



# “Your Car Matters”

Tom Dwyer Automotive Services Monthly Newsletter for February, 2020



### Read our **BAD REVIEWS**

We're proud of the good ones, but the bad ones make the best reading!



### Become part of our **Carbon Neutral vehicle fleet!**

We're building a 100% carbon neutral fleet by 2025... be part of it!



### Looking for superior **pet care in Sellwood?**

Renée Stilson wrote the book on it.



Jefferson Smith lets Tom Dwyer plead with the Senate



Learn the dance moves that are scientifically irresistible



Plastic-eating bacteria discovered... IN PORTLAND!



The magical Finnish forests of Ossi Saarinen

## Our Monthly Columns

**Tom's Tidbits-** Trump will kill us now. CorpraDems will kill us later.

**Health Notes-** 10 ways to exercise more... without even trying

**What NOW?!! Toons** Tucker's Toon for February

**“Battlefield America”** by John W. Whitehead

**Drew's Kitchen-** Crab Mac & Cheese

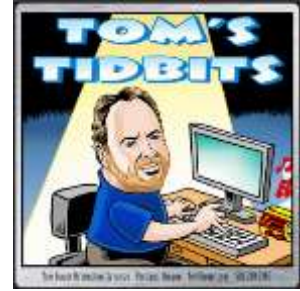
**Humorousness-** The truth about married life... in Tweets

**Shop Talk-** FREE help getting your car to the mechanic

**News To Make You Furious-** Relax... they're just here to protect and serve

# Tom's Tidbits

Trump will kill us now. CorpraDems will kill us later



Greetings,

When I vote in 10 months it will be for the Democrat, because I know the least of them would be better than the abomination behind the desk now. BUT... not all Democrats are created equal. The civil war in the Democratic party is real and it matters... not only to removing Trump in 2020, but also to how and if our country survives beyond him.

The Republican Party has been proudly in the pocket of Big Business since well before Trump, telling the Common Man that their interests were identical to Money's. Big Business once hated and feared Democrats of all stripes but in the 90's Democrats began to sell out their own middle-class base, and Big Money has since become quite comfortable with the DNC/Clinton/Pelosi/Biden breed of Corporate-friendly Democrats... the CorporaDems. Today, while THEY ARE NOT EQUIVALENT, both parties dress up their ideologies in the same Common Man Happy Talk. Either might accidentally let a scrap fall to the regular folks, but bettering the lives of everyday middle-class Americans no longer seems to be the driving force behind either one. Don't think so? Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page compared 'what the Public wants' to 'what the Government actually does', and found "the preferences of the average American appear have only a miniscule, near-zero, statistically non-significant impact upon public policy" while the preferences of the "financial elites" are turned into policy approximately 75% of the time. Or consider the recent threats by "Democratic donors on Wall Street and in big business to sit out the presidential campaign fundraising cycle - or even back President Donald Trump - if Sen. Elizabeth Warren wins the party's nomination." CorporaDems don't threaten Money's consolidation of its stranglehold on political power, but the Warren/Sanders/AOC breed scares the hell out of them.

Donald Trump won, in part, by promising to "drain the swamp". A worthy goal. But Trump was never the person to do it because we're not sinking into the swamp he sees. His idea of the 'swamp' is government restriction on the graft and fraud of the 1%, restrictions on environmental and economic pillaging, or restrictions on America's greed and bloodlust abroad. His vaporous promises to "Make America Great Again" are only to hide that goal. The CorporaDems also promise a return to an America that once worked... you know, like under Obama. But that's another illusion; America under Obama was better than Trump, but it was already breaking down and any 'return' is undesirable as well as impossible. This CorporaDem pabulum is just as facile and dangerous as Trump's cynical lies... more soothing, but just as bad.

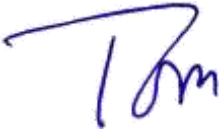
The #1 stated priority of every Democrat is to defeat Donald Trump, and that's driving the lingering love for a party that's become nothing but Republican-lite since Clinton. They're worried that the middle-of-the-roaders won't vote for change; that running anything other than a whitebread corporatist risks scaring away the swayable middle. But Trump didn't win by swaying the middle, he won by activating the same cultists who will support him in 2020. That's a lesson the Dems ignore at their peril. They have the choice... a couple choices, actually... that can activate their base and actually excite the middle with a new vision that includes them, rather than looking at them as a necessary inconvenience.

It may sound naïve but maybe bombs, prisons, and border walls aren't as effective as killing-them-with-kindness assaults. Unlike bombs, buildings leave a value instead of a bloody crater. Money spent for things like schools, healthcare, living wage jobs, human dignity, food, and mental health are an investment that pays back for the entire society, not political funders. A domestic and foreign policy based on butter rather than guns builds a society for the People, not the Money. Maybe trying consistent accountability for little things like war crimes, mass murder, corruption, or theft in the billions would make our government more responsive and less corrupt.

Trump is the problem of today, but the election will also be about the problems of tomorrow. We'll need a leader that can resurrect hope for an America that's better than it's been behaving lately. We'll need someone who cares about the long-term viability of the vast bulk of American Middle Class and not the short-term interests of their rich handlers. We can't rely on ANY of our previous systems, not because they were necessarily bad to begin with but because they were built to solve the problems of their day. A 'return' to the 'old ways' solves the problems we had

then, not the ones we have now... a guarantee of failure. Replacing Trump with a CorporaDem may be a necessary and painful first step to success, but we'll need someone other than a CorporaDem to step beyond that.

Make a great day,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "T" and a cursive "om" following it.

### **Digging Deeper...**

[Mainstream Democrats failed the impeachment process. Now, it is time for the progressives to take over and put forward a new political alternative.](#) By Haider Khan and Aaron Schneider on Al Jazeera, Jan 2020

['Middle Class' Joe Biden has a corruption problem – it makes him a weak candidate,](#) by Zephyr Teachout in The Guardian, Jan 2020

[Calm down. Democrats are not in disarray,](#) by Paul Waldman in the Washington Post, Feb 2020

[The Game is Rigged,](#) by Paul Street on Counterpunch, Feb 2020

[An Open Letter to the DNC From an American Centrist,](#) Erin McCarley on Common Dreams, Feb 2020

[The Economy Not Worth Defending: A Response to Trump's State of the Union,](#) Anthony DiMaggio on Counterpunch, Feb 2020

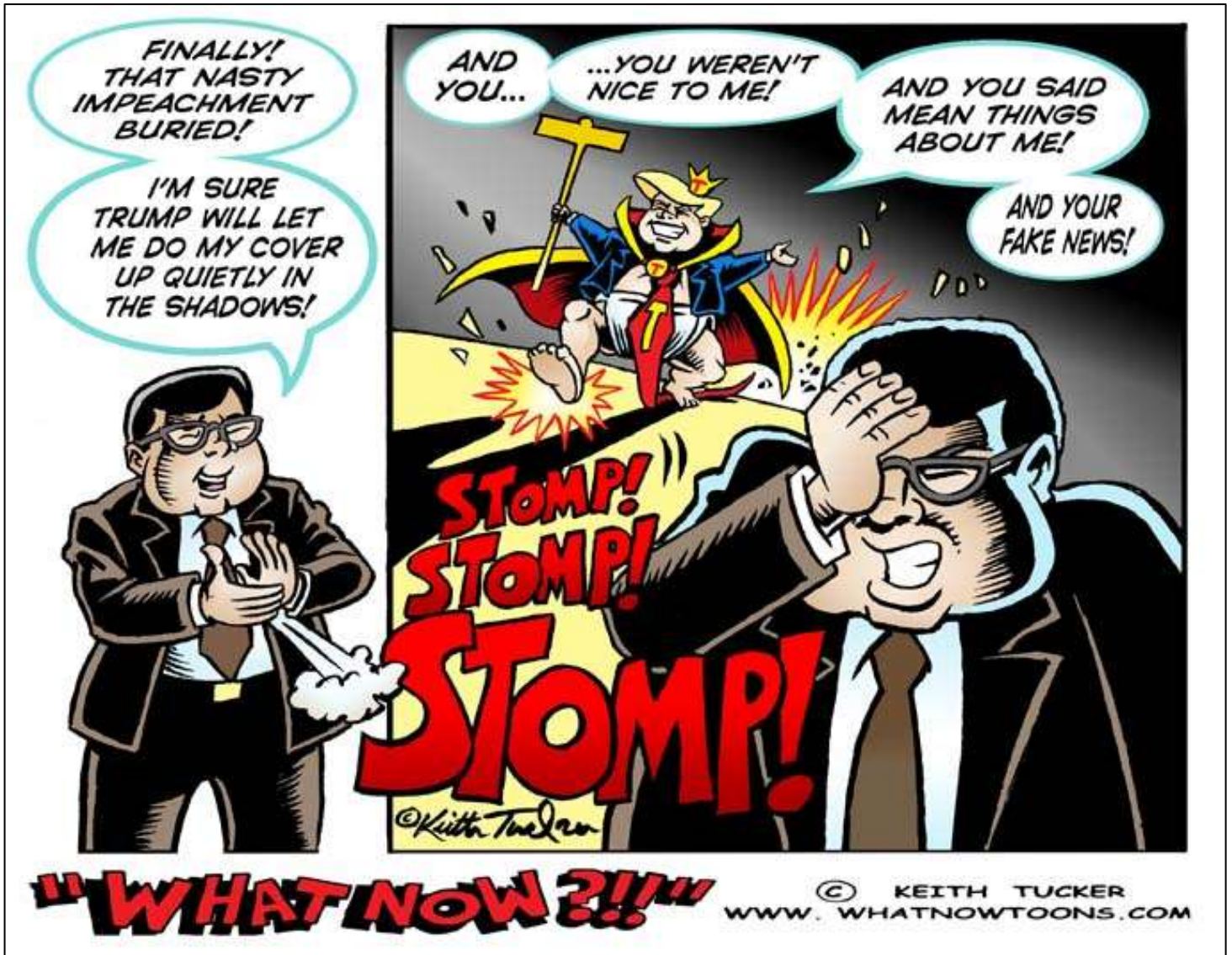
[Americans Demand a Rethinking of the 'Forever War',](#) Edward Wong in the New York Times, Feb 2020

[Table Scraps,](#) Tom Dwyer Automotive KPOJ radio spot, Aug 2011



# What NOW?!! Toons

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





## We're building a 100% Carbon-Neutral Vehicle Fleet by 2025

Come be a part of it!

The 'Transportation' sector of our economy produces about 29% of all greenhouse gasses, so as an environmentally conscious company it's painful to advocate fighting Climate Change while working on internal combustion engines. But in America right now about 85% of us own cars, so even with the rise of EV's there will be few alternatives to driving these carbon geysers for many years to come. We plan to be part of the Transportation sector for many years to come, but we'll do what we can to make our corner of it cleaner while we're here. We started by creating a one-of-a-kind Carbon Neutral Program so clients could offset their carbon production while getting discounts on shop services. Now, we're taking the leap to build a fully carbon-neutral client vehicle fleet... we invite you to be a part of it!

