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Tom's Tidbits

Don't count on corporations for your health care

Greetings!

Sadly, I see most current healthcare systems as extensions of Corporate sociopathy. When it comes to your healthcare it is best for you to realize that you are mostly on your own; don't expect anyone else to fix you. You are the one in control of the choices you make and have the best vantage point to see cause and effect, recognize symptoms and know when treatment is working or not.

"The... patient should be made to understand that he or she must take charge of his own life. Don't take your body to the doctor as if he were a repair shop." ~Quentin Regestein

The current form of [allopathic](#) medicine as practiced since before the 1900's is not the best system to insure your health maintenance, disease prevention, diagnosis or treatment. Broken bones, lacerations and traumatic injury are points I'll yield to traditional medicine but that's just about it in my book. I've learned firsthand that unless you are taking an active role in your own healthcare management, or have found a good [integrative](#), [holistic](#), or [naturopathic](#) practitioner, dependence on allopathic medicine is not likely to deliver good results. There are many parallels between vehicle care and human healthcare; especially when it comes to prevention, diagnosis and treatment. You may have noticed a fair amount of health related books in our loaner library and you will see articles in the newsletters as well. One of the best recommendations I can make is to purchase a subscription to "[Well Being Journal](#)". This bi-monthly publication has a combination of many short and some lengthy articles; some right on and some a bit edgy so use your skills to filter them.

I wanted to close this month's Tidbits with the quote "Without your health nothing else matters." I tried to find out who said it without success, but in the search I found much [wisdom](#) that you may enjoy as well. Here's to your health!

Make a great day,



How Much Is THAT Gonna Cost?

Understanding estimates is key to wise spending

By Tom Dwyer

"As we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns -- the ones we don't know we don't know."

-Donald Rumsfeld

There is very little of lasting value from the Bush administration, but Donald Rumsfeld had a good point with his awkward thoughts on planning. Giving estimates for the cost of a job is one of the hardest things to do in any business. A client, understandably, wants to have at least SOME idea what they can expect to pay, but the service provider is being asked to predict an uncertain future and then stand by that prediction. One Portland automotive icon, [Harold Dick](#), would banish clients who asked for an estimate. His feeling was that you were asking him to care for your car, so you should trust him to charge appropriately and be prepared to pay whatever it took to do it. Most businesses are a little more accommodating, though, and will give some estimate of what their work will cost. Estimates can be deceptive, either through intent or by accident. I hate to lose work to an incomplete or deceptive estimate provided by another business. I fear that in many cases that the services are not being compared accurately, and that ultimately they are delivered at a higher true cost, or not done right.

So what should you look for in a good estimate?

The dictionary defines estimate as "To judge tentatively or approximately the value, worth, or significance. To produce a statement of the approximate cost." Simple enough, but then the questions start. Are you asking for a ballpark guess based on past experience or a detailed projection and evaluation based on current conditions? Is the estimate OK if it's within 15%, or should it be the exact bottom line on the final bill? Should the estimate cover only certain items, or should it cover whatever it takes to do the job right? What happens to the estimate if something unplanned happens during the job?

Some states require estimates to be within 10% accuracy, but Oregon has no such requirement. Some Oregon shops even put disclaimers on their estimates that say the estimate can be off by stated percentages or dollar amounts without phone calls and the client still has to pay. If you run into this situation, be careful. If a shop is going to give you a number, you should at least know that it won't change without warning. (We are within the estimate on 99.8% of our jobs, and we call for confirmation before proceeding when problems arise)

Where do estimates come from?

Most shops (including ours) create their estimates from a combination of previous experience and time-and-materials estimates from programs like Mitchell or AllData, databases that list parts and expected times for most vehicle repairs. You'd think it would be straightforward- all you do is read the numbers off the screen and you're covered. But that's exactly where the integrity, experience and goals of a Service Advisor comes into play.

First, the database time estimates are average times to complete individual, well-defined tasks. They're guidelines, and don't take into account things that could speed up or slow down the actual task in the real world. For instance, they assume the use of hand tools under normal conditions; no rust, no hidden damage, and everything installed to factory specifications. Database times don't take into account the technician's special tools, skills, or experience, nor do they cover unknowns (known or not) all of which can greatly impact the repair time.

Take advantage of overlapping labor

Database systems describe single tasks with some obvious additional related tasks as add-ons known as "combinations". These combinations usually add minimal time to the core job because overlapping labor is accounted for. Some operations have logical additional tasks that can be done simultaneously to add reliability or to take advantage of the labor overlap for good long-term maintenance add-ons that are not listed as "combinations". A good Service Advisor should offer these overlap discounts when possible. Not taking advantage of labor overlap is lost opportunity to save money on preventative maintenance. If you're working on a big job, and an exposed part is predictably going to fail, you "might as well do it while you're in there."

For example, you know that all your vehicle's hoses will eventually fail. Replacing a \$10.00 bypass hose while the cylinder head is off only costs \$25.00 because the labor to access and replace the hose is exposed from the cylinder head job. Sure, the \$25.00 adds more to an already expensive job, but it's money well spent. If that same hose fails later it will cost hundreds to replace, and you may also be left with a damaged engine, a tow bill, and a major inconvenience probably at the worst possible moment. Not taking advantage of overlapping labor is wasted money! I've seen people be charged for jobs done at separate times that could have been done together much more economically, taking advantage of the overlap in labor to save major money. An experienced and caring Service Advisor knows these overlaps and will suggest them. It's not an up-sell; it makes good economic sense.

What kinds of estimates are there?

For illustrative purposes we will look at three kinds of estimates, based on the general intention of the person providing them. These aren't hard-and-fast divisions, and there are definitely combinations of the types, but these general guidelines can be useful.

Bare-Bones Estimates- This is an estimate for the most basic job that can be done, covering the bare minimum parts and labor only. The cost estimate is given for a part and the labor to install that part, period.

