



“Your Car Matters”

Tom Dwyer Automotive Services Monthly Newsletter for November, 2020

2020 Year in Review

Let's take a last shuddering look back at the Year From Hell.



VOTE for our Referral Reward Yearly Winner!

Who gets our \$1000 Yearly Award?



SCIENCE shows Trickle Down doesn't work



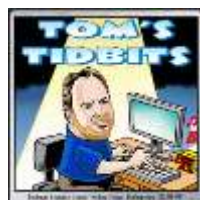
It's not too late to get YOUR \$1 Italian house



The quick way to defrost your windshield



Burying toxic waste in park as 'cleanup'



Santa's coming, but it's up to us to bring the gifts.



THE story of 2020... Covid, of course.



Your source for cartoons, puzzles, memes, jokes, and more



The science of Santa, the Big Bang, vertical farms, and new glues



Rethinking the way we look at addiction



The full Dwyer library for 2020



Monte Cristo Casserole- like the sandwich, but it fills the oven

Tom's Tidbits

Santa's coming, but it's up to us to bring the gifts.

Greetings,

In these last two weeks of the most surreal year our country has seen so far, normality seems about as believable as Santa Claus. Our lives have been upended by disease, our economy destroyed, our government is in tatters. It's hard to remember what 'normal' was, and even harder to imagine returning to 'normalcy' of any kind. Hope is on the horizon in the form of vaccines and new political leadership but hope is not the solution to our problems. We are.

This year we were assaulted; are still BEING assaulted, by enemies without and within. From the outside, Covid has slaughtered over 300,000 and the death count is growing. Months ago, Russia launched a massive attack in the virtual world whose real-world effects are still unknown. From the inside, our people are bitterly divided over how our country should protect (dare we say 'advance'?) basic human dignity and civil rights. Large groups of people balk at the simple community protection of wearing masks to slow a plague. Our 'representatives' bicker over table scraps for the commoners as an already-shrinking economy crumbles completely, leaving millions wondering whether 2021 will bring homelessness, hunger, or death.

Our President, consumed by his delusion of election fraud, has only emerged from his bunker to veto a defense bill and set up yet another government shutdown, destroy an insufficient and insulting covid package, and issue corrupt pardons to mass murderers and political cronies. Trump created many of today's problems and exacerbated others, and it's proper to hold him responsible. But it's not all about Trump. Congress is impotent. There's blame to go around, but neither the 'people's house' nor the 'world's greatest deliberative body' have been able to come together to respond to existential threats to our country. Investigators and prosecutors are stymied by corruption. The Judiciary has been occupied by Federalist society clones who defer to corporate 'people' instead of humans.

Hope is on the horizon with Biden, but anyone hoping he can cure our problems is heading for disappointment. Trump was an aberration that transcended party and the country will be better for Democrats, Republicans, and Independents when he's gone, but the fundamental problems will remain. Trump is a symptom, but the disease will continue. As long as government is enslaved to corporate interests, as long as money matters more than votes, as long as ideology matters more than the people it theoretically serves, the disease will keep eating us.

Christmas is a season of hope, and this year we have hope. It's a blessed relief, and the gift of shiny possibilities is the best our battered peoples could receive. But government of the People, by the People, FOR the people isn't based on hope. It's not Santa myth for naïve children, but it doesn't happen by itself. It's up to us to do the hard work to make it real. Now we have a chance again... my hope for all of us is that we seize it.

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".



Come cringe with us.

The Tom Dwyer Newsletter 2020 Year In Review.

We never get tired of saying “the Tom Dwyer Newsletter is unlike any other newsletter you’ve ever read”, but what do we mean? There’s no better way to show you than to look back at the stories we covered in 2020. We didn’t cover EVERYTHING (not even the real news organizations could!) but we hit a lot, and all from our unique viewpoint. We know you want 2021 to start ASAP, but please join us for one last horrific look at the

dumpster fire that was 2020...