There's no way to *eliminate* the carbon production of your vehicle, but you can *reduce* it by keeping your vehicle maintained in top shape. (We like to think we're very helpful in that!) You can go even further by buying Carbon Offsets for your vehicle's fuel usage. Carbon offsets fund carbon-reduction projects in proportion to the amount of carbon your vehicle (or other sources) produce.

In 2007 we created a one-of-a-kind program to help our clients drive carbon-neutral by **offering a 10% discount on shop Labor charges for a year** if they bought carbon offsets for their vehicles. (We'd call it 'industry-leading', but unfortunately, no one else in the industry seems to be following. Yet.) Since then, members of our Carbon Neutral Program (CNP) have offset over 2,070,000 pounds of carbon pollution in our atmosphere! That's an amazing achievement and we're grateful to (and proud of!) all our clients who made it possible!



But we still have clients who aren't CNP members... time for that to change! **Tom Dwyer Automotive is committing to having ALL OUR CLIENTS, well over 3000 people, enrolled in our CNP by January 1, 2025!**

It's a big goal, some would say almost unobtainable, but if We As Humanity want to save our planet as we know it, then We As Individuals have to set 'unobtainable' goals... and achieve them.

We're going to be doing everything we can over the next 5 years to bring you into the CNP family. We lowered the CNP Membership prices temporarily last year, but now we're making it permanent...

**Sippers** (hybrids, electrics, etc)- **JOIN FOR \$20**

**Drinkers** (most types of cars)- **JOIN FOR \$40**

**Guzzlers** (SUVs, land yachts, etc)- **JOIN FOR \$60**

In today's world, every action is scrutinized for hidden motives and hypocrisy. 'Green' companies have a special obligation to show they're really trying to make a difference instead of just 'greenwashing' to sell products. That's why you should know **WE DO NOT MAKE MONEY FROM SELLING THESE CARBON OFFSETS**. There's no markup. We don't take a cut, we don't get a kickback, we don't make a dime. In fact, we lose money on each membership... the 10%-discount-on-Labor-Charges comes straight out of our pocket for the whole year of your membership, and we're very glad to do it. All funds go directly to [Bonneville Environmental Foundation](#) (BEF) to support carbon-reduction projects in the Northwest and beyond. BEF provides products, services, and programs to help businesses address their environmental footprint through renewable energy, carbon offsets, and other means. To learn more about BEF and their mission, check out their website at [B-E-F.org](#).

## **BECOME PART OF OUR CARBON-NEUTRAL VEHICLE FLEET!**

It's easiest to sign up next time you're in the shop, but we can handle everything through the mail as well. We'll need a check for \$20, \$40, or \$60 **PAYABLE to BONNEVILLE ENVIRONMENTAL FOUNDATION**. Please mail it to Tom Dwyer Automotive, 530 SE Tenino St, Portland, 97202, (attn Charles) and we handle it from there. If you have any other questions, our non-commissioned Service Advisors are always ready to talk with you about our CNP, your vehicles, or even life's annoying other questions. Give 'em a call!

### **Carbon Neutral Program Milestones**

**October 2007-** Tom Dwyer Automotive Services starts its Carbon Neutral Program.

**December 2008-** Clients reach 1 million pounds carbon offset

**December 2016-** Clients reach 2 million pounds carbon offset

**October 2019-** Prices for carbon offsets temporarily reduced 20-30%

**February 2020-** New, lower pricing made permanent!

### **Digging Deeper...**

[Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website, 2017

#### [Science and History of Climate Change- Learn the science without the hype... from either side](#)

This is our flagship article on Climate Change. It includes to a variety of sources that will lay out the problem at whatever level of complexity you're comfortable with. Particularly useful is the debunking pages for arguments around Climate Change. Not all arguments of the Denialists are ridiculous on their face; some may sound like they make sense. This resource will explain how and why they're still wrong.

#### [What Does It Mean To Step Lightly? Understanding your carbon footprint](#)

The reality of Climate Change is scary, but responsibility obviously can't be laid at the feet of any one individual. We all contribute to the problem, but by how much? That's the idea of a Carbon Footprint; it's the amount of carbon YOUR individual activities create. This article has a much more in-depth discussion of Carbon Footprint, along with links to calculate yours.

#### [Shrinking Your Footprint- What are those carbon offsets you keep hearing about?](#)

You know the problem, you know your role... what do you do? Carbon offsets don't prevent you (or your vehicle) from polluting, but they give you a way to balance your carbon output with carbon cuts elsewhere. It's a free-market solution to Climate Change, and while it's hardly a full solution it's a good place to start.





## Read all of our **BAD REVIEWS!**

We're proud of the good ones, but the bad ones make the best reading!

Independent businesses live and die by their online reviews. It used to be word of mouth that could kill you, but in the days before the InterTubes it took a while for that word of mouth to spread. And there was always a fresh supply of people who would never get to hear the rumors, so unethical businesses could sleaze along for years before the bad word got out. Now the buzz (good or bad) is online instantly, lives forever, and can be easily compared to your competitors.

We've worked very hard to build our online reputation and we have stacks of great reviews to back it up, but no one's perfect and we do get bad reviews occasionally. We don't look at this as a bad thing though, we look at it as the most direct possible form of communication with our clients. Whether it's an online review or a comment on one of our [post-service feedback cards](#) we take it as an opportunity to improve. We first try to identify the person who had the problem (sometimes this is easy, sometimes it's impossible) and contact them to resolve their issue. Whatever the result with the person, we take their review back into our weekly Service Advisor meetings, examine our processes, and make changes to ensure that (if possible) that particular complaint never happens again.

But no matter how good a company is things can still go wrong. Mistakes do happen, there can be misunderstandings, and even (very rarely) people come in who just don't want to be happy. When things go wrong for us WE DO OUR ABSOLUTE BEST TO MAKE IT RIGHT but we don't always succeed. The good reviews are what we strive for but you know the dirty little secret... the bad reviews make the best reading! Here are all the bad reviews we could find from every platform along with comments from us where appropriate. Time to exercise those schadenfreude muscles and enjoy our BAD REVIEWS!

(Ed. Note— As we wrote this article it got a little confusing trying to figure out who was saying what. To make things easier to read we put each type of response in a different font. We hope it's helpful.)

- The original reviews are in black regular print
- *The response we made at the time (if any) is in black italics.*
- *New comments specifically for this article are in blue italics.*

One other thing... if you'd like to check out any of the reviews below in their natural habitat, just click on any of these links...



And now let's get started with the most recent review in our Bad Review Rogue's Gallery...

### **"Ezra B.", Yelp, 3/5/2018 - 1 star (out of 5)**

So it all started with an oil change, a \$60 oil change. They did the job and inspected the car and upon pick-up there was \$1000 worth of work on my car. Being a full-time student, I have enough bills to deal with, so I left knowing there was no urgency to the work they recommended. Two weeks after getting the oil change my car starts burning oil, this was a new development and I thought it might have been correlated with my visit a few weeks prior. They had me bring it in again, and they said they would look over the work they had done at no-charge. Later that day I received a phone call saying oil was leaking from various places, and they said that some sealing around the engine wasn't done properly causing oil to leak, as well as the oil sensor was leaking. BOOM- another \$1000 quote. None of this made any sense whatsoever, my car had been checked in all places the previous summer before making the trip cross country, no reported leaking or sealing problems. I got in a car accident where the entire front of the car had to be put back into place, no oil leaking or sealing issues. Then I go and get an oil change, AN OIL CHANGE, and shit starts to hit the fan.

Knowing somethings up, I took the car to a different auto shop, where they reported the leak was coming solely from the oil sensor, which apparently is really easy to knock/damage during an oil change on a vehicle similar to my own. A \$300 fix and the car has been running smoothly ever since. Another thing this new shop noticed was my front breaks, they were really bad, almost metal on metal. So I got that fixed that as well,

### ***Our reply, 3/11/2018-***

*This review is the first we've heard Ezra was dissatisfied. It's hard to see so much vitriol when he just had to talk with us. If he'd called, our Service Advisors would have gladly resolved things to his satisfaction. If he'd used the pre-paid reply card we leave in every vehicle after service, we could have helped. An email would've gotten a lightning reply. Whether we were at fault for something or not, we'd have gone out of our way to make things right because we understand the importance of long-term, trusting relationships with our clients. But we can't make things right if*

and there was no mention of front break concerns at Tom Dwyer even though they found \$2000 of other work to do in just two visits. My theory is they were expecting me to come back in a couple months to get the brakes checked out and give me another \$1000 quote.

Look, these guys put on a mask of your friendly neighborhood auto shop that is there to help you in anyway possible, but the reality is they have a business model that seems quite slimey. Hey if you got a brand new car and want it in the best possible conditions at all times, go here, you will probably hit it off real nice with the staff. If you got a car that you are not trying to invest too heavily on, go somewhere else, because Tom Dwyer is going to find a way to give you a massive bill.

\*Also a little icing on the cake, Tom Dwyer seems to be known around the auto mechanic community in Portland as a bad business. When I passively mentioned I was bringing my car from Tom Dwyer to this new mechanic he immediately responded "Fuck Tom Dwyer" and continued mumbling about the absurdity of their diagnosis on my car as he walked away.

P.S. Tom Dwyer if you are reading this, don't put this on your "Our BAD Reviews" page, I don't want you swindling this into some publicity/transparency stunt, because from my perspective, it is a cheap trick to make you look better.

*we are not given the opportunity, and now we're left respond thru Yelp. If you EVER have a problem with our service please LET US KNOW! Yelp is great, but our Service Advisors' job is solving problems before they become issues for a review.*

*Ezra scheduled our Minor Interval Service (he said "\$60 oil change", but it's actually 45 minutes of an ASE-Certified Technician's professional time, premium materials, and a 90-point vehicle inspection) on his 2002 CRV. The Technician found some issues (as would be expected on any 16-*



year-old vehicle) and one of our non-commissioned Service Advisors discussed potential services with Ezra. "As "a full-time student" with "enough bills to deal with" Ezra decided his budget didn't cover non-critical vehicle maintenance, but he left knowing he had a list of concerns to deal with. It's our job to identify services and advise our clients how to proceed, but we never pressure people; we try to educate them to be able to make their own decisions.

Ezra returned a month later complaining of a burning oil smell. On his first visit we'd noticed and discussed oil seepages but Ezra had decided to wait on any service at that point. At that time the seepages weren't causing serious oil loss or damage so a decision to hold off was understandable. Over the following month one of the seeps had worsened into a higher priority so we gave him a quote for diagnosis, repair, cleanup and dye testing and he went on his way. Again, that's the last we've heard from him until now.