A bare-bones estimate may not necessarily be deceptive or dishonest, but it can be very incomplete. It may estimate the "knowns" but ignore the "known unknowns". Sometimes a bare-bones estimate is acceptable and a decent job can be done, but most repairs involve more and the client is usually looking for a job done RIGHT. An experienced Service Advisor knows the things that are likely to pop up during a given repair, and should include them upfront when estimating work needed. Bare-bones estimates don't respect your hard-earned money because they fail to consider additional needed parts for a complete job, and will not cover or suggest other needed work that could be done inexpensively at the time rather than expensively later.

Upsale Estimates- These are Bare-Bones estimates given knowing full well they are incomplete and will require additional parts or labor. While an honest bare-bones estimate might strip out some of the "known unknowns" for economy, the Upsale estimate counts on the dreaded "Second Phone Call". You brought the vehicle in based on a very attractive bare-bones estimate, but you'll be at home or work when the phone rings. The Service Advisor (usually paid on commission) says "You know, we gave you that estimate for a new clutch disk at \$499.95 but now we have the clutch apart and it looks like you also need the pressure plate, throw-out and pilot bearings, flywheel resurfacing, and clutch hydraulics. That'll cost about \$1200.00. Ya want us to take care of that now?" Ouch. Well, all those things added after the work was started are known unknowns and should have been included in the original estimate. Only a guy in his backyard would spend all the labor to remove the transmission and then replace just the clutch disk and call it a "clutch job".

No one, no matter how skillful or honest, can plan for everything that can happen in an automotive repair. Once you've covered the knowns and planned for the known unknowns, the unknown unknowns can still pop up. There may be non-factory parts or options, a part may break due to unseen rust or damage, or previous work done may change the assumptions of the job. Sometimes that second phone call is for a very legitimate reason. No one likes the second or third calls, but they're far preferable to not doing the job right or a giving you a huge surprise at the time of pickup.

Full Upfront Estimates- These are the kind of estimates we always give, and they are the most reliable type. These are estimates for a complete job, quality repair, long-term performance, and wise spending. They start with the "known knowns" of the job and then include the caveats and/or the prices for the "known unknowns". Determining the known unknowns is primarily a matter of honest intentions, experience, research, and judgment. The type of vehicle, its mileage, repair history, the owner's usage and driving habits all give clues to what level of service makes sense. A Full Upfront estimate covers a job done right, with all the known parts and labor processes accounted for, as well as the

known unknowns needed to finish without a second call. Full Upfront estimates should also include discussions about the advantage of overlapping labor for preventative maintenance whenever it makes sense.

One downside of the Full Upfront estimate is the sticker shock that can come with it. Because our estimates cover all the logical bases, they'll always be higher than a BareBones or the original Upsale estimate. It's very frustrating to us when we give a Full Upfront Estimate to do a job right but we lose out to a lower number that is inaccurate or incomplete. When comparison shopping repairs and services, be sure to compare exact services; PLEASE don't just ask "how much to replace my timing belt?" Ask; "When you replace my timing belt what will you do?" and **then** ask "how much for those services and what is the warranty?"

We will work with a client to find a less expensive solution if safe and viable options exist, but we will decline a job if economy trumps results. If we know something won't work or is not in our client's best interest we won't do it. There is one caveat to this type of task negotiation- when we recommend a repair and the client chooses not to do it, we can't be held responsible. "If the client dictates the recipe for the soup, we can't be held responsible for how it tastes." We have plenty of stories of recommending a repair, having the client decline it, and then having them blame us when the problem we predicted happens. We can't (and certainly don't want to) force people to do repairs, but it is still painful to hear: "you should have made me buy that!" Sometimes, there's just no option but the right way.

Still sounds pretty iffy. Can you give me an example?

Glad you asked. One of the repairs that best illustrates the differences between types of estimates is the dreaded timing belt replacement. The timing belt is one of your vehicle's most critical operational systems, so making sure it's replaced before it breaks is pretty important. Timing belts are buried deep under the engine covers where there's no easy or reliable way to examine them. Because we can't accurately check their condition, timing belts are one of the vehicle systems that are appropriate to change on a time/mileage basis. Timing belts are good for 60,000 to 105,000 miles, or about ten years depending on the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations.

So let's pretend you drive a 2004 Honda Civic 4-cylinder that has 108,500 when you come in for an oil change. If it's still the original timing belt (due at 110,000 miles) then it's very likely we have already recommended a timing belt replacement and would remind you again at this point. For the sake of this example let's assume you'd agree to the repair but ask the classic question "How much is THAT gonna cost?" A Service Advisor's first step would be to go to the computer and pull up the basic repair. Here's what the screen would look like...

The screenshot shows the OnDemand5 software interface for a 2004 Honda Civic. The main window displays a list of repair items under the 'Parts' tab. The items are organized into sections, including 'CAMSHAFT OIL SEAL', 'TIMING BELT', and 'TIMING BELT TENSIONER'. Each item has a description, a labor time, and a price. The total estimate is \$292.05.