Tom’s Tidbits

Many of our clients first heard about us through [Tom’s radio ads](#) on the late, lamented [KPOJ](#). Surprisingly, these were almost never about cars. It was always just Tom, no music, talking about the issues of the day. What made them interesting was that he rarely if ever settled for an over-simplified news-porn opinion; he always preferred digging for deeper insights. Though 620AM is now a FOX Sports outlet and [the torch of KPOJ is now being carried by XRAY.FM](#), we’ve still tried to carry Tom’s political thoughts in [Tom’s Tidbits](#). We know this is a surprise to precisely no one, but 2020 was a surreal year for anyone trying to make sense of the political scene. Every month brought the same “well, THIS is the most twisted thing that will ever happen in the US” feeling, only to be surpassed 30 days later. From January’s Impeachment to July’s Federal Occupation of Portland, to December, when martial law and election “do-overs” are being floated as possibilities, it’s been a long, painful slog. Here’s what Tom had to say about it...

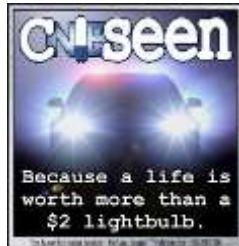


- January- [Trump’s fate is the least of what’s at stake](#)
- January (extra, letter to Senate)- [To a very few Senate Republicans...](#)
- February- [Trump will kill us now. CorpraDems will kill us later](#)
- March- [We are OPEN during this crisis.](#)
- April- [THIS... this is what government is SUPPOSED to do!](#)
- May- [The ultimate warfighting machine](#)
- June- [The fall of our political parties is not a spectator sport.](#)
- July- [The Fed’s Occupation hits close to home. Too close.](#)
- August- [Welcome Republicans!](#)
- September- [We can even learn from THAT debate!](#)
- October- [Who are domestic enemies? The ones that want to steal your vote](#)
- November- [Death by Denial](#)



Our Feature Articles

Just about every company has a newsletter these days, but they can get pretty stale. As Tom says, “do you really want to read about bugs from your exterminator every month?” We know that if we want you to read our newsletter, we have to make it worth your while. We hope one of the ways we do that is our Feature articles, where we try to cover automotive, political, community, environmental, and other news. These are (almost always) original articles written by us, but beyond that you’ll never know what to expect (other than that the articles are, hopefully, interesting and/or useful).



Our Monthly Columns



Our clients are multi-dimensional people so we try to serve all those dimensions with our Monthly Columns. Whether it's good food, important books, health tips, science exploration, humor, or (god forbid), even stuff about our shop, you'll find it all in our monthly columns. This year we have some big changes to share with you!

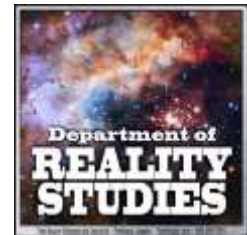
The Final Fury

"News To Make You Furious", which infuriated its first reader in 2009, riled it's last reader in 2020. In it, we covered many of the most jaw-dropping abuses in the world whether environmental, political, legal, medical, or things that just wouldn't fit in a box. [We archived all the angst in our own Vault of Venom](#), so if the rage and desperation of 2020 ever fade for you, you'll know where to come to get re-amped. But why did we drop Furious? To make room for TWO new columns...



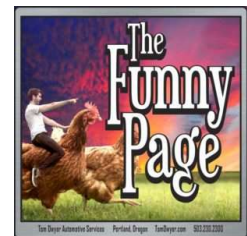
The Department of Reality Studies

Basic science, even basic consensual reality, seems under attack these days. Science and education are increasingly something for the 'elite'; something to be distrusted by honest folk. We think this is a dangerous trend that needs to be stopped... yesterday. In the "Department of Reality Studies" we'll bring you stories from the outer rim of the scientific frontier to show you (or at least the science-deniers out there) just how exciting the real world can be... for all of us.

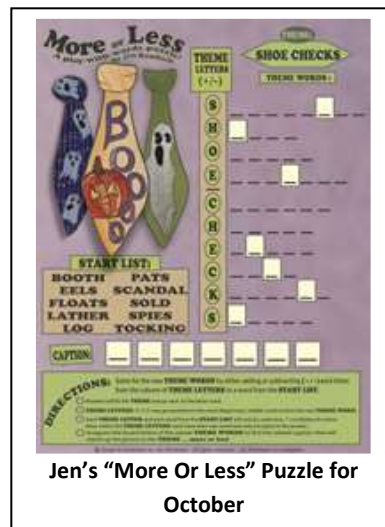


The Funny Page

We had a wonderful "Humorousness" column with one problem... no one ever read it. We decided to expand Humorousness from one-funny-a-month to a bigger conglomeration of all sorts of funny things from jokes to memes to stories and more. But even better, we brought the brilliant pen of Keith Tucker's "What NOW?!! Toons" onto the funny page, and we also added a monthly art puzzle from local artist Jen Rombach. Now all your laughs and relaxation are under one roof... make it your monthly stop for a smile!