We're distraught Ezra is so upset but we're honestly having trouble identifying why he seems so acrimonious. He's right, we didn't force him to buy an oil pressure switch, or brake job, or any of the items on his long list. Instead, we gave him options to address the most likely and serious potential failures and he passed on our advice. We're good, but we're not psychic... with a long list of possible problems growing, we can't predict which issue will flair next, or when.

We looked into the possibility we accidentally damaged his aging oil sensor. Despite the other shop's assertion, our ASE-Certified Master Technicians agreed that a CRV's oil pressure sensor is too far away from anything touched during service to be damaged accidentally. They thought a more likely culprit was the normal change of oil seeps into leaks as time and miles pass. Ezra had his east coast CRV "checked in all places" over a year ago, before a cross-country trip and "car accident where the entire front of

the car had to be put back into place". All our Technicians thought those factors were more relevant causes for the failure.

The other shop said Ezra's brakes were "metal on metal" while he says we "mentioned nothing about them", and we do have some responsibility here. The 90-point inspection included in our Minor Interval Service does not include a wheels-off brake inspection, but we had noted a brake pulsation during road testing and discussed it with Ezra. This should have prompted us to explain our inspections and make a stronger recommendation that he leave his vehicle or re-schedule a time that would allow us to do a thorough "wheels and calipers-off, drums-off, measure-and-document-everything" brake inspection.

Yelpers can trust a 36-year track record of impeccable service and hundreds of 5-star reviews testifying to our professionalism and integrity. Or, Yelpers can trust that it took just two quick visits and \$60 to see through our "mask of your friendly neighborhood auto shop" and expose our "quite slimey business model" along with one visit to a nameless shop to uncover our city-wide reputation as a "bad business". Even better, Yelpers don't have to trust blindly... trust is earned. RESEARCH US YOURSELF, and find out why pretty much everyone but Ezra trusts us with their vehicles!

P.S. Despite Ezra's wishes, his bad review and all others (with any replies) will definitely go on our "Bad Reviews" page because it's not a "transparency stunt", it's ACTUAL TRANSPARENCY! Potential clients can learn from how we deal with the worst things said about us... are we "swindlers" using "cheap tricks" to "get publicity" for a "slimey business model"? Or are we responding as politely and fairly as possible to a confusing castigation and blatant attempt to sully our 36-year reputation of personal, honest, professional service? We'll report... You'll decide.

### **“Larry Gumm”, Yelp 6/4/2017- 1 star (out of 5)**

“Way over priced unless your the government, tires 400.00 over les schwab,had charging system checked @ 65.00 and failed 30 days later, bad battery.”

#### ***Our reply, 6/30/17-***

*We’re sorry Larry was disappointed with our shop at all, but we do have issues with the reasons he gave. When we checked his charging system Larry’s 730-amp battery was putting out 803 amps and his alternator and charging systems were fine. We obviously can’t be responsible for the state of an electrical system a month after we see it, but everything was ship-shape when we tested it.*

*We also have a real problem with the idea that we’re “overpriced”! Our prices are usually VERY competitive and Larry’s tires are a perfect example. We called Les Schwab to compare their prices on the tires we recommended, and while they didn’t offer the same brand-name tire they did have a store-brand equivalent. Their price was \$229-\$271 each (depending on features) while we*

*quoted Larry \$257 each. Not only were we NOT “\$400 over Les Schwab”, but we were LESS EXPENSIVE while offering HIGHER QUALITY!*

*We use top-quality parts, employ top-certified technicians, and back everything with a 24/24 warranty, so we typically can’t price-match with cut-rate shops who offer a much different level of product and service. Instead, we choose to consistently offer our services at prices fair to both our clients and our business. Our clients realize that in the long run they are saving money because they are NEVER being sold UNNEEDED services, so they’re satisfied paying a fair price when NEEDED services do arise. And, as Larry’s comment shows, they usually don’t have to sacrifice “quality” for “price” at all!*

### **“BD195172”, CitySearch 2/7/2011- “Recommends” (updated review)**

“Great Service Model. Someone once said, ‘It’s not the fact that a mistake is made, it’s how you deal with it that counts.’ Steve at Tom Dwyer has made me a believer in customer service excellence. I had a negative experience and he listened to my grievance, understood the challenges, and gave me viable solutions to resolve the situation. Such customer awareness and excellence deserves five stars! Thanks Steve!”

#### ***Our reply, 7/30/2012***

*Like he says, we all know things go wrong, so it’s important to be prepared when they inevitably do. We’re actually very proud of this review... one of our newest clients came in because of it! And thanks to BD for being willing to work with us to make things right.*

### **“Megan I.”, Yelp 7/30/2010- 2 Stars (out of 5)**

“I came to this auto shop specifically because of the great ratings on Yelp, and I was incredibly disappointed in the service.

I was having problems with my power steering and my brakes were screeching (they were so bad people on the street were turning to stare at me when I drove by!) Based on the reviews here I was expecting really friendly service, fair pricing, someone to clearly explain the problems with my car to me and to drive away with the car fixed. Unfortunately, I experienced none of these things.

They weren’t rude per-se, but the folks in the office were really stand-offish. My power steering problem was straightforward so I understood that, but I didn’t understand what they were saying was wrong with the brakes. Rather than explain it, the guy in the office acted like I was a moron and was really annoyed to have to explain it to me.

I HATE this attitude at auto shops and avoiding it was the reason I ultimately chose this shop. It was really frustrating to be treated this way. After I got my car back — (\$1600 later....) the power steering worked great so two stars for that, but

the brakes were still screeching. I took the car back for them to figure out why their expensive repair didn't fix the problem but they couldn't. Instead they just told me over and over that there was nothing wrong with the brakes.

I expect to pay a lot for major repairs, so that wasn't a surprise, but I also expect to be treated

with respect and for the problem to actually be fixed after I fork over almost 2 grand. Again, really frustrating since I know brakes aren't supposed to screech like that. I'll be taking my business elsewhere for a second opinion on the brakes and wouldn't recommend this second rate auto shop to anyone."

### **Our reply, 7/30/2012-**

*We weren't able to find out who Megan was or what went wrong on her visit, so we were never able to reply directly to her about her Yelp review. The only thing we can say is that we tried our best then, and if she came back even now we'd still try to make things right for her.*

### **"Chris E.", Yelp 6/18/2012- 2 Stars (out of 5)**

"Really not sure what rating to give these guys. Would have loved to have given them a try, but they are only servicing vehicles that are 1998 or newer. Never heard of that with any reputable garage. Guess I'll take my '94 Toyota somewhere else. To their credit, they were professional and friendly and did give me some recommendations for other garages, but what a shame that they aren't interesting in assisting any of us with older vehicles."

### **Our reply 7/30/2012-**

*I'm sorry you're disappointed at our older vehicle policy, but it's nothing personal...it's been our policy for many years not to start NEW service relationships with clients with older vehicles; currently 1998 or older. We clearly post this on our website, but not everyone sees the website before they call. If we were actually able to service your vehicle I'm sure you would have given us more than two stars... please let me try to explain why we have this policy, and when you understand why we believe it's in your interest maybe you'll revise your rating...*

*We have many longstanding clients with older vehicles, and we plan to keep them happy for years to come! We started maintaining those vehicles when they were newer and continued servicing them as they aged. We have relationships with the clients, and everyone is aware of the vehicle's ongoing needs and condition. We'll continue to service these vehicles, but experience has taught us not to start new client relationships based around older, often challenged vehicles.*

*There are good reasons for this. First, we constantly update our training and equipment to match the technology of more recent vehicles. Second, older vehicles can be "houses of cards"*

*due to age, service history, or condition, which can lead to questions if there are problems with the service.*

*Most importantly, our service is built around trusting, long-term relationships with our clients, and that depends on the quality and condition of the vehicle being serviced. Most older vehicles are what we call "economically totaled", needing so much work to make them safe or reliable that the cost of repairs exceeds the value of the vehicle. It doesn't make sense for us to prioritize repairs on vehicles in this situation. Once we've built a service relationship with a client, they listen to us if there's a glitch, or trust us when we tell them it's time to stop spending on repairs and move on to a different vehicle. It's impossible to build that kind of relationship around a vehicle that is already worn out.*

*Coherent maintenance can extend the life of vehicles, but it's rarely worth playing "catch up" to get an older, poorly maintained vehicle running safely and reliably. We hate saying "no" to potential new clients, but we don't believe in relationships that are not mutually beneficial. Vehicles will come and go, but a service relationship can last for generations.*

*If there are folks out there with a vehicle older than 1998, you think it's in good condition, and you just won't part with it, there are options. For slightly older, good model vehicles with less than 150,000 miles we can do our Comprehensive Inspection (\$150.00) to determine the actual*

*needs and conditions of the vehicle. If the vehicle is in a condition we can support then we'll gladly do it. If not, we'll recommend you to one of the places we trust to handle older vehicles, but we hope you remember us when you trade up to your next vehicle.*

### **"Ron Z.", Yelp 10/18/2009- 3 stars (out of 5)**

"I called Tom Dwyer regarding my 1994 Ford Ranger clutch problem and in the end was informed they only work on 1996 or newer vehicles and wouldn't be able to work on my truck. I have since learned they only take easier work that has little chance of damaging their perfect rating. Seems true. It sure would be nice to have that on their website instead of wasting my time on the phone and asking me all about the problem and then declining the job."

### **Our reply, 7/30/2012-**

*Ron and Chris had the same problem... our '1998 and newer' policy. About the only thing we have to add to what we wrote for Chris' review is to point out the way Ron says we dealt with him ... we kept him "on the phone asking all about his problem" to give him good directions to a mechanic that could help him even when we knew he wouldn't be our client. If you call us, you'll always get the same courtesy and respect.*

### **Yelp- "Curtis I.", 11/21/2011 review- "3 stars (out of 5)" (updated review)**

"This is an edit to my review from November 2011. I originally gave Tom Dwyer a less than stellar rating because of some problems we had in November after service they performed. Tom yelped a reasonable response to my review, and we later discussed these issues over the phone. Tom offered to resolve the issues, and we came to a fair agreement.

I commend Tom for being willing to discuss the issues, and make a fair offer of resolution. This is well beyond what most service centers would have done. My updated rating is 3 stars, for a less than stellar beginning that was made right in the end. Things do not always work out perfectly, but at least Tom will work with you towards a fair end."

### **Our reply 7/30/2012-**

*Here's another bad review we're very proud of. Even when things go bad we don't want you going home unhappy. Dealing with people as reasonable as Curtis and BD (above) makes it much easier to work out solutions that are satisfactory to everyone involved.*

### **Angie's List- 9/11/2009 review**

Work Completed Date: March 11, 2009 Hire Again: No Approximate Cost: \$250.00  
Description Of Work: They replaced the transmission fluid in my car.