DESCRIPTION	LABOR TIME	WARR TIME	SL	PRICE
CAMSHAFT OIL SEAL				
CAMSHAFT SPROCKET				
CRANKSHAFT OIL SEAL				
CRANKSHAFT SPROCKET				
CYLINDER HEAD GASKET				
TIMING BELT	2.7		B	
1.7L Eng				
Includes: Adjust Values				
Additional Time				
TIMING BELT - Remove & Replace Where Pwr Strg Interferes add	0.3		B	
Combinations				
CAMSHAFT OIL SEAL - Remove & Replace Front,Each	0.2		B	
CAMSHAFT SPROCKET - Remove & Replace Each	0.1		B	
CRANKSHAFT OIL SEAL - Remove & Replace Front	0.2		B	
CRANKSHAFT SPROCKET - Remove & Replace All Applicable Models	0.1		B	
TIMING BELT TENSIONER - Remove & Replace All Applicable Models	0.2		B	
TIMING BELT TENSIONER				
ROCKER ARM	Item: 33, 34			View Graphic
ROCKER ARM ADJUSTING SCREW	Item: 36			View Graphic
ROCKER ARM SHAFT	Item: 6, 7			View Graphic
ROCKER ARM SPRING	Item: 35			View Graphic
SPARK PLUG TUBE SEAL	Item: 39			View Graphic
SPOOL VALVE ASSEMBLY	Item: 9			View Graphic
SPOOL VALVE FILTER ASSEMBLY	Item: 10			View Graphic
TDC PULSER PLATE	Item: 13			View Graphic
TENSIONER ASSEMBLY	Item: 17			View Graphic
TIMING BELT	Item: 25			View Graphic
APPLICATION				
All Applicable Models				
TIMING BELT DRIVE PULLEY	Item: 16			View Graphic
TIMING BELT TENSIONER SPRING	Item: 18			View Graphic
TIMING COVER	Item: 22, 23			View Graphic
TIMING COVER GASKET	Item: 19, 20, 21			View Graphic
VALVE COVER	Item: 40			View Graphic
VALVE COVER GASKET	Item: 38			View Graphic
VALVE COVER WASHERS	Item: 43			View Graphic
VALVE GRIND GASKET SET	Item: 1			View Graphic
14400-PBM-A02	22.75		25	

Parts: \$ 0.00 Labor: \$ 292.05 Subtotal: \$292.05

The database indicates that changing the timing belt on a '04 Civic takes 3 hours. Labor rate in this example is \$97.35/hr, for a labor total of \$292.05. We'll need one timing belt at \$22.75, and there's \$18.50 in fees for a total of \$333.30.

This is good, solid information and it provides everything needed for a BareBones estimate. It covers the minimum job, and when a client asks "How much to do a timing belt?" it's a completely honest answer. However, the list is far from complete. To do the timing belt replacement as it may need to be done to insure a long-term result and take advantage of all the overlapping labor savings, the estimate for a Civic should include the bare-bones list plus some or all of these items: water pump, external belt, cam seals, crank seal, timing belt tensioner and idler bearings, valve cover gasket and grommets, spark plug seals, thermostat and cooling system supplies.

Doing the timing belt with these additional parts and labors insures that you won't be paying the \$300 dollars in labor to go back under the timing cover again soon for a problem. The complete job including the list of additional parts would cost significantly more but covers much more as well; timing belt replaced with seals and tensioners, water pump replaced with thermostat and cooling system service (also any needed hoses could be replaced at this time for the cost of parts and minimal labor), resealing the valve cover (that needs to be loosened or removed to pull the timing cover off) and checking the valve clearance (with the cover off now is the time to do a valve adjustment).

Any Up Front estimate will include all these elements (or at least discussions about them) because although they may not be critical needs right now, it makes sense to do them for little or no labor with the timing belt overlap. So let's see what happens when we add all these new recommendations.

The screenshot shows the OnDemand5 software interface. At the top, there's a menu bar with 'File', 'View', 'Tools', 'Setup', and 'Help'. Below that, a toolbar contains various icons. The main window is titled '2004 Honda Civic' and has tabs for 'Vehicle', 'Repair', 'Estimator', 'TSB', 'Maintenance', and 'Quote'. The 'Quote' tab is active, showing 'Saved Quotes | Quote Options'.

The interface is divided into several sections:

- Customer Information:** Fields for Mileage, Last Name, Address, Zip/Postal Code, City, Home Phone, and Email. There are also fields for First Name, State/Province, and Office Phone.
- Summary:** A table showing Subtotal (\$308.46), Shop Supplies (0.00), Hazardous Materials (0.00), Discount (0.00), Tax (0.00), Labor (0.00), and Column Total (\$308.46). The Grand Total is \$921.77.
- Quote Details:** A table with columns: Type, Description, Qty/Hrs, Price/Rate, Total, Part No, Locals, and Delete. It lists various labor and part items, including timing belt replacement, oil seals, water pump, thermostat, valve cover gasket, spark plug tube seal, timing belt tensioner, and various belts and seals.

At the bottom, there's a taskbar with the Windows Start button and several open applications, including OnDemand 5.0.1.0.

Wow. Now we're up to \$921.77. It's a heck of a change from the original Bare-Bones estimate of \$333.30, but look how the numbers break down. The labor has only gone up \$214.17, and all the rest is parts! Rather than inappropriately doing the timing belt alone, we have performed six needed maintenance services economically and correctly:

- Timing belt replaced with all wearing components
- All front engine oil seals replaced
- Valves adjusted and cover resealed
- Water pump and thermostat replaced
- Cooling system flushed, filled and pressure tested.

External Drive belt replaced

All of this extra work was done to take advantage of combinations or overlaps. If it was done later (and most of it would need to be done well before the next timing belt interval) it could risk engine damage and would be done with substantially higher labor charges. Because many of these wearing items are under the timing cover, later replacement would start out by paying the near 3 hours of labor just to regain access.

Here's a final example that might shed some light on the difference between Bare Bones and honest Up Front estimates. It's the difference between estimating the bare minimum to get the job versus estimating the job completely with the known unknowns included to do it right the first time. One good example of poor service and loss of value (aka rip-off) I have had a client tell me about was this: This client had a timing belt done at the dealer and was given no discussion about covering the combinations or overlapping labors. 10,000 miles later, the same dealership tried to sell the client a cam seal (which lives behind the timing belt) for \$350.00. When asked why it was needed, the client was told that they often leak and that it was a preventative measure. That's pretty sad when the seal (which wasn't currently leaking) could have been replaced preventatively when the timing belt was replaced as a combination for an additional .3 hours labor and a \$10 dollar seal (probably \$35.00 total). Not offering the sensible combinations and overlaps was bad enough on the original visit, but trying to resell the labor that 100% overlapped on the original job is criminal, incompetent or negligent at best. Most consumers have no basis for understanding combinations and overlapping labors and might expect some help there.

