



“Your Car Matters”

Tom Dwyer Automotive Services Monthly Newsletter for January, 2019



What did Rudy do on Christmas vacation?

As citizens, we beg you please, read Rudy’s report from Ukraine



When Will YOU Switch To Synthetic Oil?

Synthetic oil is better for you, your vehicle, and the planet



Someone wants to steal your cat!

Catalytic converters are being stolen worldwide... for a reason



The US spends 10 times more on fossil fuel subsidies than on education



Kids’ Climate Lawsuit: CASE DISMISSED!



“Xenobots” made by AI from living cells... but don’t worry, they’re cute.



Our national parks are ending right now

Our Monthly Columns

Tom’s Tidbits- Trump’s fate is the least of what’s at stake

Health Notes- Oh, nothing much... just a cure for cancer

What NOW?!! Toons- Keith Tucker’s First Toon of 2020

Book Spotlight- “The Age of Illusions” by Andrew Bacevich

Drew’s Kitchen- Crescent Breakfast Ring

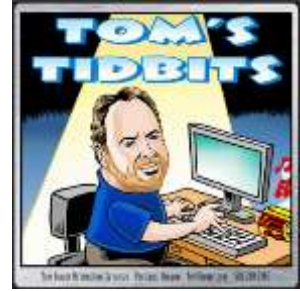
Humorousness- Humor in the time of Stalin

Shop Talk- The New York Times

News To Make You Furious- Happy Anniversary! Citizens United Turns 10!

Tom's Tidbits

Trump's fate is the least of what's at stake



Greetings,

It's coming down to the wire now, but the fate of one broken man is the least of what's at stake. The country's direction, even the very existence of a constitutional republic are also imperiled, but I'd argue even these aren't the biggest risks. It seems humanity's most fundamental assumption, that of consensual reality itself, is up for grabs. America, and the 100 Senators 'representing' us, have a pretty clear understanding of Donald Trump's actions in reality. The reasonable, appropriate, reality-based response is clear. The only way for the Senate NOT to convict (much less to hear witnesses) is to deny reality. Yet I still wonder what they'll do.

People know when they're being abused in reality, so the most effective way for an abusive system to continue is to deny reality itself exists. George Orwell is one of the most famous advocates of objective reality and explainers of why oppressive regimes MUST destroy consensual reality to exist. Trump's statement that "What you're seeing and what you're reading is not what's happening" is a horrifying realization of Orwell's *1984*, but Orwell's prescience is confirmed every day under the Trump regime...

"The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history."

"For, after all, how do we know that two and two make four? Or that the force of gravity works? Or that the past is unchangeable? If both the past and the external world exist only in the mind, and if the mind itself is controllable – what then?"

"And if all others accepted the lie which the Party imposed—if all records told the same tale—then the lie passed into history and became truth. 'Who controls the past' ran the Party slogan, 'controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.'"

"Orthodoxy means not thinking-- not needing to think. Orthodoxy is unconsciousness."

This assault on reality isn't supposed to convince anyone that the Party is right; it's supposed to erase the concept of reality and destroy the will of people who stubbornly assert our actions as a society are best based on it...

"The party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. [Winston's] heart sank as he thought of the enormous power arrayed against him, the ease with which any Party intellectual would overthrow him in debate, the subtle arguments which he would not be able to understand, much less answer."

But Orwell wasn't a pessimist on this. He also said, "if liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear". What the current regime does not want to hear... MUST NOT hear... cannot function if it knows... is that reality exists. The way to have liberty, to fight the cancer of the authoritarians or reality-deniers of any stripe, is to stand up for objective reality. "Sometimes the first duty of intelligent men is the restatement of the obvious." "In a time of deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act." "There was truth and there was untruth, and if you clung to the truth even against the whole world, you were not mad." Indeed, in the very quote in which Orwell exposes the Party's motives, Winston has his victory. Read the whole thing...

"The Party told you to reject the evidence of your eyes and ears. It was their final, most essential command. [Winston's] heart sank as he thought of the enormous power arrayed against him, the ease with which any Party intellectual would overthrow him in debate, the subtle arguments which he would not be able to understand, much less answer. *And yet he was in the right! They were wrong and he was right. The obvious, the silly, and the true had got to be defended. Truisms are true, hold on to that! The solid world exists, its laws do not change. Stones are hard, water is wet, objects unsupported fall toward the earth's center. With the feeling that he was speaking to O'Brien, and also that he was setting forth an important axiom, he wrote: Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.*"

Of course, it's worth remembering that 1984 closes with Winston being shot in the back of the head by agents of the state. I guess we'll all find out what the Senate does to us.

Make a great day,

Digging Deeper...

[The Ministry Of Untruth, What Donald Trump's unending stream of lies has done to our White House, our country and us](#), by S.V. Date on Huffpost, Jan 2020

[This Is a Trial of the Constitution Itself](#), by Maya Wiley in The Atlantic, Jan 2020

[Trump's lawyers are absolutely entitled to their own facts](#), by Dana Milbank in Washington Post, Jan 2020

[Will the Constitution Fail Again?](#) By Frank Joyce on Counterpunch, Jan 2020

['What You're Seeing... Is Not What's Happening.'](#), by Mahita Gajanan in Time, July 2018

[Quotes from George Orwell](#), Age of the Sage website

[1984](#) by George Orwell, 1948

What NOW?!! Toons

Keith Tucker's What NOW?!! Toon for January



"WHAT NOW?!!"

© KEITH TUCKER
WWW.WHATNOWTOONS.COM



What did Rudy do on his Christmas vacation?

As fellow citizens we beg you, PLEASE READ THIS.