Member Comments: (Transcribed from a telephone interview)- I went to them because it was conveniently located and they had a good rating on AngiesList. I felt that they redid the work that had already been done recently by the auto repair shop that I usually go to. I was not satisfied with their service.

### **Our response:**

*We were sorry and surprised to find that this client had a problem with our service. We do everything we can to protect our 99.7% satisfaction rating, and no one leaves unhappy if we are given the chance to work things out.*

*Although this work was performed over 7 months ago, we were able to search our records and check into the matter. We started by doing a 90-point inspection of the client's 2002 Jeep. The*



*ASE-Master-Certified Jeep Specialist who did the inspection found dirty transmission fluid that needed to be replaced. We told the client, she authorized the work, we did it, and as far as we knew the client was happy.*

*There are two points in this review that we take issue with. First, the client mentioned in the review (although not to us) that "...the work had already been done recently by the auto repair shop that I usually go to." We checked the transmission fluid and documented that it needed replacement. Perhaps the issue was not with the work we did, but that the transmission fluid had been extremely dirty again or may have not been thoroughly flushed by the previous shop. There are several systems available today to flush automatic transmissions and some do work better than others. We don't sell unnecessary work!*

*(7/30/12)- For some reason, the folks at Tribe.net don't like us. We have six reviews; four of them are five-stars but two of them aren't, as you can see below. All the spelling and grammar mistakes were in the original reviews. (7/11/18)- Tribe.net is closed down and has been for some time, so though you won't be able to see Phil's review (or "J's" review below) in their original habitat, here they are in all their original glory.*

### **"Phil", Tribe.net, 4/17/2008- 2 stars (out of 5)**

I read the tribe ratings after hearing several advertisements on KPOJ, and decided that I would go to Tom Dwier, for an inspection and an oil change. What I left the shop with was much more — a spooky encounter with a service manager, who recommended that I not go on long trips, unless I pay more than \$2500 for additional repairs, and an \$800 whole in my wallet.

I was seduced by Tom Dwier Automotive's website and progressive radio message. When I arrived I was awestruck by all the technical certifications and employee photos on the wall. The place looked humble, and the people were very friendly at 7 am. I dropped the car off and took the shuttle back to work, without incident.

A few hours later I get a message to call them, the inspection had been completed. Turns out that my suspension is totally shit struck, I had a bald tire, and I needed a brake job, because a caliper is broken and dragging. Now I'm no mechanic, heck, I couldn't pick a brake caliper out

*Second, this review could mistakenly lead people to believe that we charged \$250 for a transmission flush. Actually, it was \$76 in parts and \$97.35 in labor of a bill that also included the 90-point inspection, pre-service road test, a minor interval service, oil change and lube, resetting the "maintenance required" light, repairing a broken brake light, and a full post-service check and test drive.*

*Again, there is nothing more important to us than our client's satisfaction. No one leaves unhappy or stays unhappy if we are given the chance to work things out, but we can't fix problems we don't know about. If this client had told us there was a problem and asked for some adjustment, we would have done everything requested to make it right for her. And, even after 7 months, we still will.*

of a lineup, but that sounded pretty serious, so I had them fix it.

I was then told they had the parts in stock and I could get it done by the end of the day, they would call me. At this time I was also "sold up" on additional services like a break system flush, a cleaning and adjustment on the rear brakes, and a transmission fluid change. My \$99.50 inspection and \$37.22 oil change had skyrocketed up to \$800! They called me two hours before closing, and then told me that something wasn't fitting right and that they would have to keep the car over night. I was upset, but what could I do?

I got dropped off by my girlfriend, to pick up the car, and told her I that I would pay and be meet her at a local pub in a couple of minutes. It seems that I underestimated their respect for a customer's time when I told my girlfriend to go on ahead of me and order me a beer, because I, with credit card in hand, could not simply pay and leave without a lecture in vehicle safety, and a hard sell on the urgency of restoring my entire

suspension system to original factory specs (I have a lowered ride), FOR OVER \$2000!

They did this as a sales tactic, because once I had my keys I would stop listening and be able to just say "no thanks" while walking toward the door, but I was forced in to justifying my desire to drive a lowered vehicle and given ominous warnings about going elsewhere to get service. All I wanted to do was pay and lick my wounds in a pub with happy hour beer. Thanks to that wind bag I missed happy hour, but still got to pay \$800, yea!

The next day I went to Les Schwab, to get a replacement tire, and told the service guy, that I had just come from Tom Dwier Automotive and I was told I needed a new tire and suspension, he

said he was glad to do the tire and asked to take a look at the car's suspension. Naturally I approved, and his diagnosis was the same as Tom Dwier Automotive's I needed new front struts, shocks, and springs. The difference was about \$900! Not only that he gave me a quote on a break job, and it too was half as much as I paid!

The take-home message here is: if you are a blue-collar guy on a tight budget, avoid this place like the plague, If you are a latte-sipping sipping YUPPE Tom will happily relieve you of your burdensome cash. I have to give up my vacation plans this year. I had planned on going to the great American Beer Festival for the first time this year, had I gone to Les Schwab, I could have at least gone camping.

### **Our reply 7/30/12-**

*We really weren't sure what to do with Phil's review. We don't "upsell" anybody, and the "sales trick" about holding someone until they're mad is news to us. Anyone who knows us knows that we don't do things like that at all, but we still reviewed Phil's comments in our weekly meeting to make sure our Service Advisors knew how their advice was being interpreted by clients.)*

We'll continue our walk through the potholes of Memory Lane with one of our oldest and worst reviews, which still stands out as a favorite...

### **"J", Tribe.net, 12/31/2005- 1 star (out of 5)**

These hacks are liars.. dont trust them!

Let me tell you about me and myself first, I am a mechanic with over 20yrs experience, that said.. I had a car for sale and my prospect wanted a pre-purchase inspection done. Ok no problem so he chose this place. 2 weeks prior to me selling the car I had just got done putting a brand new clutch in. So this place keeps the car for a few hrs and tells me right to my face the car passed, I am thinking great! My prospect calls me an hr later with what the shop told him. The shop said the brakes were shot, the clutch was going out and the trans was bad, all lies and they wanted something to the tune of \$1,200 for "future" repairs.

This was all bold face lies because another prospect took the same car to a different shop in LO and they passed it with flying colors. Hacks at Tom Dwyer, yes dont go there, there filthy liars!

### **Our Response-**

*We protect our customers from unethical car dealers! A real customer alerted us to the rating posted by "J". Thank you for the heads up. "J" is not one of our customers! Never has been never will be. I looked at his bio etc. What a guy! "J" sells used cars for a living and after reading his information I'm hoping that others will see the truth in this story.*

*After inspecting "J's" vehicle for sale (for profit), we advised our customer to decline purchasing his vehicle. We ruined "J's" car sale to the "prospect" he had in his sights. SORRY "J", oh and by the way do you have a dealer's license? I assure you that the inspection was accurate. Our job is to protect our customers from buying used vehicles that will not deliver good service and economy. I would like to know what shop in LO*

*passed it with flying colors (don't have your pre-purchase inspections done there!).*

*Many details don't add up in "J's" rating. You don't get a clutch, transmission and brakes for \$1200.00. We don't give estimates to our customers for repairs on cars that fail pre-purchase inspections. "J" states in his bio that he is 30 years old (bio picture looks even younger). He claims to have 20 years' experience "working on cars". At the age of thirty I'd like to know how you get 20 years of experience "working on" cars,*

### **"Jim C.", Yelp 8/13/2012- 1 star (out of 5)**

*"Politics has no place in your business. Go elsewhere."*

*9/12/17- We've found that Yelp pulled Jim's review and placed it behind the Great Wall of Yelp... it's still there, but you'll have to dig to see it. However, does he have a point? We're up front with Tom's politics in our shop but does it really have "no place in our business"? It's a serious question, so we addressed the issue [at length](#) in this article- "[Business or Politics? YES!](#)"*



### **Yelp- "Anne M.", 7/30/2011 review- "1 star (out of 5)"**

*I used to think this was a great shop. I don't anymore. We brought our cars here for 15 years but the last couple of experiences have changed my mind. They are always booked and charge too much. When my air conditioner had a terrible smell, they found nothing wrong and charged a lot to tell me so. The dealer, on the other hand, immediately found the issue and fixed it. I guess my feeling has been that this shop no longer needs my business; they are doing fine without me.*

### **Our response, 8/26/2011-**

*We've tried to determine who Anne is from the facts of her review so we could contact her, but were unable to do so. I'm disappointed any time one of our clients has a bad experience with our shop, ESPECIALLY a 15-year client! Whether you're a first time client or, like Anne, you've been coming to us for many years our only goal is to make sure you're completely satisfied with every aspect of your experience with Tom Dwyer Automotive Services. If we're allowed to we always make things right for a client when frustrations occur. Since we can't make things right for Anne in this case we'll address the specific points of her review instead...*

*"They are always booked".*

*I know it's frustrating when a client has an automotive need and can't get in as soon as they call. We aren't always booked, but we do have busy times, usually around summer, when it can*

*unless riding in cars counts. "Working on cars" and being a professional ASE-Master Technician are not equivalent. We don't employ any 10-year-old technicians at my shop.*

*I'm hoping "REAL" Tom Dwyer customers will post feedback to wash "J's" out. Talk to a real Tom Dwyer Automotive client and you will find that we have been delivering impeccable service for 25 years and have a 99.8% customer satisfaction rate. Take Care and play nice!*

*be difficult to get immediate appointments. During these times our clients are usually pretty understanding and work with us to schedule them as promptly as we can. We will always find a way to squeeze in emergency or breakdown work; we realize you can't plan an emergency. We provide shuttle service and rental cars to make things smoother in a pinch, but thinking ahead for your predictable vehicle maintenance or pre-road trip checkouts makes it much easier to schedule even during our busy times.*

*"They charge too much".*

*Our hourly rate is in the mid-range of area shops, and our estimates are accurate (over 98% accurate- click here for results from almost 11,000 feedback cards) and cover complete work. Shops may offer lower estimates for jobs that appear similar, but if you look closer there are reasons for any price differences. Parts*

quality, mechanical expertise, and most importantly the detailed list of the repairs to be performed will all affect price. We always use the best parts, the most qualified techs, and will give you an estimate upfront for everything we think your vehicle needs to be serviced or repaired properly. Many shops will give a low number for a repair or service, and once started will recommend additional work that should have been included in a good estimate upfront. (Please see our article on Estimates and Overlapping Work for more detail). For price-driven consumers there are many cheaper shops available, but we don't pay our Service Advisors or Technicians by commission, as is the norm in this industry, and we won't compromise on the process, parts or advice that we give our clients. We charge the lowest price we can to cover the level of service our clients have come to expect and deserve, and because we stand behind our work with a 24 month 24,000 mile warranty; it has to be right.

