usually write a short article about to introduce you to our Quarterly and Yearly winners, but despite the media blackout you probably already know who Bernie Sanders is. Instead of our usual article we'll bring you five links to get a little closer to the Senator From Vermont, and maybe to your local Sellwood mechanic that supports him. On behalf of our clients and ourselves, we extend our congratulations to Bernie Sanders for President and hope to do so again on Nov 9!

 <p>Main campaign site; go here to learn about Bern or to donate to the campaign</p>	 <p>A grassroots site in support of Bernie; even more detailed than the campaign site</p>	 <p>FaceBook page for Small Businesses supporting the 'Socialist' candidate</p>	 <p>We have Tom Dwyer / Bernie Sanders T-shirts at the shop. Get yours for FREE!</p>	 <p>10 min from Bernie's 8½ hr filibuster of Obama Tax Cuts in 2010</p>
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Thanks to everyone who participated in our 2015 Referral Reward Program, and our 2016 program is already underway. We think it's a great way to help deserving charities and introduce them to new people, but just remember the whole purpose of the program is to say...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR REFERRALS AND CONTINUING SUPPORT OF OUR SHOP!



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

We know you better than you know yourself



You wouldn't drive a car without reading the owner's manual and knowing all the features, so why would you do the same with your own body? Of course you know how amazing the human body is, but even the base model has some pretty outstanding features you may not be aware of. Here's some of [our favorites from a thread at Quora.com](#), but this just scratches the surface. We found a great site called [100 Interesting Facts About the Human Body](#) that will keep you interested for hours!

A [single mutation which arose as recently as 6-10,000 years ago](#), possibly near the Black Sea, is responsible for all the blue-eyed people alive on Earth today.

We [share 96% of our DNA with the Chimpanzees](#). That 4% is all the difference that makes you 'human'.

[75% of the world's population are lactose intolerant](#). The ability to digest milk well into adulthood has been a very recent adaptation among a small percentage of people, but has been one of the fastest spreading mutations of recent times.

One of the [leading factors people find attractive in the opposite gender is a symmetrical face and body](#). It serves as an indicator of good genes by demonstrating that the person was fit and healthy enough to produce equal number of cells on both sides of the body.

Most people know about humanity's African origins, but not many know [humans migrated out of Africa only in the last 65,000 years](#). It's not that many years in an evolutionary time frame but these 65,000 years have given rise to all the amazing human diversity we see today.

Nerve impulses to and from the brain travel as fast as [250 miles per hour](#).

The [brain operates on the same amount of power as 10-watt light bulb](#). Your brain generates as much energy as a small light bulb even when you're sleeping.

The brain only makes up about 2% of our body mass, yet [uses 20% of the oxygen](#) that enters your bloodstream.

The brain is much [more active at night than during the day](#).

[Neurons continue to grow throughout human life](#). For years scientists and doctors thought that brain and neural tissue couldn't grow or regenerate, but neurons can and do grow throughout your life.

The [brain itself cannot feel pain](#). The brain itself does not have pain receptors and cannot feel pain, but the brain is surrounded by loads of tissues, nerves and blood vessels that do.

[80% of the brain is water](#). Your brain isn't the firm, gray mass you've seen on TV. Living brain tissue is a squishy, pink and jelly-like organ thanks to the loads of blood and high water content of the tissue.

[Facial hair grows faster than any other hair on the body](#). In fact, if the average man never shaved his beard it would grow to over 30 feet during his lifetime, longer than a killer whale.

We're [taller in the morning](#) than at night

Our [stomach manufactures a new lining every three days](#) to avoid digesting itself.

A person will [die from lack of sleep sooner than they will from starvation](#), which usually takes a few weeks.

A single human [blood cell takes only 60 seconds](#) to make a complete circuit of the body.

An average person produces about [25,000 quarts of saliva](#) in a lifetime, enough to fill two swimming pools.

We [humans are the best long-distance runners](#) on the planet, better than any four-legged animal. In fact, thousands of years ago we used to run after our prey until they died of exhaustion.

[Humans are bioluminescent](#) and glow in the dark. The light that we emit is 1,000 times weaker than light our human eyes are able to pick up.

When we look at an object, [the image of that object appears upside down on our retina](#). However, our brain automatically corrects for this, allowing us to perceive the object the right side up.

Like fingerprints, every person has a unique [tongue print](#).