What ELSE could go wrong?

Another issue is the one that can destroy even the best, most in-depth estimate. It's the one that no one can predict: the totally unexpected things that can pop up despite the most earnest efforts and worldly experience, Rumsfeld's "unknown unknowns." No one likes these; neither client nor shop, but the Bare Bones and Up Sell methods don't seem to worry much about it. They make that second call and point out (correctly) that this was unanticipated and outside the scope of their estimate; how would you like to pay? The second call bothers us a little more since our estimate was supposed to cover all contingencies from the beginning, but the unexpected does happen and when it does we make that call too. Here are just a few issues that can make the phone ring (legitimately) the second dreaded time:

- Unusual or hidden damage- You might expect a particular type of damage as a part fails, but it might have failed in an unexpected way or damaged another system that it wouldn't normally affect. The damage wouldn't be known until after the repair was started.
- Prior work issues- Sometimes people try to work on their own cars with mixed results. There might be parts missing or added, or entire systems could be reassembled in new and exciting ways that the manufacturer never intended. Our techs are top-of-the-line but they are trained to deal with factory correct vehicles. We can't plan for how long it will take to unwind someone else's mechanical creativity.
- Missing or broken fasteners- Ever heard the poem "For want of a nail the horse was lost...?" Estimates assume that all of the parts are there for reassembly, but a little plastic fastener that's broken or gone can ruin the day.
- Hidden leaks- Timing cover leaks, head gasket failures, intake manifolds, covered oil seals. Visibility is much greater after things are apart. The source of leaks can be hard to pin down and it doesn't do any good to put you back on the road still leaking.
- Broken / rusted/ seized fasteners- If a bolt or stud is rusted or broken, depending on access, it can take hours of work with specialized tools for replacement or removal without doing further damage.
- Engine ID parts problems- When the parts are ordered for the repair; it's based on the assumption that the engine and main parts are the proper ones for the vehicle. Repairs from accidents or installation of rebuilt engines and drive train components can mean the parts we order may be proper for your year and model car may not fit your particular car.

Sometimes parts break because they are old and crusty, and sometimes they break through legitimate accidents or inattention. We have a general rule that's fair to both the client and our shop... if things break when coming apart it's the client's responsibility, but if it there is a problem going back together it's our problem. If something breaks coming apart we'll call you to change the estimate, but if it things fail going back together we will smile and make it right without complaining and add the experience to our database.

So what's the bottom line?

That's a lot to know about estimates, but the basics boil down pretty simply. When getting an estimate for auto repair (or any similar type job)...

- Make sure that estimates covers all the parts and labor for a complete job done well.
- Make sure all work is covered under a good warranty.
- If you get a series of phone calls with increases and surprises after an estimate; ask questions.
- It's OK to limit spending, but be careful. If something goes wrong, remember who made the decisions.

A friend once joked with me, saying "you'd make more money if you didn't fix everything so good the first time". He was right; many shops thrive on repeat business, but the kind of repeat is the question. I won't profit by charging twice for operations that should have been done right the first time. When we make estimates we always give you the most accurate "...statement of the approximate cost" for finished work done right. We tell you about the knowns and we warn you about any likely known unknowns or include them in the estimate. We will also take the time to talk with you about the possible advantages of overlapping labor for your particular repair. If you can save money or add reliability by logical job sequencing we'll let you know. We are always looking out for your long-term best interest, not just the short-term profits. Our estimates are for complete jobs done right the first time that we can stand behind with our 24-month 24-thousand mile warranty. Our estimates are always as complete and accurate as possible, and you shouldn't expect anything less from any company you deal with.



Client Profile

Lisa Collins is living a massage therapist's dream

"Preventative maintenance is absolutely critical for your long-term happiness and performance." Sounds like the start of one of Tom's rants on automotive care, but not this time. It's actually the thought of one of our longtime clients, Lisa Collins, and she's talking about something even more important than your car- your health. "Massage is like preventative maintenance for your body. Many people look at it as a luxury, so it's one of the first things they cut when the economy dries up. But that's exactly the wrong way to look at it. It's an investment in your health, and if you're healthy you do a better job in everything." Lisa knows what she's talking about. As an athlete and triathlete she understands pain, and is a frequent massage client herself. Plus, after almost dying from a brain hemorrhage she has a particular appreciation for the value of health in her life...

Sometimes life can take you on a twisted path to where you need to be, and that's the case with Lisa. She grew up in North Carolina and studied business education at Virginia Tech, one of two senior military colleges in the country. Although she was in the Virginia Tech Corp of Cadets, in the end she decided against a military career. Her athletic and adventurous nature was coming out already, as she was a Emergency Medical Technician and member of the Appalachian Rescue Squad while she was there. From Virginia Tech it was off to be... a first mate and chef of a charter sailboat in the Virgin Islands! Not a bad gig in itself, but soon the Big Chair called and Lisa moved on to become captain of a 115' crew boat servicing oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. As you might expect, the BP spill stirs deep feelings in anyone who spent 3 years in those waters. "It hurts to see what's going on down there. I remember the many times we tied our ship up to an abandoned rig where we'd cook out and go fishing over the side. Those were good times in a beautiful place, and it's heartbreaking to see what's happened."