*"Air conditioning smell".*

*Since we can't determine Anne's identity, I don't know why we were unable to diagnose the AC problem nor can I can't respond specifically to this point. It is very rare we are unable to diagnose even the most technical or intermittent problems given the time and authority to do so. We have experienced technicians that hold factory and ASE Master certifications and are motivated to do the best job possible. When we can't determine the cause of a client's problem we tell them so, and we don't guess at things or install parts that may be unneeded.*

*"I guess they no longer need my business".*

*NOT TRUE! As a small company we need and value the business of every person who walks*

### **"Lou F.", Yelp, 7/16/2013- 1 star (out of 5)**

THIS IS A REAL REVIEW! I resent having this filtered (censored twice) by Yelp. It is strangely similar to another review done in 2008 by a completely different person, so our stories might be indicative of the typical culture of this business. I heard about this shop on the radio, and saw the great reviews so I had high hopes for them. The owner likes to wear his politics on his

*through our door. If Anne feels we don't care, then it's our fault and we've made a huge mistake. We try our best to make sure EVERY client knows how important they are to us, and that we want to keep them happy and coming back for many years.*

*One final note-*

*This Yelp review was the first we've heard of Anne's disappointment. We offer clients many ways to tell us about any issues they have. The most important is the meeting with our Service Advisors when picking up completed vehicles, when we describe the work that was done on the vehicle and tell the clients what to keep an eye on in the future.*

*Secondly, we leave a pre-stamped feedback card in each vehicle after service for the client to comment or rate our performance. Third, we have email, phone, fax, and mail that a client can use to give compliments or criticisms. We encourage all our clients to take advantage of any or all of these methods to make their experience with Tom Dwyer Automotive an interactive one. Of course we want to know about the good things, but WE CAN'T SOLVE A PROBLEM UNLESS WE KNOW ABOUT IT! If you are disappointed with us in ANY way, PLEASE TELL US!*

*When we have the opportunity to fix our shortcomings we always step up to the plate, but when we don't know about our errors we can't do anything about them. And Anne M., if you're out there, that includes you! If you call us and talk, we will bend over backwards to make things right for you, and keep you coming back for another 15 years.*

sleeve (which may not be the brightest thing to do to attract customers).

About 9:00 a.m., I brought in my car to be evaluated for basic maintenance. The car was running rather well, but they offered a 1/2 price "new customer deal" for \$75, and I was looking for a garage that was closer to where I lived and worked. I work about five minutes away so they



said that their shuttle could pick me up when the car was done.

However, when they were finally done at 4:00 p.m., they said that they would not have the time to pick me up, and that I should call a cab (but they would pay for it). It was hard to get a cab near rush hour, but I got lucky and a friend at work gave me a lift. The shop closed at 5:00 so I had to hustle. It became apparent that the reason they could offer to pay for the cab was because the proposed bill was for about \$2000 – \$3000 worth of work.

They wanted to do major work for what amounted to be very minor oil and coolant leaks. They never even asked me about the severity of the fluid loss, but just assumed that I would perceive that the leaks were bad, or the car was burning oil. Neither was the case.

They did an oil change WITHOUT my authorization, then charged me more than I'm used to spending at and overfilled the engine with oil. Furthermore, they used my personal oil and filter I had in the trunk of my car, but I also did not authorize them to use it (let alone tell them about it).

A few days later, I had to drive back to their shop and have them drain the excess 1/2 quart of oil. The owners manual clearly gave the specs, but two people behind the front desk and the mechanic insisted that they were right. They also insisted that the "MAX" indication on the dipstick meant "full" which is not the case according to the manual. Full is in between min/max.

When I left the shop on the first day, Drew at the desk said that I should call them if I wanted to authorize the work so that they could order the parts and have them ready. I called back and told them that I did not want to do the work, but they had claimed that they had already ordered the

parts and would have to send them back. At best, that was foolish on their part since they would have no idea in advance which work I would authorize. At worst, it was a manipulative tactic to make customers feel guilty and spend money there.

The shop may give the impression that their work is meticulous by writing down precise measurements on their evaluation sheets (and thereby making a case for you to spend money based on these minor details). Yet, messing up by overfilling the engine with an additional 1/2 quart of oil is just plain sloppy. If they can't do a simple oil change correctly, (or immediately admit a mistake) then I'm not keen to trust them to do major work.

I asked for a written estimate, which took them a long time to get together after I arrived at the shop. The estimate was written out in a cluttered and chaotic manner and required a lot of excess time to understand. They didn't charge me, but I had to come back and get the oil drained without ever receiving an apology, only excuses.

For example: Drew also, told me that the mechanic should be right about the oil level simply because he was a Ford mechanic! I told him that he should learn to read an owners manual. Sarah at the front desk said that I must have measured the oil on an incline, and not on a flat surface. Even if that were true, they still used up all five quarts of my oil when they should have saved a 1/2 quart. In other words, what should have been a simple fix turned out to be an extensive process requiring me to defend my position with at least three individuals.

They also told me I needed rear brake work because there was a "lip" on the drums, but the another mechanic said that lip was normal and turning the rear brake drums was not necessary. There were other things too. My visit to Tom Dwyer was a colossal waste of time.

### ***Our Response 7/23/2013-***

*I'm sorry Lou felt his first experience at our shop was a waste. We invested several hours of professional time before realizing Lou was never going to be satisfied with his experience, and we did not charge a penny for our work. Despite his*

*opinion we stand behind our work, our actions, and our advice. I think our other 62 Yelp reviews, the vast majority of which are 5-stars, are more "indicative of the typical culture of this business" than the reviews of any one person. 6 of Lou's 7*

other Yelp reviews are all one-star, and two of those were for other auto shops. However, I think the Yelp community deserves a response to the substance of Lou's criticisms...

The "New Customer Deal" Lou mentioned is our Comprehensive Inspection, an in-depth mechanical examination performed by an ASE-Certified technician. It's not a quick peek with a flashlight; it means road test, in depth; ignition, charging system, cooling system, brake and chassis inspection, fluid inspections, records review... in short doing everything possible to document the vehicle's exact condition before any recommendations are made. This is a logical step for new clients to establish a baseline condition for their vehicle and to make intelligent decisions about what, if anything needs to be done to it. This inspection generally takes two or three hours and Lou was informed of an estimated completion time when he dropped his vehicle off.

Our Courtesy Shuttle covers a 5-mile radius of our shop, and we have clients in every direction. It's not unusual that our shuttle will be picking up clients on one side of town when a client on the other side needs a ride at the same time. In these cases our standard policy is to arrange a cab at our expense rather than rush our clients or make them wait on us. Lou wrongly assumed this Cadillac-level treatment was due to the size of his "potential bill" but it's not special treatment at all... this is typical of the service all our clients have come to expect.

**We NEVER DO WORK WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION and we did not in Lou's case!** We have a reliable supply of oil and filters, but Lou's review makes it sound like we ransacked his trunk, stole his oil, and then overfilled his vehicle. Lou asked us to do two things... change his oil using the oil and filter he supplied, and perform our Comprehensive Inspection. We did those two things and nothing else. When Drew called Lou to discuss the results of the inspection, Lou said to skip the oil change if we hadn't already done it (which we had). We did not tell him we had already "ordered parts we would have to send back" because we did not order any parts at all! We were not going to encourage any repairs in his case and as Lou said,

ordering would have been foolish on our part since we would have no idea in advance which work (if any) he would authorize.

Lou spent quite a bit of time in his review (and in our shop) concerned about the fill level of his oil, citing the owner's manual and complaining that "two people behind the front desk and the ASE mechanic insisted that they were right". When changing the oil on a 181,000-mile vehicle known to leak and consume oil, insuring the oil level is at the full mark is NOT A MISTAKE. Lou and his owner's manual are correct that an oil level is "OK" (meaning not to add a full quart) anywhere between min and max. Against our recommendation and at Lou's request we did remove a half quart to bring the indicated level to exactly mid-point between min and max.

The final point we need to correct is Lou's "proposed bill for \$2000-\$3000 worth of work". Our Comprehensive Inspection of his vehicle revealed a huge list of backlogged maintenance and problems. We never recommend a catch-up investment into a challenged vehicle, and we would NEVER recommend ANY of our clients pour that kind of money into a vehicle with so little value! When asked to pick the "most important" things that needed to be fixed, Drew came up with a shorter list prioritizing safety and breakdown items.

We don't get them often, but when we get a bad review we treat it as an opportunity- to make things right with a client, to apologize when appropriate, and learn from our mistakes. We try to learn something from every negative experience, and one of the things we've learned is that starting a new client relationship based around a challenged vehicle rarely works out. We don't do unauthorized work; our procedures are designed to prevent it. We know that we didn't recommend an unreasonable amount of work because it wouldn't have been in Lou's interest or ours to do it. Our Service Advisors are non-commissioned to prevent exactly this kind of conflict of interest.

Lou has a right to expect service on his terms, and I wish him well finding another shop better able to accommodate his needs.



## Looking for superior pet care in Sellwood?

Renée Stilson wrote the book on it.

Renée Stilson had big news for us when she picked up her car recently... her new book was finally out!

Renée was an Occupational Therapist for many years until ethical qualms with today's health care system became overwhelming. "I had to keep telling patients they couldn't get the therapy they needed because their insurance determined they should be well, whether they were or not. It broke my heart." Her occasional fill-in position with a neighborhood pet sitter gave her the rewards she was missing as a therapist. "I loved caring

for the animals and comforting them when they were apart from their humans." When that pet sitter moved away, Renée took the leap to fill the void (though it was still a while before she could quit her day job!) "The Balanced Pet Sitter-What You Wish You Knew Before Starting Your Pet Care Business" tells how Renée built Home Sweet Home Pet Care here in Sellwood, how her personal philosophy affects her business, and how people can find the best care for their animal family members...

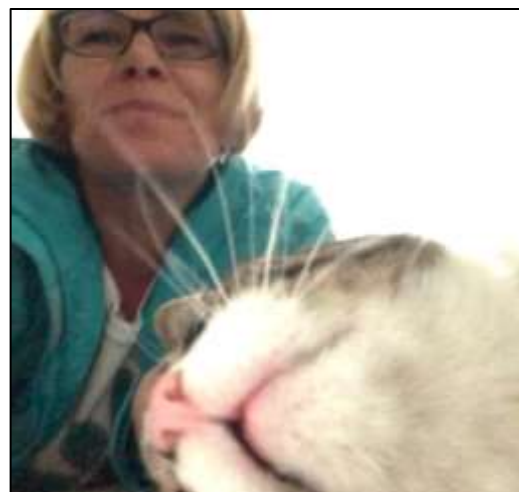
### What makes a REAL pet sitting business?