Keith's "What NOW?!!" Toon for August



Jen's "More Or Less" Puzzle for October

The Ladle is Passed

In 2020 we said goodbye to Drew Pearson, the original chef for Drew's Kitchen. You can [read about his departure here](#), find [the full more-than-a-decade Drew's Kitchen menu here](#), or ask for your FREE copy of the Drew's Kitchen Cookbook next time you're at the shop. But we couldn't leave the Kitchen empty, so our Service Advisor Kyle Speers stepped in to take over. There's another chef stirring the pot now, and we hope you'll check in to see exactly how his menu will develop.



So that's the news ABOUT our columns... click below to see the news FROM any column you choose!



Our Popcorn Shorts

In our voyages through the InterTubes we run across some amazing things to share with you, but we don't have much to add to most of them... they're just interesting on their own. Most (but not necessarily all) of these are stories from [our Facebook Page](#), so if you haven't 'liked' us yet please do... that way, you won't have to wait the full month!



WOW!
"It's not technically cannibalism!"

Oregon's last coal plant closes... 20 years early!

Details that really would have mattered.

"The Great Realisation"
A Post-Pandemic Bedtime Story

The Parable of the Polygons
INTERACTIVE GAME
WHY evil prospers when the good do nothing.

How are things going at Tom Dwyer's?

The Magical Finnish Forests of Ossi Saarinen

We're Going Back!
NASA's plan for a 2024 moon mission

Freedom is coming to the Klamath

How to turn your backyard into a certified wildlife habitat

Someone wants to steal your cat!

18 hiking trails for your Oregon Bucket List

Is a Portland to Vancouver Ferry on the way?

Meet the latest candidate for "best symbol of 2020"
THE DIABOLICAL IRONCLAD BEETLE
It can survive being run over by a car!

Our national parks are ending right now.

How to build houses for your new bee neighbors

WOODEN SHIPS
The Future Of Cargo Transport?

We Spend Ten Times More On Fossil Fuel Subsidies Than On Education

Oregon Supreme Court Rules **IN FAVOR** of Campaign Limits!

Wanna be ready for the NEXT pandemic?
Here's an idea...
Health Care for ALL Oregon

Kids Climate Lawsuit **CASE DISMISSED**

World Championship MARBLE RACING

Learn the dance moves that are scientifically irresistible

Jefferson Smith lets Tom Dwyer plead with the Senate

TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY ...AT HOME

This ship is **NOT** sinking!

Art flourishes in LockDOWN

SOME countries are refusing to bail out offshore tax evaders

Bill Moyers' conversation: Losing Reality: Can we get the truth back?

Portland's strip club delivery gets international love



Please VOTE for our Referral Reward Program Yearly Winner

We'll give \$1000 to one of these charities... YOU tell us which one!

Even with Yelp and Google around, old-fashioned people-telling-people is the best advertising for any small business. When our clients recommend our shop to their friends we say thanks through our Referral Reward Program, in which we make a

donation to the non-profit group of your choice. At the end of the year we let our clients vote for one of these groups to receive a \$1000 gift, and now's the time for you to be heard. Follow this link to our webpage where you'll find a list of all this year's eligible groups, and vote for the ONE group you think deserves the \$1000 the most. It's a difficult decision but that's why we leave it to you... get started!

We used to say 'thank you' for new client referrals with a free Minor Interval Service, but Tom always felt a little uneasy about it. Even if you're making a completely sincere referral (and we certainly hope you are!) can a potential client be confident if there's even a *possible* conflict of interest? That's why we created our Referral Reward Program... we still get to say thank you, but there's not even the *appearance* of impropriety! We've been privileged to give over \$30,000 on behalf of our clients so far, and this year's voting for our Referral Reward Yearly Winner will give us a healthy start for 2021.