As we write this, the impeachment trial of Donald Trump is beginning in the Senate. It's a political activity with grandstanding, hypocrisy, and political theater abounding. No matter how hard they try, no Senator will be able to avoid SOME partisan taint, real or imagined, to their words or acts. But impeachment isn't *only* that, or at least it doesn't

have to be... it *can* be more. People of integrity from opposite sides of a political divide *can* come together to find truth, if they choose. This report from Rudy Giuliani proves they aren't even trying, but that they are, at least, pretending.

The material we're directing you to is a 3-hour program on One America Network (OAN). It is Rudy Giuliani's 'report back' from Ukraine, prepared under his direction, and designed to imitate a typical investigative news report. It is not.

We have no idea why Rudy's Report hasn't made bigger waves since it was dropped on Dec 16, but it really should have, and for so many reasons. PLEASE TAKE A LOOK AT THIS MATERIAL! Specific allegations of specific wrongdoing, backed up by testimony and evidence, have been lodged against the President of the United States. This is his response, and basic fairness demands that it be heard. Of course, basic fairness also demands that it be evaluated objectively, and acted upon accordingly. Whether you're a Trump supporter or detractor, please take the time to actually listen to our president... and act accordingly.

The report is in three parts. [This link directs you to the OAN website](#), but the videos are also hosted on YouTube here at [Video 1](#), [Video 2](#), and [Video 3](#).

Digging Deeper...

[‘Stunning piece of propaganda’: Journalists blast One America News series](#), Michael Calderone on Politico, Dec 2019

[Giuliani Tries To Promote His OANN Show On Fox; Pirro Laughs Nervously](#), Frances Langum on Crooks&Liars, Jan 2020

[Fact-checking Rudy Giuliani's newest allegations from his Ukraine trip](#), Mary Ilyushina and Nathan Hodge on CNN, Dec 7, 2019

[Giuliani continues bid to dig dirt on Trump political rivals in Kiev](#), Mary Ilyushina and Nathan Hodge on CNN, Dec 6, 2019

[Giuliani draws attention with latest trip to Ukraine](#), Brett Samuels on The Hill, Dec 6, 2019

[Rudy Giuliani Made A Surprise Visit To Kyiv And Nobody There Is Happy About It](#), Christopher Miller on BuzzFeed, Dec 5, 2019

[Rudy Giuliani, Under Investigation For Ties To Ukraine, Takes A Trip To Ukraine](#), Eric Lutz in Vanity Fair, Dec 4, 2019

[New York Times: Giuliani traveled to Hungary and Ukraine to meet with ex-prosecutors in effort to defend Trump](#), Devan Cole on CNN, Dec 4, 2019

[Rudy Giuliani Plans Ukraine Trip to Push for Inquiries That Could Help Trump](#), Kenneth Vogel in New York Times, May 2019



Someone wants to steal your cat!

Catalytic converter theft is growing for a reason

Stealing catalytic converters (or 'cats' to the cool kids) is big business in Portland and beyond. They're great for thieves because they're self-contained, easy to steal, easy to sell, and worth big money. They're not so great for you, because if your cat's stolen your car will barely run, you'll need an immediate replacement, it's a very expensive part,

and there's very little you can do to prevent it...

What does a catalytic converter do?

Catalytic converters (cats) are part of your vehicle's exhaust system and live underneath the vehicle between the engine and the muffler. They use a complex catalytic chemical reaction to reduce the toxicity of combustion gasses from your engine before they're dumped into the air. Every gas-powered American vehicle produced since 1975 has had a cat. (Electric vehicles don't have catalytic converters)

Why are thieves looking for cats?

Cats perform their exhaust magic using rare-earth metals like palladium, rhodium, and platinum. These rare metals are extremely expensive to begin with and China has been stockpiling them lately. That's only driven the price up. For example, an ounce of palladium that cost \$500 in 2016 would cost over \$2500 today. Rhodium is \$2750 per ounce.

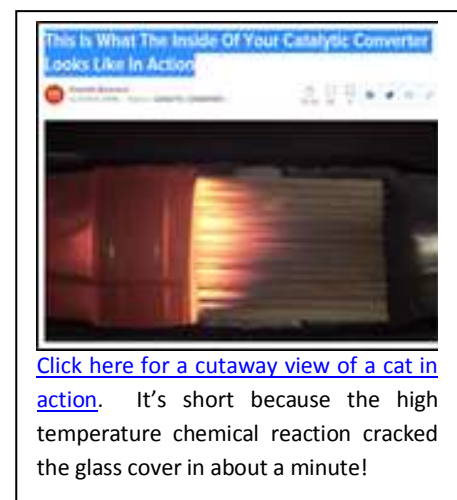
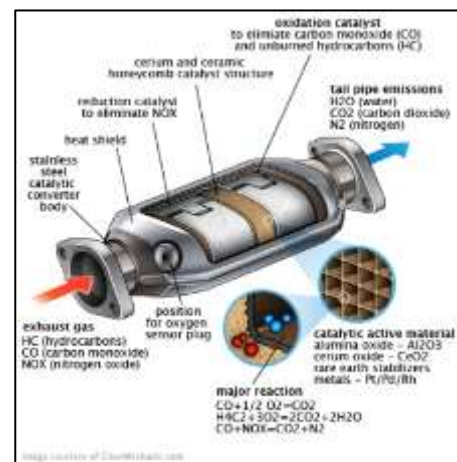
Once they've stolen your cat, thieves can unload it easily. A quick [search of Portland's Craigslist](#) turned up three area buyers; no questions asked.

Though there are over 10,000 types of catalytic converters and all are vulnerable, the cats from hybrid vehicles are the most sought after. Why? Because the value of a cat lies in the metals, and since a hybrid vehicle isn't using the cat when driving in electric mode, the metals last longer.

How are the cats stolen?

It takes less than 5 minutes to steal a cat. Thieves use high-speed rechargeable cutting tools to make two cuts in your exhaust pipe and they're out the door. They aren't being careful while they cut, either, so they're likely to damage other components like fuel lines or wiring.