How hard can it be to walk a dog? Seriously, couldn't anyone just scrape together a leash and a couple dogs to be a qualified pet care business? ABSOLUTELY NOT! Pets are family members and very few pet owners think 'good enough' is good enough at all. Renée brings the care and attention they're looking for. "I don't just "love" animals, I "get" them," she says. "It is my calling, my gift. I hold myself and my staff to the highest standards when it comes to care, communication, reliability and responsiveness."

Caring for the pets is just part of the equation; their humans need care too. It's common for humans to project their own anxiety onto their animals, so Renée's first priority is always helping her clients feel comfortable leaving their furry friends in her care. She quickly learned to be a counselor as well as pet-care provider, and her experience with human healthcare was a huge advantage in transitioning to homecare for animals. "I believe that all sentient beings deserve love and respect. Just as with humans, every animal has their own unique needs and we respond to those. I look at the animals holistically, taking into account their emotions and sensitivities."

Loving, attentive care to people and pets is primary, but it still doesn't make a business. Renée has gone far beyond with Home Sweet Home Pet Care...

- She offers additional services that people need when they're out of town. An unoccupied house is an invitation to crime, so Renée also waters plants, brings in the newspaper and mail, turns on or alternates lights, opens and closes blinds, and takes trash in and out.
- She's formed a networking group for pet sitters, and has mentored many pet sitters toward their own success.
- She was one of the first pet sitters in the area to develop a website ([homesweethomepdx.com](http://homesweethomepdx.com)).



- She continues to integrate the latest technology into a high touch, very personalized service.
- She is Pet First Aid and CPR certified, and is fully licensed and insured.

Renée knows she's most successful when the clients don't have to think about her at all. "I like to say that clients will return home to find everything just as they left it. They wouldn't even know that we have been there except that the animals are relaxed and happy with all of their needs met. I am a stickler for this and our clients appreciate it."

### When things go bad

Pet care deals with real, breathing clients, both animal and human. This means serious implications if Renée's meticulous standards aren't met. "I've heard stories from clients about past sitters not showing up, collecting the money and never coming back. If miscommunications happen with our clients they might mistakenly pay for services until we get it sorted out, but that's not the worst. If animals get sick and go unnoticed it can be too late. Animals that aren't well monitored can be destructive, stressed, and they can escape. There's been an uptick in postings on neighborhood sites about animals lost by the 'pet sitter'. I can almost guarantee that these folks are not *professional* pet sitters! It is a huge responsibility and involves a great deal of trust on the clients' part to leave their beloved animals and their home in the care of someone. We need to be worthy of that trust."



### Balanced work life

Renée also knows a huge factor in running any successful business is knowing when to NOT run it. "I've learned to develop very healthy boundaries around what I will and won't do. When you're self-employed, you're basically always thinking about the business. Clients email, call and text at all hours. This can be very difficult for those of us who are caregivers. We have to learn to put our own oxygen masks on first or we can't effectively serve others. When you work at something you love so much, you need to make sure that you don't burn out and can continue doing that work for as long as you would like to."

### Teaming up

Hiring a team of sitters has helped Renée share the load. "My team is well-trained in my methods and I keep in close contact with them. We know how to recognize anything that might be "off" about an animal." She realizes how much of a difference this makes. "I no longer need to be the be all and end all. We all love to be loved, but giving up the attachment to being indispensable is really important. We won't find the help we need if we think that no one can do it as well as we can." These team members are actual employees so she can maintain great quality control in a way she couldn't if they were merely independent contractors.

### Renée wrote the book on pet sitting

Renée's book ["The Balanced Pet Sitter-What You Wish You Knew Before Starting Your Pet Care Business"](#) brings together everything she learned through years in the field. It is a treasure trove for pet owners, people considering pet sitting as a career, or people building other types of home-based businesses. "I would say about 60% of the book is targeted toward pet care with very specific information on caring for dogs, cats, rabbits and chickens," says Renée, but "there is a plethora of information on how to start a home-based business of any kind."



“There are so many side hustles these days with folks trying to make a living doing something they really enjoy. Many folks do so because they don’t know how to get into a business themselves and rely on an app to generate customers. The companies get most of the profit and the worker makes quite a bit less than they could by working for themselves.” This book shows them how to break free and transition to a stable, viable income.

“I use mindfulness and intention to create a balanced life as a self-employed person. I give examples and exercises to get very clear on one’s vision for their business. The clearer the picture that one has, the more likely they will be able to bring their vision to reality.”

As just one example, all businesses are tempted to take on clients that aren’t a good fit just to pay the bills, but in her book, Renée explains why this is a bad idea. “This never works out well and causes a lot of stress. I only work for clients that I enjoy. I still don’t enjoy saying “no” to clients but I have gained a comfort level with it.” But she doesn’t leave anyone hanging... “I also believe that there is someone for everyone and if I am not a good fit for a client, I refer them to a colleague who would be.”

### **Looking to the future**

We asked Renée what goals she had left for her business... was growth on the horizon? She seemed quite comfortable with the size of Home Sweet Home Pet Care for now, but not its impact. “I want to stay small enough to keep the very personalized service that we provide. We will be adding one or two team members this year in order to serve more clients, but I don’t want to expand the business beyond my comfort level. I hope to spread my message and share my wisdom through my book rather than the business itself.”



### **A business based on values**

One of the things that initially made us so interested in “The Balanced Pet Sitter” was the conversation we had with Renée when her book was published. Tom Dwyer Automotive Services is proudly value-based, so it was a pleasure to hear her discuss the central role her values play in building and maintaining her own business. So much of what she said resonated! She began with the fundamentals of “always doing our best and keeping a positive attitude. This gives clients a great level of comfort with me and my business.” But then she moved on to take responsibility for her business’ place in the larger world... “I believe that preserving the planet for future generations is of utmost importance, and thoughtfully run businesses can play a huge role in that.” She believes knowledgeable clients are the best clients, so she “educates her clients on recycling practices and use of sustainable products” for their pets. She “believes that a high level of integrity is essential in any interaction”, so for her each client/business relationship must be “one of mutual respect and trust”. She believes ‘cheap’ isn’t an advantage to client OR business in the long run... “I believe you get what you pay for, so a bargain is rarely a bargain. I believe in charging a fair rate so that my team and I can earn a living wage and be here for our clients for years to come.”

### **Freedom to be excellent**

One of Renée’s main reasons for loving her pet care business is a wonderful point to close on. “With my own company, I determine the amount of time I want to spend with the animals and no insurance company tells me what I can and can’t do.” That fiery independence motivated Renée, it motivated Tom Dwyer, and it seems universal among people who start their own businesses. They itch to get out and “do it right”, and breaking out on their own gives them the freedom to be excellent. It’s one reason we’re so enthusiastic

about independent businesses... each one is an opportunity for you to work with someone whose goal is your satisfaction, and is accountable to you to see it's achieved.

We hope our pet-owning Sellwood neighbors take advantage of the opportunity they have in Renée Stilson's "Home Sweet Home Pet Care", and we hope people far beyond benefit from the wisdom in her book as well.

## Get Connected

You can buy Renée Stilson's book, ["The Balanced Pet Sitter- What You Wish You Knew Before Starting Your Pet Care Business"](#) in both paperback and e-book options.

If you'd like to bring Renée's superlative care to your pet family, her primary service area is Southeast Portland south of Holgate and east to 60th. Her website is [homesweethomepdx.com](http://homesweethomepdx.com), her email is [homesweethomepdx@gmail.com](mailto:homesweethomepdx@gmail.com), and Renée's phone is 503-310-7105.



# Shop Talk

FREE help getting your car to the mechanic



## Comment of the Month



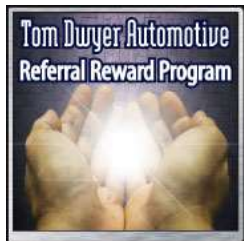
Ann N. wrote on her Post-Service review card...

**"I appreciated the transportation home while the work was being done."**

You're welcome Ann, and we're very glad to do it. But the reason Ann's comment is featured is that on the same day we received, our shuttle driver found himself driving a client who didn't (until that day) even know we have a shuttle service. If our clients don't know about our services, it means we're doing a bad job telling you! So just in case you haven't heard, we offer a FREE Courtesy Shuttle for our clients! It runs BY APPOINTMENT so you must tell us so we can schedule you a ride, but we can always get you a ride if you need it. Just ask your Service Advisor about it on your next service, and Tom Dwyer will get you going!



## Referral Reward Program



Our Referral Reward Program is how we say "thank you" to the clients who recommend our shop to their family and friends. When a new client comes in and gives your name as a Referral Source we'll make a donation to the non-profit group of your choice, and all selections are eligible for our \$1,000 Yearly Award as well. It couldn't be easier!

**We've made 10 donations for \$335 since our last count; a total of 668 donations totaling \$28,476 since the program began!**

### Here's who our clients chose to help in February...

[Oregon Humane Society](#) by Sean G. & Sara F.

[Central City Concern](#) by Diane P.

[Greater Than](#) by Matt H.

[Oregon Food Bank](#) by Miranda E.

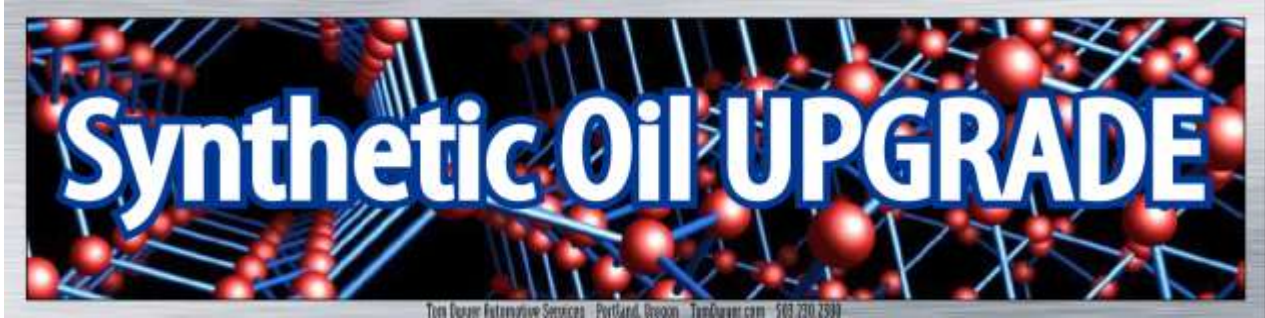
[Planned Parenthood](#) by Ronald K.

[Oregon Wild](#) by Florence B.

## Current Special Offers



Take advantage of these special Tom Dwyer offers!



### **Get your first Minor Interval Service (MIS) 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!

*Offer expires 2/29/20*

*\$120 maximum value*

*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*



### **Get a FREE CNP Membership with any job with \$300 or more in Labor charges**

Members of our Carbon Neutral Program (CNP) save 10% on Labor Charges at our shop, which means any job with \$500 (or more) in Labor always pays for a CNP membership. But in conjunction with [this month's newsletter article on our CNP](#) we're making it even easier... if your service has as little as \$300 in Labor charges, we'll give you your one-year membership FREE!