With the [60,000 miles of blood vessels](#) inside the average human body, we could circumnavigate Earth two and a half times.

[Everyone has a completely unique smell](#) (except for twins).

There're [more bacteria in our mouth than there are people](#) in the world.

Our heart pumps nearly [1.5 million barrels of blood during our lifetime, enough](#) to fill 200 train tank cars.

People with [higher number of moles tend to live longer than people](#) with lesser number of moles.

According to a [research at Cambridge University, it doesn't matter in what order the letters in a word are](#), the only important thing is that the first and last letter be at the right place. The rest can be a total mess and you can still read it without problem. This is because the human mind does not read every letter by itself, but the word as a whole.

Southampton University scientists have found evidence [that awareness can continue for at least several minutes after clinical death](#) which was previously thought impossible

[Every day the average person loses 60-100 strands of hair](#). Unless you're already bald, chances are good that you're shedding pretty heavily on a daily basis. Your hair loss will vary in accordance with the season, pregnancy, illness, diet and age.

An adult is made up of 7,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (7 octillion) atoms. For perspective, there's a 'measly' 300,000,000,000 (300 billion) stars in our galaxy.

The [human brain can hold 5 times as much information as the Encyclopedia Britannica](#).

Sellwood Bridge Update

A Tour of the Impossible



Last month the Sellwood Bridge moved from a frustrating dream to a fuzzy reality. Although there's still about 9 months of construction until it's complete, the new Bridge is open and traffic is flowing smoothly. The major work remaining is the West Side traffic lanes and the removal of the old bridge. For the next several months our Updates will be slow and small, so on the heels of last month's big opening we'll bring you a story that we've been sitting on for a while...

You may have noticed the gigantic tower cranes standing by the bridge during the construction. Those cranes are gone right now, but they'll be back when the old bridge is being taken apart. These cranes are a little bit of a sore point around the shop because our Sellwood Bridge reporter swears that cranes of this type are impossible. He presents a strong case... without supports or cables they shouldn't be able to stand up to begin with, but putting any load on the end of the long arm would immediately tip them over. Wind would be a complete killer. According to him they aren't construction equipment at all, but secret NSA antennas that are constantly scanning our communications. Don't worry, we have him on medication.

Impossible or not, these gigantic machines are definitely amazing. In an effort to calm our Bridge reporter, as well as to entertain you, we did some research on how these cranes are built, how they work, and what it's like to spend a whole day 30 stories in the air in an 8' glass box. We've assembled some great videos for you to enjoy, but you know what? We still can't explain how the darn things stand up.

[A 4-day crane erection in 4 minutes](#)

[Tower Crane Assembly with Climber Demo](#)

[The Moderne tower crane in Milwaukee](#)

[How to Operate a Tower Crane](#)

[The daily routine of a Federation Tower crane operator](#)

[A crane driver's death defying commute](#)

[Dismantling the world's largest tower crane](#)



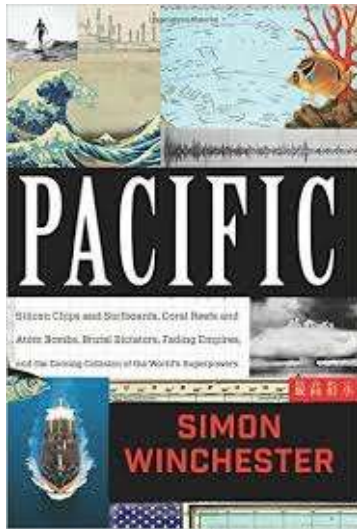
As always, Multnomah County maintains the definitive website on everything related to the Sellwood Bridge Replacement project, www.sellwoodbridge.org. Construction and closure alerts, archived information, and other resources are all available 24/7 for your convenience. If you're looking for something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

“Pacific” by Simon Winchester



Voter disappointment with giant trade deals like NAFTA is credited with giving Bernie his big Michigan win, and Trade is shaping up to be one of the big issues in election 2016. The TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership) would organize 12 Pacific Rim countries into one unified trade bloc. This month’s Book Spotlight will shed some light on the Pacific Ocean, its history, and the role it may play into our futures.



[“Pacific” by Simon Winchester](#)

(click the book cover to go to the [Powells.com](#) site)

(from the Harper/Collins website)

Following his acclaimed *Atlantic* and *The Men Who United the States*, New York Times bestselling author Simon Winchester offers an enthralling biography of the Pacific Ocean and its role in the modern world, exploring our relationship with this imposing force of nature.