Before you vote, we have one restriction... we gladly give to any organization you choose throughout the year, but for our Yearly Award we take large groups and past winners out of the running. The large groups are doing incredible work but our \$1000 would be lost in their budgets of millions, and while our past winners would certainly appreciate another \$1000 boost we want to share the love a little. These are the groups we gave to in 2020 that we've EXCLUDED from this year's voting...

Catholic Charities (large)	Pongo Fund (past winner)
Oregon Food Bank (large)	Red Cross Portland (large)
Oregon Humane Society (large)	Salvation Army (large)
Oregon Public Broadcasting (large)	Planned Parenthood (large)

We reserve our Yearly Award for the small- to mid-size groups for whom \$1000 would have a huge impact. We hope you'll join us in sharing the love with some of the smaller guys! That said, it's

TIME TO VOTE FOR OUR YEARLY AWARD WINNER!

Please email your choice to Charles@TomDwyer.com

(Please include "yearly vote" in the subject line)

Here are your choices for the 2020 Tom Dwyer Referral Reward Program Yearly Award. Please email your choice to charles@tomdwyer.com. You are free to organize friends and supporters to vote for any particular group (just read [what happened last year when Pongo Fund won!](#)) but just one vote per client; honor system please! Winners will be announced in the next issue of “Your Car Matters”!