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

*Offer expires 3/31/20*

*\$60 maximum value*

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

*Offer is VOID AFTER SERVICE IS COMPLETE*



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



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



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

## Your reviews and referrals matter



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

## Latest Automotive Recalls



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

# **Drew's Kitchen**

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## Crab Mac & Cheese



Mardi Gras is just around the corner. Though we couldn't get Drew to part with a Cajun recipe, he did treat us to Crab Mac & Cheese. Well, crabs are close enough to crawdads for the purposes of this month's Drew's Kitchen...

### **Ingredients:**

- 1 lb elbow pasta
- ¼ cup butter
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 cups milk
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup shredded white Cheddar
- 1 cu shredded mozzarella
- 1 lb. lump crab meat
- Chopped fresh parsley, for garnish

### **Preparation:**

1. Preheat oven to 375°. In a large pot of boiling water, cook elbows according to package directions until al dente. Drain and return to pot.
2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Add shallot and garlic and cook until fragrant and softened, 3 minutes. Add flour and whisk until combined and golden, 1 minute. Add milk and season with salt and pepper. Simmer 2 minutes, until sauce is thickened and smooth.
3. Stir in ½ white cheddar and mozzarella until melty, then remove from heat.
4. Add sauce and crab meat to pot with cooked elbows and stir until completely combined.
5. Sprinkle with remaining ½ cup cheddar and parsley and bake until bubbly, 20 minutes.
6. Serve.

**Serves 6**

**Original recipe from Delish**

# Health Notes

## 10 ways to exercise more... without even trying



[10 ways to get more exercise – without really trying](#), by Joel Snape in The Guardian, Dec 2014

Life is busy, and fitting in exercise can be tough, especially if you think of it as something that requires special clothing or a trip to the gym. But it's worth the effort – as well as making you happier, there's evidence that regular physical activity can protect you from everything from obesity to Alzheimer's. And the truth is, it doesn't have to be that hard. Make a few simple changes to your life and you'll be in better shape in weeks – no changing rooms required.

### 1. Always take the stairs

Simple, and yet so easy to avoid. It's easy to rationalise away taking the lift – or standing on the right on the escalator – because you've had a long day, or you've got a heavy bag, or ... well, because the opposite barely burns any calories anyway, right? But that misses the point. There's evidence that even minimal amounts of resistance exercise can increase your body's levels of a substance called GLUT4, which encourages calories from food to be stored in muscle cells rather than as body fat – so even a minute marching up a flight of stairs helps.

### 2. Walk a bit more

You've heard this one before, but it's worth looking at the numbers to get the full picture. According to a 2012 study, participants who ran one mile burned 112 calories, but those walking a mile still burned 88. True, the "after-burn" from running will increase your metabolism more than going for a walk, but after a run you're also much more likely to wolf down, say, a muffin (Starbucks blueberry: 448 calories) without even thinking about it. Besides, running means preparation, getting changed, finding a shower and – depending on how fast you go – a level of unpleasantness that can be tough to get psyched up for. Walking is just walking. Get off the bus a stop earlier and enjoy your exercise – without any need for compression leggings.

### 3. Stand up more

Sitting down puts your body in neutral – it constricts circulation, slows your metabolism, shuts off muscles and tightens your connective tissues. Even exercising for an hour a day can't do much to compensate for the dozen or so you spend slumping in a variety of chairs.

But fortunately there's a solution: just stand up. If you're an able-bodied adult there's rarely any need to sit down on public transport, for instance, and there's no rule that says you need to be curled foetal on the sofa to play Call of Duty. The office won't get you a standing desk? Suggest standing meetings as a way to prompt creativity. It's worth it: standing burns 1.36 more calories a minute than sitting, and puts you at less risk of a host of cardiovascular diseases.

### 4. Do a big shop

The farmer's walk – AKA that thing that the World's Strongest Men do while carrying iron girders – is a fine move for everyone, not just 20-stone behemoths and, uh, farmers. Done properly, it works your arms, legs, core and conditioning – and will actually burn fat. It also couldn't be simpler: all you need to do is carry a heavy object in each hand, preferably while keeping your back straight, shoulders back and head/chest up. This is a good enough reason to abandon the online shop and occasionally carry a week's worth of sweet potatoes and meat home, or at least to the far end of the car park.

### 5. Sit on the floor to watch TV

Yes, like a child. Here's why: modern sofa technology has advanced to the point where you can remain essentially motionless through an entire Downton Abbey Christmas special, but if you sit on the floor for exactly the same show you'll be squirming, stretching, changing position and generally keeping your vital systems online before you even hit the first ad break. If you're very keen, this would also be an ideal opportunity to foam-roll away some of the aches and pains of everyday life – there's a brief guide to that here.

### 6. Do the 10-minute squat every day

In many countries, the deep squat is still part of everyday life – it's just how you sit, relax, or go to the toilet. You, user of chairs and western toilets – and there's no judgment here – probably haven't done one in years. But you should – it'll help enormously with your hip and ankle mobility, as well as providing you with a jolt of isometric exercise. Physical therapy expert Kelly Starrett suggests that you should be able

to hold the position for 10 minutes, but if you can't, just accumulate a minute at a time – maybe during ad breaks, or while you're waiting for the kettle to boil. Once you're ready for some next-level squatting, invest in a Squatty Potty.

#### 7. Do an improbable number of press-ups

The humble press-up is underrated: it'll work your chest and arms, obviously, but if you're holding a strict "plank" position – ie your body's in a perfect line throughout – it'll work your core and glutes too. Want to do a number you've previously considered insane? Easy: first, divide the number you can comfortably do, chest-to-floor, by four. Now do that many every minute, on the minute, for 10 minutes. There: you've done (hopefully) anywhere between 10 and 200 press-ups, and you aren't even sweating.

#### 8. Get a pull-up bar

If you're doing a lot of press-ups – or even just slumping at a desk all day – you should be doing pull-ups. They'll counteract the computer-hunch, improve the health of your back, build your arms and – according to EMG testing, which measures electrical activation in different muscle groups – work your core muscles better than weighted crunches. Get a bar that clips on to your doorframe and uses leverage rather than screws to stay in place (I like the Powerbar 2) then just aim to do one or two reps each time you pass it throughout the day. Can't do a pull-up? "Jump"

to the top position, then lower yourself as slowly as you can – gymgoers call these "eccentrics" or "negatives" – just for a rep or two. You'll get there eventually.

#### 9. Help other people

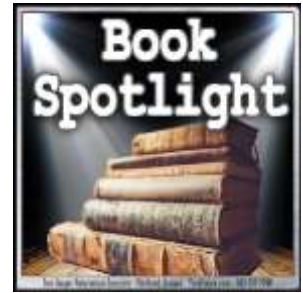
If your big objection to the gym is that it's fundamentally a waste of your precious hours on this planet, maybe it's worth doing something useful in that time instead. Charitable organisations such as Goodgym and Independent Age will happily find you a community project or an elderly person who needs help with their gardening, which certainly counts as exercise. Too much commitment? Help a friend to move house and treat it as a training day; carry a pram upstairs for someone; offer to jog to the shops when your other half needs something. Altruistic fitness still counts as exercise.

#### 10. Stop going through life with the minimum of physical effort

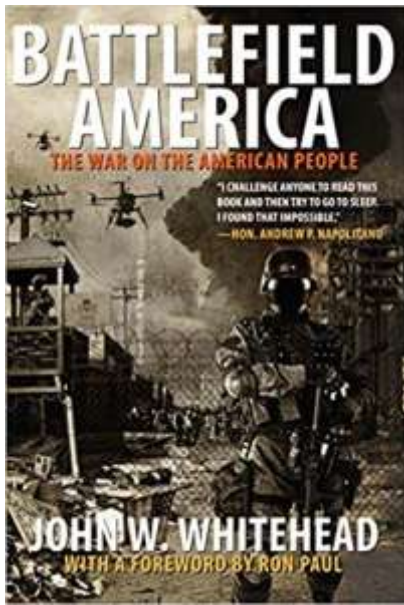
Tough love time: this, really, is what's going to do it. Modern society's done a good job of teaching us that saving effort is better, but this is not the case when it comes to physical activity. Stop thinking of exercise as something that requires a change of clothes and a warm-up – after all, you wouldn't do either of those things if you had to run away from a mugger or lift a car off a baby. Move a bit more, and soon it'll become natural.

# **Book Spotlight**

## **"Battlefield America" by John W. Whitehead**



The Trump Administration recently announced that it is "is deploying law enforcement tactical units from the southern border as part of a supercharged arrest operation in sanctuary cities across the country, an escalation in the president's battle against localities that refuse to participate in immigration enforcement." ([NY Times, Feb 2020](#)) There are so many books we could recommend as relevant, but here's one to get you started. Also, please check our News To Make You Furious this month where we delve a little deeper into this hugely disturbing development.



## **"Battlefield America- The War On The American People"**

by John W. Whitehead

In "Battlefield America: The War on the American People", the follow-up to his award-winning book "A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State", constitutional attorney John W. Whitehead paints a terrifying portrait of a nation at war with itself and which is on the verge of undermining the basic freedoms guaranteed to the citizenry in the Constitution. Indeed, police have been transformed into extensions of the military, towns and cities have become battlefields, and the American people have been turned into enemy combatants, to be spied on, tracked, scanned, frisked, searched, subjected to all manner of intrusions, intimidated, invaded, raided, manhandled, censored, silenced, shot at, locked up, and denied due process.

Yet this police state did not come about overnight. As Whitehead notes, this shift into totalitarianism cannot be traced back to a single individual or event. Rather, the evolution has been so subtle that most American citizens were hardly even aware of it taking place. Yet little by little, police authority expanded, one weapon after another was added to the police arsenal, and one exception after another was made to the standards that have historically restrained police authority. Add to this mix the merger of Internet megacorporations with government intelligence agencies, and you have the making of an electronic concentration camp that not only sees the citizenry as databits but will attempt to control every aspect of their lives. And if someone dares to step out of line, they will most likely find an armed SWAT team at their door.



# Humorousness

## The truth about married life... in Tweets



Ahhh, Valentine's Day. We just passed the big day for romance, staring longingly across a table, and long walks on the beach. Of course we all know where such shenanigans lead... marriage, and marriage changes romance. Here's a collection of Tweets that show exactly how. We've given you a few to get started, but hustle the kids out of the house for a few hours so you have a romantic opportunity to see them all at HuffPost's [36 Tweets That Reveal The Hilarious Truth About Married Life](#).

 **Unfiltered Mama**  
@UnfilteredMama

We're currently showing our home & still living there.


My husband hid the popcorn maker in the oven to make the kitchen look "cleaner."

I preheated the oven to make dinner.

We're going to be arguing about this for awhile.