You'll know if your cat is stolen. Your car will run extremely roughly, if it runs at all. Every 'check engine' light you have will be on. A vehicle with a stolen cat is not driveable for any major distance. You'll definitely need a replacement, and you'll need it immediately.



How can I keep my cat from being stolen?

You can't. If they can get to your vehicle, a determined thief can get your cat given enough time and effort. You can make it unattractive for them, though.

- The best solution is parking in a closed, locked garage to prevent all access to the vehicle. If you can't park in a garage, find the best-lit parking area you can.
- Install surveillance cameras where you park WHERE THE THIEVES CAN SEE THEM.
- Getting more aggressive, some people have steel rebar welded on the cat to make it harder to cut. However, thieves can still cut through the rebar given time. Also, if you need to have legitimate work done to your exhaust system, the legit Technician will have to cut through as well which makes a more expensive repair.
- [Toyota has created a Catloc device that clamps around the converter](#) and makes it hard to remove if the exhaust pipe is cut. They don't have locs for all models yet, but they're working on it.
- You can stencil or etch the license number of your vehicle to your catalytic converter. This won't prevent theft directly, but may make it less attractive to a thief because of easier ID and prosecution. Police departments are sponsoring programs like these to reduce theft; [the Rocklin, CA, police department's "Etch and Catch" program](#) is a good example.
- Here [at Tom Dwyer, we can install a shield to protect your cat...](#) but only if you drive a Prius. If you're interested, call us at 503-230-2300 and we'll give you all the details.



Digging Deeper...

[Police arrest duo accused of stealing catalytic converter from Portland car dealership](#), KGW Staff, KGW-8 website, Jan 2020

[This Is What The Inside Of Your Catalytic Converter Looks Like In Action](#), Elizabeth Blackstock on Jalopnik, Dec 2019

[Rocklin Police Department Catalytic Converter Etching Program](#), Rocklin, California, Police Dept.,

[Demand From China Is Exploding The Price Of The Palladium In Your Catalytic Converter](#), Bradley Brownell on Jalopnik, Jan 2020

[What to Do If Your Catalytic Converter Was Stolen](#), Emily Delbridge on The Balance, July 2019

[Huge rise in catalytic converter thefts](#), by Mary-Ann Russon on BBC News, Sep 2019

[PPB: 'Dramatic increase' in catalytic converter thefts](#), by KOIN-6 Staff, KOIN-6 Website, Jan 2020

[Catalytic Converter Thefts Plague Car Owners - Here's How To Slow Down Thieves](#), Josh Max in Forbes, Apr 2019

[Catalytic converter theft: how to protect your car](#), Toyota website, Apr 2019



When Will YOU Switch To Synthetic Oil?

Synthetic oil is better for you, your vehicle, and the planet

Not that many years ago, few people knew about synthetic motor oil and even fewer wanted to buy it. Things have changed... crude oil prices are rising, people are keeping their cars longer, and more people are worried about the environment. Today, synthetic oils are extremely common and many vehicle models even require synthetics. We have a steady stream of people at the shop who ask about this important product, but many more who still aren't conscious of it at all. If you're one of the people who hasn't made the jump yet, there are three main reasons to switch to a synthetic oil. Synthetics are:

- Better for you
- Better for your vehicle
- Better for the planet

Let's look at each of these points a little more closely...

Better for you

Synthetic oils are better for *you* because they save you valuable time and money! The superior protection and longer life of synthetics mean you'll spend less of your valuable time chasing oil changes. We recommend clients have their Minor Interval Service (which includes an oil change) about every 3 months or 3000 miles with regular oil, but clients using synthetics can go about twice that. This longer interval also matches better with intervals for tire rotation and periodic inspection. The superior properties of the synthetic oils could (in a pinch) actually be pushed as far as 12 months or 10,000 miles (though we wouldn't recommend it).

Money-wise, the less-often oil changes are about a wash with the more-expensive oil. However, synthetic's superior protection reduces expensive mechanical failures, keeping you on the road more reliably and saving on long-term repair costs.

Better for your vehicle

Synthetic oils are better for *your vehicle* because they protect it more effectively! When synthetic oils were in their infancy in the 40's and 50's, it was enough of a goal just to make them as good as conventional oil. The early oils didn't quite meet that goal, and the reputation of synthetic oils took a hit that stays with them today. But times have changed! Now, synthetic technology has far surpassed the capabilities of regular crude. They have fewer impurities, leave fewer deposits, are better for extreme driving conditions (especially extreme temperature), offer better mileage, lower oil consumption, lower octane requirements, and more. For example, "Film Strength" is how strong the film of oil is between any moving parts. While

petroleum oils have film strength of around 500 psi, synthetics average about 3000 psi, over 6 times stronger!

In modern engines with tight tolerances and high operating temperatures this extra strength is critical to extending the life of your engine. In New York taxi tests, taxis that were run 60,000 miles on synthetic oil but without oil changes (CAUTION: Don't try this at home... they used a special filter!) showed less wear than taxis using conventional oil changed every 3000 miles!

Better for the planet

Crude oil has thousands of natural impurities that aren't entirely removed in the refining process. These corrosive acids, paraffin and other waxes, heavy metals, asphalt, naphthenes and benzenes, as well as countless compounds of sulfur, chlorine, and nitrogen in crude oil mean more toxics emitted into the air. These chemicals also pass through your catalytic converter, reducing its life and efficiency.

The actual size of the oil molecules also has an effect on emissions. Crude oil has variable size molecules, while synthetic oil's molecules are mostly the same size. In crude oil the smaller molecules are stripped away to form gunk in the engine and goo in the emissions.