It's hard to imagine anything that would entice someone to leave a job like that, but that's what Lisa did. "I would call myself an 'experimenter', and I felt I'd experienced all I could on the seas," Lisa said. "I had always been interested in massage and holistic healing, so I decided to explore it more fully." That made Oakland the next stop, where Lisa settled in to study [Breema](#) for 2½ years and become a certified Breema therapist. "Breema is a gentle form of bodywork like Thai massage or even assisted yoga. It's very nurturing and relaxing, emphasizing rhythmic movements and stretches. It has both physical and emotional benefits, and helps people be responsible for healing themselves. It's kind of like pressing a reset button for your body."

Five years ago the wanderbug bit again and Lisa decided to move to the Northwest. She went to the Oregon School of Massage to get her license to practice bodywork in Oregon, but while she was there she landed a job with the main Fred Meyer office as a computer programmer. (Oh, didn't we mention that she was a computer tech as well?) Freddy's was going well and Lisa was going to school and doing massage in her spare time until 2006, when everything changed. "I was diagnosed with an AVM, a weakened blood vessel in the brain. These things can burst without warning, and are almost always fatal. Surgery is the only fix." While brain surgery might slow most of us down, it just showed Lisa how precious her life was. "It was amazing the amount of support I received. I learned a lot of things during that time, but the most important was the value of my friends. My friends are my family." One year later, Lisa received her license to practice massage in Oregon.

Of course that was just before everything changed again, this time for all of us. The economy imploded, and Lisa and Freddy parted ways. "Losing my job was actually a blessing. My big dream was always in health and making people feel better. I've always wanted to open my own healing center, and this was my opportunity to do it right." Now Lisa has [her own massage studio](#) in Northwest Portland. "I do Swedish massage and Breema in the studio, and on-site chair massage for corporate clients." One of the most unusual features of her service is her Therasage Healing Pad. "It's an infra-red mat with 100 jade stones that cover the entire massage table. It projects heat deep within the body instead of just warming the skin, so it's ideal for deep heat during massage. The jade stones create negative ions which

strengthen the body's immune system and produce feelings of well-being. Some of my clients come in just to lay on the pad!" Lisa's still building clientele, but even in this economy success is coming quickly. "People appreciate the care I bring to each client. I've really found my passion in massage, and clients can tell." As a certified chiropractic assistant and certified nutrition therapist (oh, did we forget to mention that too?) Lisa is ready to bring a full range of holistic health services to an eager audience.

This time it seems like Lisa may have found what she's been looking for in Portland, where she can indulge her love for cycling, hiking, and water sports of all types. "I still have dreams that may take me away for short periods, like a canoe trip to Minnesota Boundary Waters Wilderness area or sailing around New Zealand, but Portland is HOME to me now. It just feels right."

LATE BREAKING NEWS- If you're interested in sampling Lisa's massage technique, we've got the perfect opportunity. Just before this issue of "Your Car Matters" hit the streets, Lisa agreed to come to the Tom Dwyer booth at the Sellwood Park Summer Concerts and give **FREE** chair massages. Imagine a warm summer evening, the sun slowly setting, music playing in the background, and Lisa's talented fingers soothing away the stress in your neck and shoulders. If you can think of a better way to spend the evening, please write us to tell us what it could be. If not, then we'll be seeing you at Sellwood Park!



Painting The Town Dwyer Reports back from Ed Schultz and Phame Academy

Last month's newsletter brought you news about two big events on the Dwyer June calendar- Ed Schultz' live appearance at the Bagdad, and Phame Academy's production of Once Upon a Mattress. You probably spent the rest of June saying to yourself "gosh, I wonder what happened?" Chances are that you've been sitting silently, staring out the window, hungry for information. Your job's in disarray, your family's leaving you, and your health is fading as you vainly hope for any scrap of news. Well, we can't leave you hanging like that! Here's all the dirt about our nights out on the town, so you can get on with your life...

Most Portlanders have spent (or misspent) at least one night at the Bagdad Theater on Hawthorne, and June 10th was Ed Schultz' turn. Touring in support of his book, "Killer Politics- How Big Money and Bad Politics Are Destroying The Great American Middle Class", Ed hit Portland after a show in Seattle the night before. As one of the KPOJ representatives said, "Ed's coming into the Bluest venue on the Bluest street in the Bluest city of a Blue state. He's gotta find a friendly crowd." And he certainly did. Ed took the stage with his now-famous "Yooooooo" amid a rousing welcome. Being in Portland, the Fat Redhead knew what to look for and quickly found it... a minute after he took the stage a cold draft microbrew appeared in his hand. Suitably outfitted, Ed spent the next hour covering topics critical to the "small people" of the country, from health care and BP to Afghanistan and Obama. An extended audience open-mike session closed the show. Wendy and Homey packed the cameras and mikes into a box, and the evening's fun hit the airwaves of Ed's national show the next day. As the presenting sponsor for Ed's appearance, we had the opportunity to see many of our existing clients and to introduce ourselves to new ones. Thanks to everyone, both client and potential client alike, for the kind things you said and for your support of our shop! These events are ALWAYS fun, because we get to hang out with some of the coolest people around, find out what's on their mind, and get some in-depth information on the issues that matter to us all. If you missed Ed, don't worry. He's planning another Portland trip soon, and we'll keep you informed when dates are announced. Shame on you if you miss the next one!

Two days after the curtain closed for Ed it opened for Phame Academy, Portland's drama, music, and art school for people with developmental disabilities. This year's show was Once Upon a Mattress, the princess-and-the-pea story that marked Carol Burnett's Broadway debut in 1959. It was the first show under Phame's new creative team of Jessica Dart (director), Ben Landsverk (musical director), and Korie Chung (choreographer), but it easily lived up to the high standards set by Phame over the last 25 years. Costumes, sets, and props, the work of Phame's students and an army of volunteers, were stunning as usual but it was the enthusiasm of the Phame students that made the show so magnificent. If theater is about emotion, then this is the best experience any theatergoer could hope for. Each actor radiated joy and amazed pride as they realized that they had not only shattered the audience's expectations, but opened up new horizons for themselves. Tom Dwyer Automotive has been involved with Phame for a couple years now, and next year we plan to step up our support by helping to give Phame a little more of the exposure it so richly deserves. If you'd like to support the mission of Phame, either by giving time or money, you can contact them through their website at www.PhameAcademy.org. Otherwise, we'll keep you posted on next year's show!