As the Mediterranean shaped the classical world, and the Atlantic connected Europe to the New World, the Pacific Ocean defines our tomorrow. With China on the rise, so, too, are the American cities of the West coast, including Seattle, San Francisco, and the long cluster of towns down the Silicon Valley.

Today, the Pacific is ascendant. Its geological history has long transformed us—tremendous earthquakes, volcanoes, and tsunamis—but its human history, from a Western perspective, is quite young, beginning with Magellan’s sixteenth-century circumnavigation. It is a natural wonder whose most fascinating history is currently being made.

In telling the story of the Pacific, Simon Winchester takes us from the Bering Strait to Cape Horn, the Yangtze River to the Panama Canal, and to the many small islands and archipelagos that lie in between. He observes the fall of a dictator in Manila, visits aboriginals in northern Queensland, and is jailed in Tierra del Fuego, the land at the end of the world. His journey encompasses a trip down the Alaska Highway, a stop at the isolated Pitcairn Islands, a trek across South Korea and a glimpse of its mysterious northern neighbor.

Winchester’s personal experience is vast and his storytelling second to none. And his historical understanding of the region is formidable, making *Pacific* a paean to this magnificent sea of beauty, myth, and imagination that is transforming our lives.

One of Library Journal’s 10 Best Books of 2015

Humorousness

Stuck inside this Spring? We can help



Remember when you were a kid and they'd let you have class outside on really great weather days? Even in Portland, very few businesses follow that tradition. You're far more likely to be stuck in a windowless meeting room, only dreaming about scrunching your toes in the sand. We can't get you out the door but we can make it less painful to pass the time with this list of [Fun Things To Do At Business Meetings](#). It's a list that's been slowly growing on many sites for years, but we found this version on [Moonlets.org](#). Please enjoy, and keep looking forward to the weekend!

- Give your entire talk in Swedish Chef.
- Ask the audience for Amens every time you make a point. If that succeeds, try for a "Hell yeah!"
- Make up a new field in your discipline. Give a totally bogus talk on the topic. See if anyone calls you on it.
- Bring a pet. Seat him or her in the front row. Take questions from your pet at the end of your talk. (Bonus points if the pet is exotic, dangerous or a fish.)
- Tell your audience you will now show them a movie of your data. Turn on the overhead projector and rapidly flip transparencies up.
- Refuse the mic and holler your whole talk. As a bonus, gradually get softer until you are whispering near the end.
- Deliver your talk in reverse. (Doing the slides backwards is actually a good idea. So try to actually speak backwards, either in word-order or by reversing the pronunciation of every word, too.)
- Include subliminal messages, such as "You want beer" "This is a good talk" or "Send me money".
- Include "I deserve funding" as a conclusion in every presentation you make.
- Slowly strip as your talk progresses. Bonus points if you can use part of your body not normally exposed as a prop.
- If you have a poster, attach it to the wall backwards. If you have a talk, black out every other word. Say this is for national security reasons.
- If you're an astronomer, include black images. Point out that you took the images at night, so of course they're black.
- Include a Surgeon General's warning on your presentation. ("Warning: This talk might cause headaches, runny nose, sore throat, genital warts, projectile vomiting and the bends.")
- Carry a sidearm at your presentation. If someone starts to ask a question, make your hand twitch towards it, as if to draw it quickly. Bonus points if it's a squirt or Nerf gun and you actually shoot the questioner.
- Two thirds of the way through your talk, stop for a minute, then say "No, I am totally wrong in all of this. Forget I said anything. Sit back down.
- Challenge a questioner (if you're speaking) or a speaker (if you're in the audience) to a duel to prove who is right. As a weapon, pick okra at 10 paces.
- Get the audience to do the wave. This is especially good if you aren't the speaker.
- Criticize your own poster. Cross bits out and scribble comments in the margin.
- Go to the talks with a Jack Daniels bottle. When it's your turn, get up front, finish the bottle and begin. Bonus points if you start with a full bottle. (Alcohol is not required in this case, as long as you have something that *looks* like the alcohol usually found in the bottle.)
- If using Powerpoint (or Javascript and HTML), make your slides change bullets to things like, "When will this guy shut up?" Extra points if you set it to change back right before you turn around and look.
- Heckle à la Statler and Waldorf (from *The Muppet Show*).
- Attend the meeting pretending to be some noteworthy, but notably dead, person in your field. Spend the entire meeting speaking and answering as s/he would have. Bonus points if you remember to only use information that the person would have known about at the time of her/his death. (So if you're Newton, for example, you can't talk about thermodynamics or relativity.)
- Address all questions by questioning the person's patriotism/loyalty. Bonus if you can prove (or otherwise convince others) that the person has weapons of mass destruction.
- Have friends dressed as Imperial Storm Troopers flank you where ever you go. Have them menace anyone who disagrees with you. For a bonus, plant a friend in the audience. Have him or her ask the first question. Do a Vader-like strangling thing. Politely ask for more question.
- Include a laugh track or soundtrack in your talk.
- If you're a grad student, have a friend shoot at your advisor with a squirt or nerf gun at a predetermined time. Just in time, shout "Nooooooo" and take the water/Nerf dart with your body. Bonus if you do this while your advisor is giving her or his presentation.
- Stop talking every five minutes, glance nervously between the audience and the entrance to the room,