Since synthetic oil is made from crude oil as a feedstock, it isn't a complete replacement for conventional oil. The extended life of synthetic oils does reduce our dependence on crude oil. This is good for two reasons: Environmentally, every drop of oil we don't use is a drop we don't use. This leaves carbon sequestered in the ground and not free in the atmosphere to influence global climate change. Politically, every drop of oil we don't import helps reduce our dependence on foreign oil... or need to produce it at home.

Who DOESN'T need synthetics?

We strongly suggest everyone who *can* switch to synthetics do so, but not everyone can.

If you're vehicle burns a quart or two of standard oil between changes (not uncommon for older vehicles!) then you still have oil when the change is due. However, synthetics can burn noticeably quicker than regular oils. If you go by the recommended interval for synthetics you may have burned through most of your oil by the time the next change is due, which could leave your engine unprotected.

Don't guess, but don't worry either... call and ask our Service Advisors. They'll gladly tell you if the jump to synthetic oil makes sense for YOUR specific vehicle!

The Bottom Line

So why hasn't everyone already switched to synthetic oil? Some people (even professional mechanics) aren't aware that modern synthetic oils have solved the problems of their early ancestors, but the biggest reason is probably the fact that the oil itself is about twice expensive as conventional oil. This seems like a logical stumbling block, but the higher price for the synthetic oil has to be weighed against the advantages of your time savings, fewer oil changes, better mechanical performance,



longer vehicle life, better mileage, lower emissions, and the environmental advantages. We think that the advantages far outweigh any perceived cost drawbacks, and recommend that you consider synthetics on

your next Minor Interval Service. Like many quality products, they may cost more up-front but the long-term return makes them by far the best value.

SPECIAL OFFER-

If you're ready to make the jump to Synthetic, we want to help. If your vehicle currently uses conventional oil, we'll switch you over and give you your FIRST Minor Interval Service with Synthetic oil for the same price you've been paying for our MIS with conventional oil! Some fairly simple restrictions apply, so please call our shop and our Service Advisors will explain the details and get you in the books!

Tom Dwyer Minor Interval Service Standards		Most Cars and Small Trucks	AWD/4WD Large Truck	European and Exotics	
All work is performed by ASE-Certified and experienced personnel	Technicians	Review client history, mileage and recommendations	●		
		Complete 90-point inspection (by request)	●	X	X
		Limited vehicle road test	●		
		"Off the ground" relaxed suspension and undercarriage evaluation			
		Under-hood inspection			
		Remove guards and skid plates			
		Inspect and document pre-change oil level and condition	●		
		Fill oil to capacity (5 quarts max) and install filter ¹			
		Replace drain plug washer (new drain plug at additional cost if needed)			
		Lube chassis where applicable			
		Check accessible filters			
		Air filter (visual, mileage evaluation and maintenance record check)			
		Fuel filter (mileage evaluation and maintenance record check)			
		Cabin air filter (mileage evaluation and maintenance record check)			
		Check cooling system level			
		If coolant low, pressure test by request	●		
		Check Ph balance and coolant freeze protection condition	●		
		Test accessible batteries			
		Check wipers, replace if necessary (new wipers at additional cost if needed)			
		Reset maintenance-required light (additional charge if scan tool is needed)	●		
		Interval Service reminder sticker			
		Check all accessible fluid levels and conditions	●		
		Note any abnormal fluid loss and top off as necessary			
		Check exterior lights, signals, and horn			
		Replace bulbs (additional time requires approval)			
		Check and set tire pressures to OEM specifications			
		Note tire tread depth and condition	●		
		Tire repair (additional time requires approval)	●		
Rotate and balance tires (additional time requires approval)	●				
Advisors	Explain work performed at this service interval				
	Prioritize and explain issues that will need future attention				
	Update service records and maintenance notes	●			
●	Services not performed at convenience lube shops	Please ask your Service Advisor for pricing details			
X	Available upon request at an additional cost				
1	Service may not be available for "Wii Wait" clients				
	Additional oil is \$3.50/qt standard, \$8.99/qt synthetic				

What makes our Minor Interval Service MORE than just an "oil change"? Glad you asked... here's the answer!

Shop Talk

Don't waste your time reading!



Comment of the Month

"Love to read the NY Times. Thank you!"

-Karen K.

Just about any business with a waiting room has reading material for its customers. All too often this means old issues of "Field & Stream", new issues of "Dental Equipment Aficionado", torn copies of "Highlights for Kids", and the Estonian version of "Newsweek". Not at Tom Dwyer! We want your time with us to be well spent, down to the last detail, so the NYT is just one of the many current, interesting, topical books and magazines we have waiting for you.

Our 1998 "Ranger Rick" is just for decoration.



Current Special Offers

Take advantage of these special Tom Dwyer offers!



Get your first Minor Interval Service with SYNTHETIC oil for the same price as our MIS with CONVENTIONAL oil!

One of this month's Feature articles explains why Synthetic Oil is better for you, your vehicle, and the planet, and we want to help you make the jump. If your vehicle currently uses conventional oil, we'll give you your FIRST Minor Interval Service with Synthetic oil for the same price you've been paying for our MIS with Conventional oil!

- Your vehicle must currently use CONVENTIONAL oil.
- You must tell us you want this offer **WHEN YOU SCHEDULE YOUR SERVICE!**
- Offer is **VOID AFTER SERVICE IS COMPLETE!**

Offer expires 2/29/20
\$120 maximum value

*You must tell us you want this offer **WHEN YOU SCHEDULE YOUR SERVICE!**
Offer is **VOID AFTER SERVICE IS COMPLETE!***



FREE Tire Alignment with purchase of 4 tires!

You don't have to go to the discount shops for your tires because your friends at Tom Dwyer will gladly put your baby in a new pair of shoes. We offer most major brands of tires, and with this offer you can get them aligned for free when you buy 4! Plus, we offer free balancing, rotation, and flat repair for the life of the tires with no special offers at all!