Boardman Coal Plant Up For Review **Speak out now on Oregon's chance to become coal-free**

Out of sight and out of mind of the majority of Portland-area residents, Oregon's biggest single pollution source funnels electricity into the grid that supplies the state's largest urban area with electricity. Meet the PGE-operated Boardman Coal Plant—the only coal-fired power plant within Oregon state lines.

Each year the Boardman Coal Plant emits five million tons of carbon dioxide that contributes to global warming. It also spews out 15,000 tons of sulfur dioxide and nitrous oxides that add to acid rain in the Columbia Gorge, and 200 pounds of toxic mercury. Because Boardman was illegally grandfathered in to the Clean Air Act, the plant has polluted for decades without being held to the same air pollution standards as other coal plants across the country.

Now PGE faces a choice: install expensive pollution controls that would bring Boardman into compliance with state and federal clean air laws, or retire the plant by 2014 and transition to cleaner energy sources. By denying a PGE plan to keep Boardman open for the next decade or longer, the Oregon Public Utilities Commission has a chance to prevent PGE from prolonging the coal plant's life with ratepayer money.

Facing increased public pressure to transition off reliance on its coal plant, early this year PGE proposed a plan to the Commission which could shut down the plant by 2020. Yet this plan comes with significant strings attached. First, PGE is asking the state Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to waive pollution controls the DEQ has mandated for 2015 installation. If these waivers are not granted, PGE's "2020 plan" also asks the Public Utilities Commission for the go-ahead to continue running Boardman until 2040 or longer.

With Oregon leading the nation in the transition to a clean energy economy, the idea of keeping the state's only coal plant open for another thirty years is absurd. It's also unlikely PGE will receive the pollution waivers it seeks from environmental regulators; this month Oregon's Environmental Quality Commission, at the recommendation of the DEQ, unanimously voted to deny PGE's initial waiver requests. In other words the 2020 plan is an unrealistic and expensive proposal, which risks sinking millions of ratepayer dollars into a coal plant with a limited lifespan. By rejecting the 2020 plan, the Public Utilities Commission can protect PGE's ratepayers from this waste of money and resources.

It's an issue that came to a head on June 23rd, at a public hearing called by the Commission in Portland. Oregon residents turned out in force to criticize PGE's 2020 plan for Boardman. Student activists, health professionals, low-income individuals, and concerned citizens from all walks of life came to ask for a 2014 closure date. PGE also turned out its supporters—mostly employees with ties to Boardman or another PGE facility. Yet PGE advocates were easily overwhelmed by the chorus of voices demanding the company clean up its act.

Since PGE's announcement about the 2020 plan early this year, the movement to close Boardman by 2014 has only continued to grow. Ten student governments from educational institutions across Oregon have passed resolutions in favor of Boardman's speedy closure, almost all singling out 2014 as the date which makes sense. Collectively these student governments represent over 107,000 college, university, and high school students. Meanwhile approximately 40 Portland-area businesses that buy electricity from PGE have asked the utility to move to cleaner fuels by 2014. Environmental, health, and faith organizations are also holding strong, sticking to the 2014 option as the only realistic plan for Boardman's retirement.

Many of these diverse voices had a chance to be heard at the June 23rd hearing. From senior citizens who have lived in Oregon their entire lives, to high school students concerned about pollution from Boardman, more than 300 people showed up to support the 2014 option. Even our own Tom Dwyer was asked for comment, and you can read the [text of his remarks here](#). Some pointed out that PGE's own analyses show 2014 is a viable and cost-effective date to transition of the coal plant. The company only hides this fact by making several flawed assumptions, including unrealistically high future prices for alternative fuels.

Oregon may never have a better chance to shut down its only coal plant and eliminate the largest source of pollution in the state. This summer Oregonians still have the chance to ask the Public Utilities Commission to reject PGE's flawed 2020 plan for Boardman. You can submit your comments directly to the commission at <http://apps.puc.state.or.us/commentpgeirp/message.htm>. A coal-free Oregon is within our grasp and your voice matters more than ever. Learn more about what you can do at www.coalfreeoregon.org



Shop Talk

Why aren't we open longer on Saturdays?

You may know that our office is open on Saturdays from 10am until 1pm for pickup and dropoff, but we don't have any techs on duty for actual repairs. Why not? It seems like a logical thing to extend our hours into the weekend and it would provide much greater convenience to our clients, so what's the holdup?

The answer is a "chicken-and-egg" problem in the logistics of the auto repair industry. Repair shops (like ours) can't maintain an inventory of replacement parts for every car, so we rely on "parts houses" that stock every part necessary to fix every car on the road. These parts houses aren't open Saturdays because repair shops aren't open Saturdays, and without parts houses the repair shops can't function. Even if the parts houses were open we frequently need dealer parts, special order parts, or wrecking-yard parts, and those companies aren't open either. We could bring your car in on Saturday for diagnosis but we wouldn't be able to get the parts to fix it until Monday at the earliest, leaving you ride-less for at least three days.

Even on simple maintenance and repair, unexpected things pop up that can leave your car crippled until the parts come in. For example, a basic oil change can quickly become a major hassle if the oil plug strips out and a replacement isn't available. Some large companies that specialize in one particular type of repair (brakes, mufflers, etc.) do maintain extensive inventories, but they still face problems when the "oops" factor pops up for a part they don't carry.