1,701 5:14 PM - Feb 16, 2019

237 people are talking about this

 **URSULA**  
@3sunzzz

Assert your dominance by putting a few decorative pillows in your husband's truck.

1,027 8:49 AM - Feb 9, 2019

348 people are talking about this

 **Simon Holland** ✓  
@simoncholland

We are three days into a discussion about if getting a toaster oven would be worth sacrificing the counter space. Marriage is wild y'all.

702 5:54 PM - Feb 10, 2019

122 people are talking about this

 **F00 00N000F**  
@sofarsogud


Wife: How was your day today?

Me: There was a cat giving people high fives on the street but when I tried it started licking its butt.

Wife: Sometimes 'fine' is a good answer too.

527 9:52 AM - Feb 12, 2019

141 people are talking about this

 **Char** 🍷👉  
@shesatomado

My husband proposed two days after Valentine's day so that every year he could get me discounted flowers and chocolates on the anniversary instead of the holiday

2,021 12:15 PM - Feb 15, 2019

314 people are talking about this

# 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!

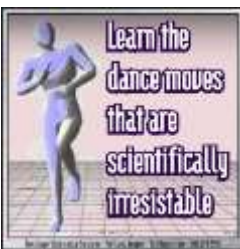


## [Jefferson Smith lets Tom Dwyer plead with the Senate](#)



February 5, 2020, was a dark day for democracy as Donald Trump was acquitted in his impeachment, but the State of the Union speech the night before was just as dark. Horrified, Tom Dwyer stayed up late into the night writing an open-letter Tidbits to the Republican Senators, begging them to reconsider their vote. We sent a copy to Portland's own Jefferson Smith (who was guest hosting the Thom Hartmann show during Impeachment Week) and were blown away when he read it on-air. [Here's a link; check it out at the 1:36:00 mark](#). Also, if you aren't a fan already, [check out XRAY.FM](#) to hear Jefferson Smith, Thom Hartmann, and some of the smartest local-Portland radio you'll catch anywhere! (And we apologize that the only vote we seemed able to change was Mitt Romney's... though he'd never admit it.)

## [Learn the dance moves that are SCIENTIFICALLY irresistible](#)



We asked our North American Facebook staff, and the response was universal: none of them can dance. Fortunately, science can come to their rescue! Recent studies probed exactly what type of dance moves the opposite sex finds attractive. Boring! But it gets better... the researchers glued reflectors to the subjects' clothes, made them listen to German dance music, and created digital avatars of their movements. You'll find good and bad moves to attract men and women; 4 avatars in all. Enjoy! And please, please, PLEASE ask Ken for a demo the next time you're in the shop!

## [Plastic eating bacteria discovered... IN PORTLAND!](#)



The world produces almost 300 million TONS of plastic every year, and most of it isn't recycled. Plastic, from micro-beads in the oceans to non-biodegradable mountains of it in landfills, is a problem we'll have to deal with. In 2018, Morgan Vague of Reed College here in Portland took a huge step to a solution. She isolated not one, but THREE strains of plastic-eating bacteria, one of which was brand new to science! And being Portland, there's a twist... Morgan has a great story to tell about having to sneak her bio-samples back through the TSA. This [story from Willamette Week](#) tells you about the TSA, this [story from Science Times](#) goes a little deeper into the bacteria.

## [The magical Finnish forests of Ossi Saarinen](#)



Sometimes it's just nice to relax with nature, and if we can't actually take you to the forests of Finland we can at least give you a look. Ossi Saarinen is a wildlife photographer in Finland, specializing in the forests and wildlife of the country. We ran across these [41 stunning examples of his work](#) and had to share them with you. From surreal landscapes to adorable little animals too cute to be believed, each photograph will keep you mesmerized. Enjoy!

# News To Make You Furious

Relax... they're just here to protect and serve



One stereotype of a certain type of Trump supporter is an overweight paranoid stockpiling weapons against the day the “government’s jackbooted thugs” come kicking in doors. Such a person should be facing some severely mixed feelings at the recent news that “The Trump administration is deploying law enforcement tactical units from the southern border as part of a supercharged arrest operation in sanctuary cities across the country.” ([2/20/20 NYT](#))

This isn’t happening quietly. The first reporters of the plan were from [Caitlin Dickerson and Zolan Kanno-Youngs in the Feb 20 New York Times](#), but there’s been additional reporting from [USA Today](#), [LA Times](#), [The Independent](#), [Democracy NOW!](#), [The Hill](#), [US News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [VOX](#), and many more. And there has been significant blowback on the policy as indicated by Chantal Da Silva in the Feb 2020 Newsweek, [DHS Faces Backlash For Plan To Send 'Swat' Teams Out To 'Knock On Doors' Across Sanctuary Cities](#).

The deployment of these heavily armed Federal acting-police fulfills every paranoid delusion the Trumpets hold dear, yet they aren’t raising a word against it. Maybe they’re right? After all, this will only apply to ‘criminal aliens’ instead of real people living next door, and the police’s long track record of restrained, balanced, prudent administration of justice means there’s no chance of anything going seriously wrong.

But we’re a little nervous about it, and think those numbed Trumpets need to look again at the threats and freedoms they purport to care about. We’re not going to try to make you Furious with the dubious legality of the policy, but by looking at the weapon the US Government is now deploying within US borders... the hyper-militarized police forces lurking in every city across the country. We’ve done several articles on the subject, some of it before Trump and some after. But it all points to a very scary mutation of the police who were once respected and valued parts of each community. You might not be threatened directly, today, but don’t sleep well if so. Remember there’s a reason we have the term ‘collateral damage’.

## Tom Dwyer- You Have The Right To Be Pacified



There’s an old theater saying that if there’s a gun on the mantle in a play’s first act, it will be used by the third act. For years, police around the country have been stocking their mantles with body armor, batons, tear gas, shotguns, automatic weapons, and armored vehicles. The Battle in Seattle,



Occupy, Ferguson, and thousands of smaller, unnamed actions around the country are sounding a loud warning... the mantle is full, and the third act in this drama could be pretty ugly.

Poverty, racism, corruption and more were on full display in Ferguson last month. These issues are all inextricably linked, and combined form a broken system that at best doesn't serve, and at worst preys upon, people who have no option but to deal with it. From this tangled mess of civic collapse we pulled one thread to look at in more detail this month, one that we all face regardless of race, economic status, or location... the problem of Police Militarization.

Overview of the situation

What kind of weapons, where are they coming from, and where are they going?

Why is this happening?

Opinions from talking heads and public officials

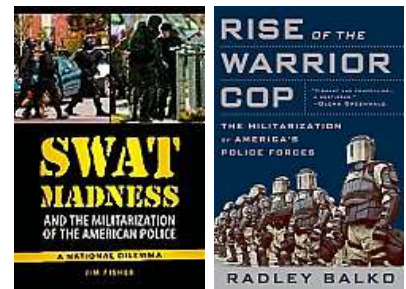
Militarization around the country

What's coming next?

What can we do to end this?

## Tom Dwyer Book Spotlight- Spotlight on Police Militarization

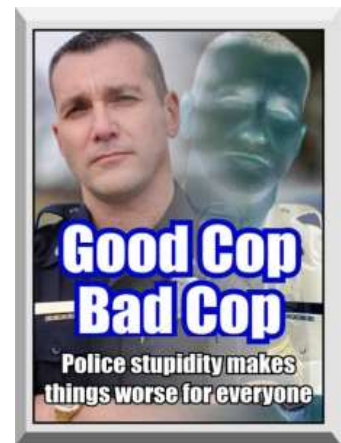
["Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces"](#) By Radley Balko and ["SWAT Madness and the Militarization of the American Police: A National Dilemma"](#) by Jim Fisher



## [Tom Dwyer News To Make You Furious- Good cop, bad cop](#)

There are few jobs tougher than being a police officer. Day in and day out, police see people at their worst. Every interaction they have with the public is a risk to their lives. Sure, the vast majority are non-violent, but a cop never knows which car they pull over houses an evil jack-in-the-box with a gun and a grudge. The job means long hours, high risk, low pay, and only a small part of the respect it deserves. Because police officers are so essential, and because they risk so much each and every day, we believe cops deserve everyone's full and unwavering support.

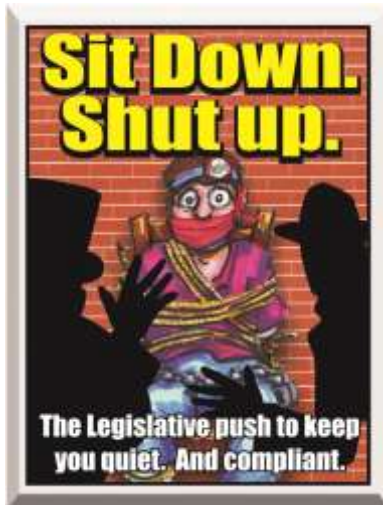
Except... well, not all cops are good cops. We don't mean an officer that's had a long day and is rude to someone when issuing a ticket. We don't even mean someone who kills someone in a split-second decision gone wrong; that's an agonizing and unavoidable part of the job. But, there's an increasing number of stories and videos of cops who are just being jerks, and sometimes dangerous or even deadly jerks. Here are links to just a few of the recent standouts from individual cops and entire agencies from across the country...



## [Tom's Tidbits- What's happening to the Rule of Law?](#)

The Rule of Law, the quaint idea that societies should be governed by objective laws instead of the whims of individuals, dates back at least to the Code of Hammurabi in 1750 BC and predates democracy by about 1200 years. In America we like to believe that even if our laws aren't perfect they at least apply to everyone, but it seems there's little reason to believe that's true anymore, if it was ever true at all...

## [The Legislative push to keep you quiet. And Compliant.](#)



Republicans greeted the election of Barack Obama with the wise counsel and universal respect necessary to give his agenda a fair chance to succeed. Of course that's horse pucky; they proudly fought him at every turn. They fought based on both real policy differences and paranoid delusions, for things he did and didn't do, but fight they did. And they probably weren't wrong to do so... they were the opposition and "fighting the power" was at least part of their job. It's part of our job as citizens as well. The various flavors of Tea Party protests before and during the Obama years were citizens expressing their discontent with the policy and direction of their government as they understood it... one doesn't have to agree with their positions to recognize their right, even their duty, to protest. Now the shoe is on the other foot and the Republicans face street protests from millions as well as much-smaller-but-still-loud protests at town halls and constituent events. Their response? They aren't looking for policies that could unite, they aren't even maintaining a dignified silence as they proceed with their

agenda. They're making it criminal to speak out. As Trump's law-and-order train pulls into the station, it's bringing with it increased powers of police and private security, decreased protections for individuals and group protests, and plans to squash dissent rather than address it. So sit down, shut up, and get Furious as we bring you a closer look at some of the laws, both proposed and enacted, designed to enforce your compliance to The Man...