Offer expires 2/1/20
4 tire purchase required
\$110 maximum value

*You must tell us you want this offer WHEN YOU SCHEDULE YOUR SERVICE!
Offer is VOID AFTER SERVICE IS COMPLETE!*



FREE Car Rental!

If a major repair means your vehicle has to stay with us for a few days then a rental car can keep your life on track. We'll reserve your rental through Enterprise when you schedule your service, and it'll be at the shop waiting when you drop your vehicle off. We'll relieve the worry, and this special offer will relieve the expense!

Offer expires 2/1/20
\$350 minimum purchase required
\$250 maximum value

*You must tell us you want this offer WHEN YOU SCHEDULE YOUR SERVICE!
Offer is VOID AFTER SERVICE IS COMPLETE!*



SPECIAL CNP MEMBERSHIP OFFER!

We're building a 100% Carbon Neutral Vehicle Fleet, so we want YOU to sign up right now! This isn't some cynical ploy to use Climate Change to benefit our company. WE DON'T MAKE ANY MONEY FROM THIS PROJECT; ALL YOUR MEMBERSHIP FEE GOES TO BONNEVILLE ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION TO PURCHASE YOUR CARBON OFFSETS. In fact, though we're very glad to do it, we lose money on each

membership... that 10%-discount-on-Labor-Charges comes straight out of our pocket for the whole year of your membership! So come on, hurt us but help the planet... join our CNP TODAY!

- Sippers (hybrids, electrics, etc)- Normally \$30- **NOW \$20**
- Drinkers (most types of cars)- Normally \$50- **NOW \$40**
- Guzzlers (SUVs, land yachts, etc)- Normally \$90- **NOW \$60**

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



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



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

Your reviews and referrals matter



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

Latest Automotive Recalls



Automobiles are just like any other product; occasional flaws in manufacture or design can cause problems once they leave the factory. When an issue is identified the manufacturers and government work hard to bring the vehicles back in for refit or repair, but not all recalls make the front pages. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration maintains a [constantly updated list of recalls from every manufacturer](#). The last month's recalls are below, but clicking the button at right will take you to the full list at the NHTSA website.



There's nothing better than a good, basic cheeseburger, but there's one problem: you can't eat it with a spoon. Worry not, Drew rides to the rescue with this Cheesburger Soup recipe...

Ingredients:

- 8 slices bacon
- 6 large eggs
- 1/3 cup chopped chives, (plus more for garnish)
- 1 tbsp garlic powder
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tube crescent rolls
- 1 cup shredded cheddar
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella
- 1 egg, beaten with 1 tablespoon water (for egg wash)

Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook bacon. Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate. Drain half the fat from the skillet.
2. In a large bowl, whisk eggs with chives and garlic powder. Season with salt and pepper. Add to skillet and scramble.
3. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Unroll crescent rolls and piece together like a sun shape, slightly overlapping, on the parchment. Place a slice of cooked bacon on top of each crescent roll. Top ring with cheddar and scrambled eggs, then with mozzarella. Season with more pepper.
4. Gently roll up.
5. Brush with egg wash and bake until golden, 10-15 minutes. Garnish with more chives and serve.

Prep: 10 min, Cook: 15 min, Serves 4
Original recipe from Delish

Health Notes



Oh, nothing much... just a cure for cancer.

We've wanted to run the headline "Cancer Cured!" for a long, long time, and now we may have the chance without it being just a grim joke.

T-Cell therapies, where a patient's immune cells are removed, modified, and returned to the patient to fight their cancer, are the cutting edge of cancer treatment. Welsh scientists at Cardiff University think they've developed a new type of 'killer cell' that targets virtually all types of cancer cells, without destroying the healthy cells around them.

Currently, modified T-cell therapies target only a few types of cancer, aren't very discriminating about protecting healthy cells, and must be personally tailored to each patient. This new version attacks the solid tumors that represent most cancers, leaves healthy cells untouched, and can be created as a 'one-size-fits-all' treatment that avoids the expense and difficulty of personally tailored treatments.

"T-cells equipped with the new TCR were shown, in the lab, to kill lung, skin, blood, colon, breast, bone, prostate, ovarian, kidney and cervical cancer cells while ignoring healthy cells." This showed "encouraging" cancer-clearing results which the researchers said was comparable to the now NHS-approved CAR-T therapy in a similar animal model.

Read all about it...

[Immune discovery 'may treat all cancer'](#), James Gallagher in BBC Health, Jan 2020

[The 'killer' cells treatment by Welsh scientists that could make a huge difference in the fight against cancer](#), by Mark Smith, Health Correspondent, Wales Online, Jan 2020

[Breakthrough discovery could lead to 'one-size-fits-all' cancer treatment](#), Nina Massey in The Independent, Jan 2020

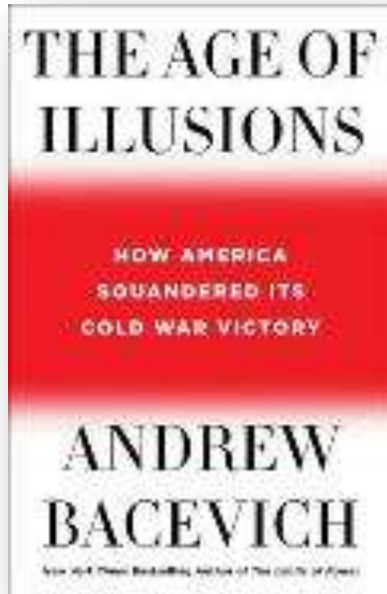
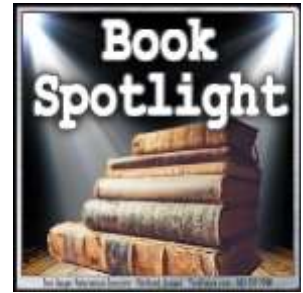
Support the Welsh cancer center where this breakthrough was created...