Like you, we certainly enjoy spending Saturdays with our families and friends, but that's not why we're closed. We want to make sure that when you bring your vehicle to us we can confidently promise complete repair in a timely manner. We don't gamble that we have everything we'll need for you; we make sure of it and we can't be sure on Saturdays. We understand why our clients would like the convenience of Saturday access, but if we can't do it right we won't do it at all.



Drew's Kitchen

Pesto Chicken Rollitini

(4) chicken breasts, tenderized and flattened
(1) 8oz. jar or tub prepared pesto sauce
¼ cup chopped pine nuts

(8) slices of deli sliced provolone cheese
(1) cup white wine
Olive oil

- (1) Place each chicken breast in large zip-lock bag or plastic wrap before tenderizing. This keeps raw chicken from contaminating the cutting board or splattering surrounding area. Pound chicken breast with meat tenderizing mallet. If you don't have one, you can improvise with a large heavy serving spoon.
- (2) Take tenderized chicken breasts and place on work surface. Evenly spread pesto sauce on top each piece of chicken. Sprinkle with pine nuts. Top each Chicken breast with provolone cheese.
- (3) Heat wide fry pan (on medium heat) with olive oil.
- (4) Tightly roll each chicken breast seam side down, and place in heated pan. Season with salt and pepper.
- (5) Allow chicken to lightly brown seam side down, until cheese begins to melt out. Gently flip or roll chicken. Pour white wine over chicken. Cover and reduce heat to low.
- (6) Simmer in liquid until chicken is cooked, approximately 3-5 minutes.
- (7) Uncover and serve with your favorite vegetable.

Total prep and cook time- 30 minutes



Popcorn Shorts

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



Sellwood Park concert series starts July 12

One of our favorite Sellwood events, the Summer Concert Series, cranks up again in just a couple weeks. There is absolutely no better way to enjoy a summer evening in Portland than to stretch out on the grass with your family and friends and listen to the music. The question shouldn't be whether you're going to go, but when you're going and who you'll see. Here's your choices...

July 12: [Mingo Fishtrap](#) (funky soul)

July 19: [Sanyu](#) (gospel, R&B, and more)

July 26: [Sallie Ford & the Sound Outside](#) (alt pop)

Aug 2: [Casey Neill & the Norway Rats](#) (left coast rock)

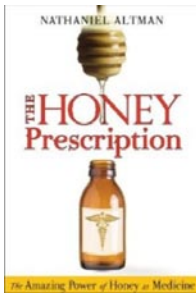
All the fun happens at [Sellwood Riverfront Park](#) - SE Spokane & Oaks Pkwy, 6:30-8:30 PM. Free art activities for children (including the Tom Dwyer "Car of the Future" coloring contest!) will begin at 6:00 PM each night, and you'll find food booths from Bellagio's Pizza, Burlly's Kettle Corn, Dano's Dogs, Mountain Ice, and Twin Paradox Coffeehouse. See you there!



Sellwood's Passport Event is August 7th

If you love strolling through our Sellwood businesses on a Sunday, or even if you're just curious about the neighborhood, August 7th is a day to circle on your calendar. The Sellwood Passport Event is a street festival, sale, and scavenger hunt all rolled into one. It's a celebratory showcase of the businesses that draws thousands of people to our neighborhood each summer. Streets will be filled with music, balloons, balloon artists, and many businesses with samples of their wares for you to explore. A new addition this year is Passport Village (in the Wells Fargo parking lot on Milwaukie Ave.) to allow service businesses and some businesses from outside the main streets to join the party.

But the main reason to come is the Passport Game! On Saturday, August 7th, you can pick up your 'Passport' at any participating business in the Sellwood neighborhood. Then, take the passport and get it stamped at as many businesses as possible. **Purchases are not required to receive a stamp.** Eight (8) stamps enters you in a general prize drawing for gift certificates donated by members of the Sellwood Westmoreland Business Alliance (SWBA). Fourteen (14) or more stamps gets you in for the grand prize, also donated by SWBA businesses. We don't know what the prizes are yet... you'll have to come to the event to find out! You'll start seeing the large event posters around the neighborhoods towards the end of July, or the ads in the Sellwood Bee and Oregonian. Tell your friends and make plans to spend a perfect summer's day with us in Sellwood!



Honey, I want to sleep...

Why use a complicated, potentially dangerous solution when a simple one might work?

The U.S. National Commission on Sleep Disorders estimated direct cost of sleep disorders at \$15.9 billion and another \$50 to \$100 billion in indirect costs. Lack of quality sleep is linked to a wide list of health problems, including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cognitive and memory problems, depression and neurodegenerative disorders.

Americans are taking both over the counter and prescription medications to try to sleep better. Not only do these medications cost billions, they are potentially dangerous and their adverse drug reactions (ADR) and drug interactions kill thousands each year. Heath Ledger's death in 2008 is a tragic example of a loss due to an ADR. In spite of this, the pharmaceutical manufacturers still prefer we just take a pill.

What if something as simple as honey could help even a small portion of people seeking help with sleep disorders? Honey has been used as a popular remedy for sleep disorders for thousands of years. The possibility that honey can be a safe, inexpensive, and effective sleep aid fits with Hippocrates' 2500 year old notions of using our food as medicine. We as a society are too quick to ridicule and throw simple solutions out in favor of the technical, scientific ones. Do you think your Doctor would prescribe honey? Do you think big pharma would like that?

To find out more about honey as a sleep aid, look for a new title in our loaner library- "The Honey Prescription" by Nathaniel Altman. In this book honey as a sleep aid is looked at historically and scientifically. Please take a look at it, and remember that it's available to be checked out if you would like.