- and mutter something about the lions always being late.
- Bring a book to your talk. If someone questions your facts, cite the "Holy Book" which is divinely inspired and therefore infallible. Bonus points if the book is a text for a totally different field. (e.g. – A high-energy nuclear physics text as evidence in a cognitive psychology talk.) Extra bonus points if the book isn't even a work of non-fiction. (Citing such books as *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* or *Winnie-the-Pooh* would be very good.)
 - Midway through your talk or your poster presentation, suddenly look frightened by something in your slides or on your poster. Quickly tear off the offending portion and swallow it. Look suspiciously at your colleagues. Bonus points if you consume something really innocuous, like a definite article or the date of the talk.
 - At the first question of your talk/poster, pause, look stunned and confused, then panic and run from the room in hysterics.
 - Attend all of the session in your bathrobe and fuzzy slippers. For an added effect, carry a cup of coffee, a donut and a newspaper.
 - At random points in random talks, burst out with statements about future events in the past tense. For instance, "What? Wu showed that that was false in 2251!"
 - Pretend something you saw on *Star Trek* or some other sci-fi/fantasy show is real science. For instance, ask a presenter why he didn't just use Heisenberg Compensators.
 - Cite non-existent sources or research to support your claims. Or use real sources, but make up the conclusions not in or supported by the paper. Bonus if you do this to one of the authors.
 - Affect a thick accent. If someone asks you to speak more clearly, change to a different, equally thick accent.
 - Do your poster in Braille.
 - Argue with your co-authors about the research being presented in the middle of their talk or yours. Particularly, disagree completely about the conclusions. End the argument with, "This is not what we agreed to say we found! Now I have to spend another 3 hours with Photoshop to create more data!"
 - Bring a pillow to the talks. Or a portable TV.
 - Ask about potential military applications to the research under discussion, especially if you're in a very abstract field, like astronomy or pure mathematics. Ask your colleagues how they can live with themselves, creating suffering like this.
 - Give out handouts for your talk/poster that have nothing to do with your poster. Bonus if your handouts are junk mail or take-out menus. Cite the handouts in your research.
 - Encrypt your talk/poster/handouts. Refuse to give the key to anyone who doesn't submit to your "security background check." Alternatively, make the talk/poster/handouts a stream of 1's and 0's and tell people that they're in binary for portability. (Bonus if you really convert your talk/poster/handout into binary.)
 - Read your poster/talk/handouts as if to small children. Bonus if you write your presentation that way. ("Ethel the free-radical was walking along one day when she met Vitamin C. Ethel was scared...")
 - When basic concepts from your field come up, like Newton's laws of motion, pretend like you've never heard of them. Make others explain them to you and then say something like, "Wow, when did that get published?"
 - For your poster, put up a dorm-room type poster. (Such as attractive people in swimsuits, pretty scenery or movie posters.) Cite the poster in later publications.
 - Do a product placement in your presentation. ("Ahh, Pepsi! The drink of nuclear physicists!")
 - During your presentation, give a pop quiz. Grade them and hand them back later in the meeting.
 - Instead of research, show photographs from your last vacation. Keep the research conclusions, however.
 - Carry a pad of paper with columns clearly labelled "subversive" and "loyal". Make sure people can read it clearly. Add people to the appropriate categories. Mumble things like, "John Ashcroft will be so pleased with me!"
 - Bring a barbecue grill into the meeting room. Have a friend wander up and down the seats selling hot dogs you've been cooking. Bonus points if you use the grill for a demonstration in your talk.
 - Have as one of your main conclusions something that is clearly false, such as the absence of any life on Earth or proof that the universe is geocentric.
 - If anyone objects to a point you make during the talk, respond with "Objection overruled!" or other appropriate legalese. Charge the dissenter with contempt.
 - Fall asleep while giving your talk.
 - Bring your SO with you. Have loud, angry spats and tender reconciliations on alternate days. Make the arguments about technical points of research being presented. ("What?!? You believe in an inflationary universe? I can't **believe** I slept with you, you imbecile!")
 - Cordon off your poster. Have a large bouncer at the entry area. Charge a two-drink minimum.
 - As part of your presentation, have a guitar riff or drum solo. Act like it was a vital bit of evidence for your conclusions.
 - During the presentation, keep moving closer to the door, an inch at a time. If you are in the audience, shuffle your chair with you.¹
 - Put up an extremely complicated diagram. Stare at it for a while with your hand on your chin. Look to the audience and nod, going "mmmMMMMmmmm." Then go to the next slide.¹
 - Begin your presentation by producing a bottle of clear, yellow liquid. Ask if everyone has remembered to bring their 'samples'. Say that, if not, they'll all have to share