[Velindre Cancer Centre](#)

[Velindre Fundraising Site](#)

Book Spotlight

“The Age of Illusions” by Andrew Bacevich



Age of Illusions How America Squandered Its Cold War Victory

By Andrew J. Bacevich

A thought-provoking and penetrating account of the post-Cold war follies and delusions that culminated in the age of Donald Trump from the bestselling author of *The Limits of Power*.

When the Cold War ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Washington establishment felt it had prevailed in a world-historical struggle. Our side had won, a verdict that was both decisive and irreversible. For the world's "indispensable nation," its "sole superpower," the future looked very bright. History, having brought the United States to the very summit of power and prestige, had validated American-style liberal democratic capitalism as universally applicable.

In the decades to come, Americans would put that claim to the test. They would embrace the promise of globalization as a source of unprecedented wealth while embarking on wide-ranging military campaigns to suppress disorder and enforce American values abroad, confident in the ability of U.S. forces to defeat any foe. Meanwhile, they placed all their bets on the White House to deliver on the promise of their Cold War triumph: unequalled prosperity, lasting peace, and absolute freedom.

In *The Age of Illusions*, bestselling author Andrew Bacevich takes us from that moment of seemingly ultimate victory to the age of Trump, telling an epic tale of folly and delusion. Writing with his usual eloquence and vast knowledge, he explains how, within a quarter of a century, the United States ended up with gaping inequality, permanent war, moral confusion, and an increasingly angry and alienated population, as well, of course, as the strangest president in American history.

BOOK SPOTLIGHT EXTRA- Bill Moyers interviews Andrew Bacevich



“Bill Moyers adds to his special collection of interviews, going behind the headlines to talk with Andrew Bacevich about democracy. Bacevich, a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, and a professor emeritus of history and international relations at Boston University, joins Bill Moyers to explore a very complex America and his new book. *The Age of Illusions: How America Squandered Its Cold War Victory*.” [Listen to the whole interview here.](#)

Humorousness

Humor in the time of Stalin

This month we're not telling jokes or making you laugh; we're talking ABOUT jokes, and telling you WHY laughing can save your life in the darkest times. Not quite as funny, but we hope you enjoy it anyway...



[The jokes always saved us: humor in the time of Stalin](#)

by Jonathan Waterlow in Aeon, Dec 2019

Stalinism. The word conjures dozens of associations, and 'funny' isn't usually one of them. The 'S-word' is now synonymous with brutal and all-encompassing state control that left no room for laughter or any form of dissent. And yet, countless diaries, memoirs and even the state's own archives reveal that people continued to crack jokes about the often terrible lives they were forced to live in the shadow of the Gulag.

By the 1980s, Soviet political jokes had become so widely enjoyed that even the US president Ronald Reagan loved to collect and retell them. But, 50 years earlier, under Stalin's paranoid and brutal reign, why would ordinary Soviet people share jokes ridiculing their leaders and the Soviet system if they ran the risk of the NKVD (state security) breaking down the door to their apartment and tearing them away from their families, perhaps never to return?

We now know that not only huddled around the kitchen table, but even on the tram, surrounded by strangers and, perhaps most daringly, on the factory floor, where people were constantly exhorted to show their absolute devotion to the Soviet cause, people cracked jokes that denigrated the regime and even Stalin himself.

Boris Orman, who worked at a bakery, provides a typical example. In mid-1937, even as the whirlwind of Stalin's purges surged across the country, Orman shared the following anecdote (joke) with a colleague over tea in the bakery cafeteria:

Stalin was out swimming, but he began to drown. A peasant who was passing by jumped in and pulled him safely to shore. Stalin asked the peasant what he would like as a reward. Realising whom he had saved, the peasant cried out: 'Nothing! Just please don't tell anyone I saved you!'

Such a joke could easily – and in Orman's case did – lead to a 10-year spell in a forced-labour camp, where prisoners were routinely worked to death.

Paradoxically, the very repressiveness of the regime only increased the urge to share jokes that helped relieve tension and cope with harsh but unchangeable realities. Even in the most desperate times, as the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev later recalled: 'The jokes always saved us.'

And yet, despite these draconian responses, the regime's relationship with humour was more complicated than we tend to assume from the iconic narratives we've long internalised from George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's memoir *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973).

The Bolsheviks were certainly suspicious of political humor, having used it as a sharp weapon in their revolutionary struggle to undermine the tsarist regime prior to their dramatic seizure of power in 1917. After they consolidated their position, the Soviet leadership warily decided that humor should now be used only to legitimize the new regime. Satirical magazines such as *Krokodil* therefore provided biting satirical attacks on the regime's enemies at home and abroad. Only if it served the goals of the revolution was humor considered useful and acceptable: as a delegate to the Soviet Writers' Congress of 1934 summed up: 'The task of Soviet comedy is to "kill with laughter" enemies and to "correct with laughter" those loyal to the regime.'

Nevertheless, while many Soviet people no doubt found some comic relief in these state-sanctioned publications, humor can never be entirely directed from above. In the company of friends, and perhaps lubricated with a little vodka, it was frequently nigh-on impossible to resist taking things several steps further and to ridicule the stratospheric production targets, ubiquitous corruption and vast contradictions between the regime's glittering promises and the grey and often desperate realities ordinary people encountered daily.

Take, for example, the gallows humor of Mikhail Fedotov, a procurement agent from the Voronezh region, who shared a common anecdote that laughed at the true costs of Stalin's uncompromising industrialization drive:

A peasant visits the Bolshevik leader Kalinin in Moscow to ask why the pace of modernization is so relentless. Kalinin takes him to the window and points at a passing tram: 'You see, if we have a dozen trams at the moment, after five years we'll have hundreds.' The peasant returns to his collective farm and, as his comrades gather around him, clamoring to hear what he's learnt, he looks around for inspiration and points to the nearby cemetery, declaring: 'You see those dozen graves? After five years, there will be thousands!'