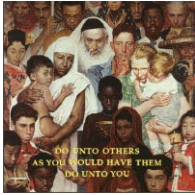
Summer Postcard Contest- \$100 cash

With everyone heading out for summer fun, it's time once again for our Postcard Contest. Pretty simple, really. Send us a postcard from anything you've done, almost done, considered, or avoided from your summer vacation. The winner will be chosen mostly at random, and subject to the arcane editorial opinions of the "Your Car Matters" editorial staff. If you are inexplicably chosen as the winner, you'll get \$100. Entries are due August 31, and the winner will be announced in the next newsletter. Last year's winner, shown above, came to us from the Moon so you have a high mark to hit. Keep those cards and letters coming!



Free Carwash Season continues through September 15

Just a reminder that it's still Free Carwash Season at Tom Dwyer! The season goes from May 15 to September 15, and you'll get a free carwash coupon for any purchase over \$100. We do this because our parking lot gets a little dustier than we'd like, and we don't want you leaving in a dirty ride!



Peace journey comes through Portland

On June 2, two Iraq War vets and an Iraqi refugee set out from San Francisco on [The People's Journey](#), bringing a positive message about the possibility of peace, a message that does not point a finger at a set of "wrong-doers." They traveled through Los Angeles, Phoenix, Oklahoma City, and more, telling their personal stories of Afghanistan. Two weeks later In Washington DC, they were joined by three women from Palestine, and travelled on to New York City, the Detroit, Chicago, Denver, and Boise before reaching us here in the Pacific Northwest.

Josh Stieber, Conor Curran, and Salam Talib, two Iraq War veterans and their Iraqi refugee friend respectively, have joined forces to spread a message of peace. For them "The People's Journey," forms a continuation of a trek Stieber completed last year which he called the "Contagious Love Experiment." Stieber and Curran, who joined Josh in the middle of that first cross-country trip, met and became friends with Talib during their final stop in the San Francisco Bay area.

[The People's Journey](#) was conceived by an inspiring group of youth from Afghanistan as a result of their conversations with Josh and other young people in Afghanistan, the US, Israel/Palestine and Iraq. It became very clear that when people truly listen to one another that they want to hear more and soon get to know each other. This direct communication – hearing each others voices, their stories of life during war, and everyone's yearning for peace – led to a level of caring, or love, that will no longer allow for harm.

Although Josh, Conor, and Salam's journey ended in Olympia on July 7, the Journey continues for the rest of us. Here are a few links that can help you get a little deeper into their world, and maybe make our world a better place.

Ordinary Afghanis travelling and educating for peace

[Our Journey to Smile](#)

The Contagious Love Experiment

<http://contagiousloveexperiment.wordpress.com/>

Josh Stieber

http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/glenn_greenwald/radio/2010/04/09/stieber

Conor Curran

<http://kdhx.org/ondemand/vetnet/2009/09/10/vet-net-podcast-josh-steiber-and-conor-curran-the-contagious-love-experiment/>

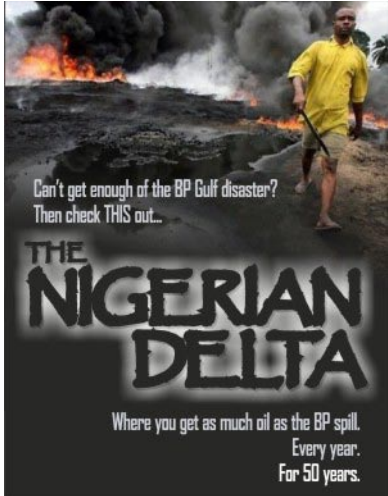
Salam Talib

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Clq4Z3Qc2jo>

Three Cups of Tea (A book that has nothing to do with the People's Journey, but that does show a radical way to think about a situation that only seems to respond to violence)

<http://www.threecupsoftea.com/>

News To Make You Furious



There can't be much these days that's more depressing than being a Cajun. Louisiana was never really on the economic front-burner to begin with, but the little it had was devastated by a natural disaster compounded by governmental inaction and incompetence. Then, just as it may have been on the road to recovery, BAM! BP happens, and the whole Gulf Coast is in the same leaky boat. What could be worse?

It may be cold comfort to New Orleans, but there is somewhere that has it worse... Nigeria. Nigeria supplies about 10% of the world's total oil reserves, and is the 5th largest oil supplier to the US. It also has an extremely weak and corrupt government working with extremely strong and corrupt international corporations to extract the oil. As you can imagine there's a price to pay, and that price isn't paid by the government or the corporations but by the people who live in the oil-smeared hell the situation has created. For the last 50 years, Nigeria has been the victim of governmental incompetence, corporate malfeasance, environmental rape, and a resounding yawn from the world community. Here's some links on the situation so you can dip your toe in the oil. (Oops. 'Water'. We meant 'dip you toe in the water'.)

United Nations University- "Nigeria's agony dwarfs Gulf oil spill" (sent to us by a client)
<http://ourworld.unu.edu/en/nigerias-agony-dwarfs-gulf-oil-spill/>

New York Times- "Far From Gulf, a Spill Scourge 5 Decades Old"
<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/17/world/africa/17nigeria.html>

Photo essay on Nigerian Oil (click the "Nigeria" tab on the homepage)
<http://www.chrishondros.com/images.htm>

New York Times- "Growing Unrest Posing a Threat to Nigerian Oil "
http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/21/business/worldbusiness/21oil.html?_r=1

Amnesty International Report- "Oil industry has brought poverty and pollution to Niger Delta"
<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/news/oil-industry-has-brought-poverty-and-pollution-to-niger-delta-20090630>

National Geographic- "Curse of the Black Gold- Hope and betrayal on the Niger Delta"
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/02/nigerian-oil/oneill-text>

National Geographic Photo Essay-
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2007/02/nigerian-oil/kashi-photography>

Telegraph.UK- "Nigerian oil rebels attack Lagos"
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/nigeria/5818102/Nigerian-oil-rebels-attack-Lagos.html>