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!



Happy Anniversary, Fukushima!

On March 12, 2011 the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant suffered the largest nuclear disaster since Chernobyl. The fifth anniversary quietly passed recently, and we thought it might deserve more coverage than it got. This link is to Fukushima Update, the site aggregating all the Fukushima news, legitimate science, rumors, and TEPCO press releases since the disaster. One of the headlines focuses on a quote from a TEPCO employee... "The fuel rods melted through containment and nobody knows where they are now." We thought it was worth your time.



Private Subs and Artificial Islands

In our December issue of Your Car Matters, we pointed out that exotic supercars and luxury yachts make great Christmas gifts for your local mechanic, but scratch that, we've found something better. An [Austrian company is now making a series of "private submersible yachts"](#), but that's not the best part... they also offer fully artificial islands! Yes, you too can "experience ultimate freedom and privacy, enjoy outstanding amenities or discover the deep sea wild life," if you have a few spare billion to spend. There weren't any prices on the website, but face it... if you have to ask, you can't afford it.



How Dark Is Your Personality?

We tend to avoid "bad" personality traits like Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy, but many psychologists think these "dark" personality traits can be extremely useful (in moderation) in your everyday life. How "dark" is your personality? [This questionnaire is a simplified version of the one psychologists use to measure psychopathology](#) in clinical settings. Do you have enough "darkness" in your personality to be useful, so little that you're a sheep ready for slaughter, or so much that you need to be carted off for everyone's protection? Sharpen your pencil and find out.

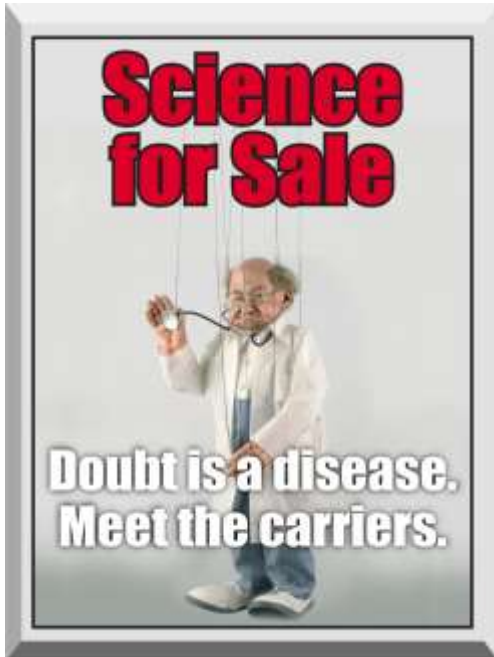


The Scariest Bridges in the World

No one was more excited than we were when the new, improved Sellwood Bridge opened in February. We shared a lot of stuff about the Bridge on our Facebook page, but the most popular link (actually, one of the most popular links we've shared in quite a while) was a [tour of bridges around the world](#). From rickety footbridges to inspiring suspension bridges, from the beautiful to the terrifying, here's a gallery that will make you truly appreciate the bridges here in Portland!

News To Make You Furious

Doubt is a disease. Meet the carriers.