Such a joke could relieve oppressive fears by making them (briefly) laughable, helping people share the enormous burden of a life lived – as another quip ran – 'by the grace of the NKVD'. But even as it helped people to get on and get by, sharing an anecdote became ever more dangerous as the regime grew increasingly paranoid over the course of the 1930s. With the threat of war looming over Europe, fears of conspiracy and industrial sabotage ran amok in the USSR.

As a result, any jokes that criticized the Soviet political order rapidly became tantamount to treason. From the mid-1930s onwards, the regime came to see political humor as a toxic virus with the potential to spread poison through the arteries of the country. According to a directive issued in March 1935, the telling of political jokes was henceforth to be considered as dangerous as the leaking of state secrets – so dangerous and contagious, in fact, that even court documents shied away from quoting them. Only the most loyal apparatchiks were permitted to know the contents of these thought crimes, and joke-tellers were sometimes prosecuted without their words ever being included in the official trial record.

Ordinary people had little chance of keeping pace with the regime's paranoia. In 1932, when it was more risqué than dangerous to do so, a railway worker such as Pavel Gadalov could crack a simple joke about

Fascism and Communism being two peas in a pod without facing serious repercussions; five years later, the same joke was reinterpreted as the tell-tale sign of a hidden enemy. He was sentenced to seven years in a forced-labor camp.

This style of retroactive 'justice' is something we can recognize today, when the uncompromising desire to make the world a better place can turn a thoughtless Tweet from 10 years ago into a professional and social death sentence. This is a far cry from the horrors of the Gulag, but the underlying principle is eerily similar.

However, like many of us today, the Soviet leaders misunderstood what humor is and what it actually does for people. Telling a joke about something is not the same as either condemning or endorsing it. More often, it can simply help people point out and cope with difficult or frightening situations – allowing them not to feel stupid, powerless or isolated. In fact, something the Stalinist regime failed to appreciate was that, because telling jokes could provide temporary relief from the pressures of daily life, in reality it often enabled Soviet citizens to do exactly what the regime expected of them: to keep calm and carry on.

When we tell jokes, we are often simply testing opinions or ideas that we are unsure of. They are playful and exploratory, even as they dance along – and sometimes over – the line of official acceptability. The vast majority of joke-tellers arrested in the 1930s seemed genuinely confused to be branded enemies of the state due to their 'crimes' of humor. In many cases, people shared jokes criticizing stressful and often incomprehensible circumstances just to remind themselves that they could see past the veil of propaganda and into the harsh realities beyond. In a world of stifling conformity and endless fake news, even simple satirical barbs could serve as a profoundly personal assertion that 'I joke, therefore I am.'

We laugh in the darkest times, not because it can change our circumstances, but because it can always change how we feel about them. Jokes never mean only one thing, and the hidden story of political humor under Stalin is far more nuanced than a simple struggle between repression and resistance.

Popcorn Shorts

Cool stuff that's too small for a big article

Just like it says, Popcorn Shorts is about the kind of things we think are really interesting, but don't really need a large article to explain them. From the sublime to the ridiculous, check in here for crunchy bits of info you'll love to munch. By the way, much (but not necessarily all) of our delicious Popcorn comes from articles we've posted on [our Facebook page](#). If you're on Facebook, please stop by and "Like" us and we'll keep a fairly-constant-but-not-frequent-enough-to-be-annoying stream of these coming to your virtual door!



The US spends 10 times more on fossil fuel subsidies than on education



from Forbes Magazine, Jun 2019- "Despite nations worldwide committing to a reduction in carbon emissions and implementing renewable energy through the Paris Agreement, the IMF's findings expose how fossil fuels continue to receive huge amounts of taxpayer funding. The report explains that fossil fuels account for 85% of all global subsidies and that they remain largely attached to domestic policy. Had nations reduced subsidies in a way to create efficient fossil fuel pricing in 2015, the International Monetary Fund believes that it "would have lowered global carbon emissions by 28 percent and fossil fuel air pollution deaths by 46 percent, and increased government revenue by 3.8 percent of GDP."

Kids' Climate Lawsuit: CASE DISMISSED!



from KQED Science, Jan 2020- "A federal appeals court on Friday dismissed a lawsuit by 21 young people who claimed the U.S. government's climate policies and reliance on fossil fuels harms them, jeopardizes their future and violates their constitutional rights... The Oregon-based youth advocacy group Our Children's Trust filed the lawsuit in 2015 in Eugene on behalf of the youngsters. It sought an injunction ordering the government to implement a plan to phase out fossil fuel emissions and draw down atmospheric carbon dioxide emission. The case had bounced around the federal courts for five years and multiple trial dates were canceled...It wasn't immediately clear if any further legal avenues were open to the plaintiffs

and their attorneys. Our Children's Trust and Earth Guardians did not immediately respond to telephone messages seeking comment."

"Xenobots" made by AI from living cells... but don't worry, they're cute



from Gizmodo, Jan 2020- "With the help of a supercomputer, scientists have built tiny machines comprised entirely made of biological materials. "These are novel living machines," said Joshua Bongard, a roboticist from the University of Vermont and a co-leader of the new study, in a press release. "They're neither a traditional robot nor a known species of animal. It's a new class of artifact: a living, programmable organism." these xenobots are remarkably lifelike in that they're comprised entirely of biological materials, feed off energy supplied by their cells, move with intent, and even repair their injuries."

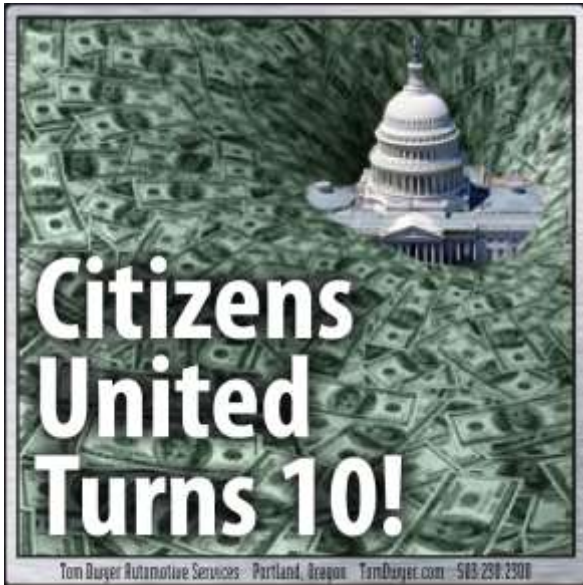
Our national parks are ending right now



from the Guardian, Jan 2020- "For more than 100 years, professional management of our national parks has been respected under both Democratic and Republican administrations. Yes, they have different priorities... but the career public servants of the National Park Service (NPS), charged with stewarding America's most important places, such as the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone and the Statue of Liberty, were left to do their jobs. This time is different. The change began within 24 hours of the inauguration when Donald Trump complained that the NPS was reporting smaller crowds on the National Mall than Obama had drawn..."

News To Make You Furious

Happy Anniversary! Citizens United Turns 10!



Our “News To Make You Furious” column began with the 20th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska. Now, 10 years later, there’s another anniversary to recognize... Citizens United, the Supreme Court ruling declaring corporations are people and money is speech, just turned 10 years old. The parallels are ominous... toxic sludge dumped by a corporation destroys everything it touches, and though there was a token effort at cleanup when the spotlights were on the problem, no one much messes with it today. But the poisons are still there, activists continue to try to bring awareness, and people benefitting from the

desecration continue to dissemble...

News from Back Then

[The Story of Citizens United v. FEC](#), The Story of Stuff project, Feb 2011

[Citizens United v. FEC in plain English](#), Lisa McElroy in SCOTUSBlog, Jan 2010

[Citizens United v. FEC \(Supreme Court\)](#), Federal Election Commission Website, Jan 2010

[Quotes by Members of Congress on Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission](#), People for the American Way, Jan 2010

[Money Is Speech: Why the Citizens United v. FEC Ruling Is Bad for Politics and the Market](#), Daniel Greenwood in Dissent, Mar 2010

[Corporations aren't people, don't merit special protections](#), Boston Globe Editorial Board, Jan 2010

[5-4 Citizens United Ruling 'a Revolution in Campaign Finance Law](#), Debra Cassens Weiss in ABA Journal, Jan 2010

[What Should Congress Do About Citizens United?](#), Erin Miller in SCOTUSBlog, Jan 2010

[Justices, 5-4, Reject Corporate Spending Limit](#), Adam Liptak in the New York Times, Jan 2010

[Corporations are Not People: Frequently Asked Questions About Overturning Citizens United](#), Public Citizen website, Jan 2010

News from Today

[Another Date That Will Live in Infamy: 10 Years After Citizens United](#), James Nelson in CounterPunch, Jan 2020

[Citizens United paved the way for Trump. Ousting Trump will let us end Citizens United.](#), Sally Kohn in USA Today, Jan 2020

[Citizens United turns 10 today. Here's what we've learned about dark money](#), Abby Wood in Washington Post, Jan 2020

[Bernie Sanders: 10 Years Fighting Citizens United](#)- Brett Wilkins on Common Dreams, Jan 2020

[More money, less transparency: A decade under Citizens United](#), Karl Evers-Hillstrom et al, Jan 2020

[The legacy of 'Citizens United' has been destructive. We need campaign finance reform](#), Fred Wertheimer in Washington Post, Jan 2020

[The Case for a Constitutional Amendment to Overturn Citizens United](#), Bryan Bowman in The Globe Post, Feb 2019 (*Interview with Wolf-PAC executive director Mike Monetta*)

[Seattle Takes On Citizens United](#), Ellen Weintraub in the New York Times, Jan 2020

[10 years after landmark Citizens United Supreme Court decision, record cash flooding US elections](#), Devin Dwyer on ABC News, Jan 2020

[The Citizens United ruling broke American democracy at the start of the decade. It never recovered](#), Igor Derysh in Salon, Dec 2019

[News To Make You Furious – 20th anniversary of the Exxon Valdez](#), Tom Dwyer Automotive, Nov 2010

[Bernie Sanders says Citizens United has been 'disastrous.' Is he right?](#), David Scharfenberg, Boston Globe, Jan 2020

Citizens United Backers

When you've waded through all this, here's one more thing to make you Furious. While no actually believes Citizens United was good for democracy, some are paid to pretend...

[It's time for liberals to get over Citizens United](#), Scott Casleton in VOX, May 2018

[Citizens United decision weathers 10 years of controversy](#), Alex Gangitano in The Hill, Jan 2020

[Celebrate the Citizens United Decade](#), Bradley Smith in Wall Street Journal, Jan 2020

[David Bossie: Supreme Court 'Citizens United' decision still protects the First Amendment 10 years later](#), FOX News, Jan 2020

[Citizens United](#), website of David Bossie and creator of the Hillary film that prompted the Supreme Court decision

Get Involved!

Here are some of the many organizations working in various ways to overturn Citizens United...

[End Citizens United- Democrats fighting for reform](#)

[ACLU \(American Civil Liberties Union\)](#)

[Common Cause](#)

[Working Families Party](#)

[Wolf PAC \(TYT\)](#)

[People for the American Way](#)

If you're looking for groups working to keep Citizens United, sorry. They probably exist too, but we couldn't think of a reason to look for them and you'll just have to go find them yourself.