The certainty of Science is paradoxically built around questions and doubt. The most revered theories can always be overturned by better ones, and some big ones have fallen in the past. No matter how sure we are of today's science there's always the *possibility* we're wrong and that better explanations might appear. Although they *can* be proven false, scientific theories can never be *proven* true. That's the type of doubt science depends on for its existence.

There's another kind of doubt, though, a false doubt that perverts this fundamental strength of science and rationality to attack it. This type of doubt doesn't offer new insights or better explanations of its own, but it says to disbelieve science anyway because it's not *proven*. There may be many motivations for this cancerous type of doubt; greed, ideology, ignorance, fear, maybe others. But whatever their motivation these doubtcasters need skills to give their tripe some tenuous connection to reality. When they do, they turn to a small and

reliable stable of carriers ready to transmit their disease. For this month's News To Make You Furious we introduce you to Scientists for Sale, the intellectual prostitutes (no offense to prostitutes) who spit at the achievements of humanity's best minds. When you're suitably apoplectic about their existence you'll just be getting started... you'll be incoherent with rage when you find out how little they sell out for!

[Meet The 'Rented White Coats' Who Defend Toxic Chemicals](#), David Heath at The Center for Public Integrity, Feb 2016

About 'Science for Sale'- Science and opinion have become increasingly conflated, in large part because of corporate influence. As we explain in "Science for Sale," an investigative series by the Center for Public Integrity and co-published with Vice.com, industry-backed research has exploded — often with the aim of obscuring the truth — as government-funded science dwindles.

[The Man Who Studies The Spread Of Ignorance](#), Georgina Kenyon on BBC Future, Jan 2016

In 1979, a secret memo from the tobacco industry was revealed to the public. Called the Smoking and Health Proposal, and written a decade earlier by the Brown & Williamson tobacco company, it revealed many of the tactics employed by big tobacco to counter "anti-cigarette forces". In one of the paper's most revealing sections, it looks at how to market cigarettes to the mass public: "Doubt is our product since it is the best means of competing with the 'body of fact' that exists in the mind of the general public. It is also the means of establishing a controversy." This revelation piqued the interest of Robert Proctor, a science historian from Stanford University, who started delving into the practices of tobacco firms and how they had spread confusion about whether smoking caused cancer...

[Dr. Evil's Payday](#), Daniel Schulman in Mother Jones, Oct 2009

Early one morning in late April, as the Today Show broadcast live from Rockefeller Center, a group of onlookers gave Matt Lauer a T-shirt emblazoned with the Web address "Econ4U.org". "Scored a T-shirt here from these folks promoting economic literacy, which is really nice," the good-natured anchor said,

displaying the shirt to nearly 6 million viewers. Little did Lauer know, but he'd been duped into providing that free advertising for a group that promotes payday lending—an industry long accused of preying on low-income Americans with short-term loans carrying huge interest rates.

A Gallery of Sold Science

[The CO2 Coalition](#), website.

Not a joke. A perfect example of scientific prostitution in service of greed.

[Greenpeace Statement On Patrick Moore](#)

Statement on Greenpeace website explaining Patrick Moore, a past Greenpeace member who now shills for anti-environment causes.

[The Princeton Academic Testifying for Ted Cruz's Climate Hearing Is For-Hire by Fossil-Fuel Corporations](#), Zoe Carpenter in The Nation, Dec 2015

[Breitbart News: Go-To Outlet For "Academics-For-Hire" By The Fossil Fuel Industry?](#) Andrew Seifter on Media Matters, Dec 2015

[Princeton Prof Loses It On Camera: Climate Science Lies for Cash](#), Sam Seder Majority Report, Dec 2015

Here's an example of a Scientist-for-hire getting called out by the actual scientist whose work he twisted...

[A Real Climate Scientist Demolishes Bill Nye's Global Warming Alarmism](#), Austin Petersen on The Libertarian Republic, Aug 2015

[Scientist Slams Daily Caller For Distorting His Research To Suggest Climate Change Is Fake](#), Emily Atkin on Climate Progress, Feb 2015

This is a pervasive strategy across a variety of industries. Tobacco was the pioneer, but today it's in every arena where the science is settled but the business isn't. We'll close with two of our past "News To Make You Furious" articles that point out this pattern in other areas...



[The Climate Change Denial Machine](#)

"News To Make You Furious"
Sep 2011

[Wendell Potter and Health Care](#)

"News To Make You Furious"
Apr 2012