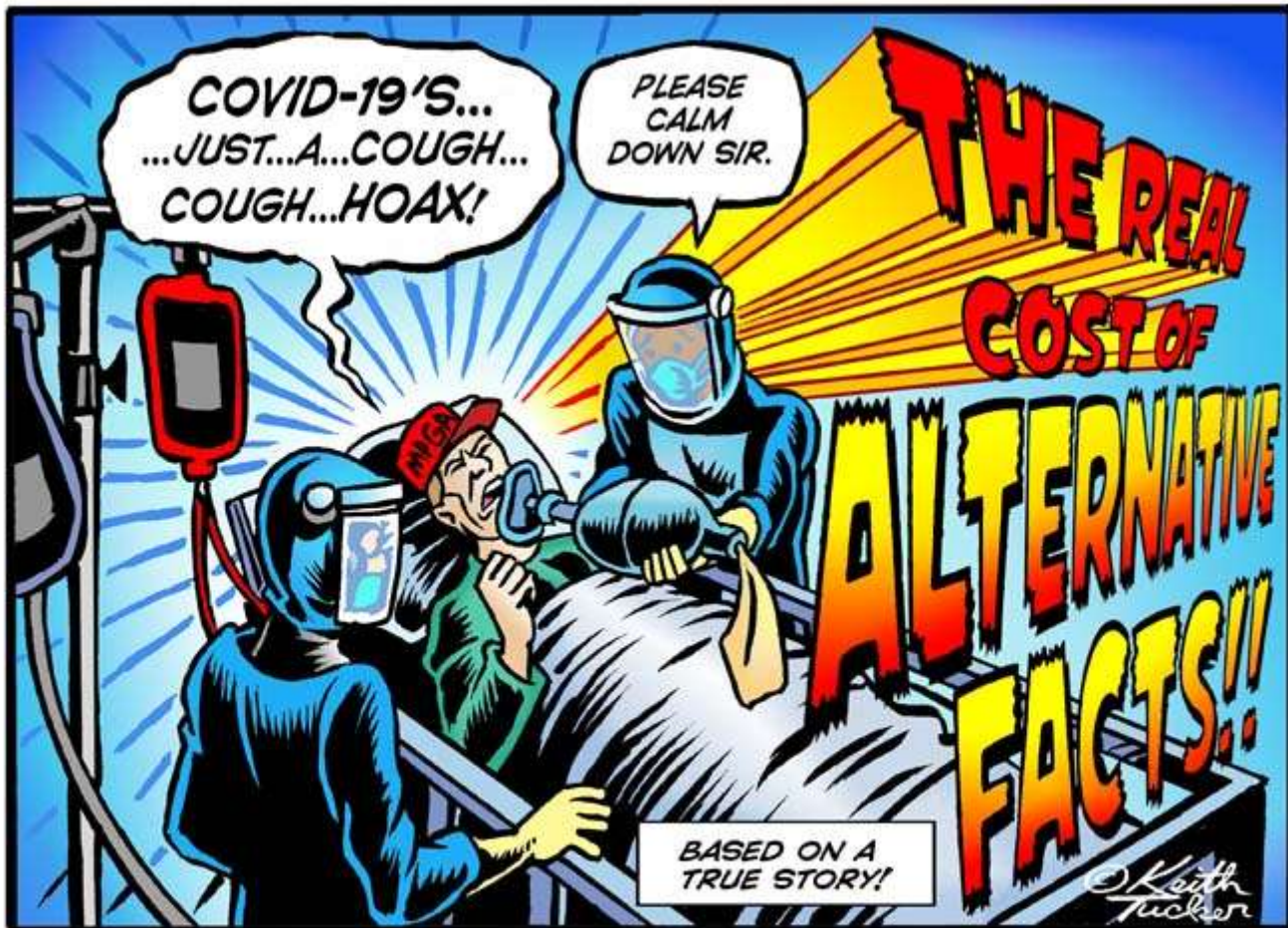
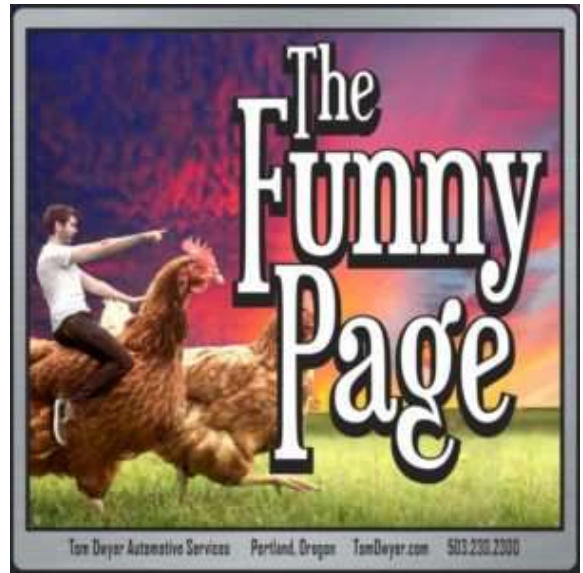
Active and Old Timers Baseball Assn
Alliance for Democracy
Black Resilience Fund
Brown Hope
Cedarwood Waldorf School
Children's Cancer Association
Clackamas Repretory Theater
Community Music Center
Don't Shoot PDX
Dove Lewis Animal Hospital
Family Solutions Mental Health
Friends of the Children
Friends of Trees
Janus Youth Services
JOIN PDX
KMHD Radio

Lewis and Clark Montessori School
Meals on Wheels
Neighborhood House
Oaks Park
Oregon Jewish Museum
Outside In
Real Rent Duwamish
Right to Health
Rosehaven
St. Jude’s Children's Hospital
St. Vincent DePaul Estacada
Store To Door
Surfrider Foundation
The Mitchell Institute
Union Gospel Mission
Willamette Riverkeeper

**Please email your choice to Charles@TomDwyer.com
(Please include “yearly vote” in the subject line)**

The Funny Page

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



"WHAT NOW?!!!"

© KEITH TUCKER
WWW.WHATNOWTOONS.COM

More or Less

A play-with-words puzzle!
by Jen Rombach



THEME LETTERS (+/-)

C
L
O
T
H
E
S
L
I
N
E

THEME: CLOTHES LINE

THEME WORDS:

Grid for theme words with yellow boxes for letters to be added or subtracted:

```

  _ _ _ _ _
  _ _ _ _ _
  _ _ _ _ _
  _ _ _ _ _
  _ _ _ _ _
  _ _ _ _ _
  _ _ _ _ _
  _ _ _ _ _
  _ _ _ _ _
  _ _ _ _ _
  
```

START LIST:

APE **ILKS**
BET **PAINTS**
CAT **SACKS**
HEAT **SORTS**
ILKS **SUITE**
TINE

CAPTION: [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

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

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

© design & illustration by Jen Rombach - all rights reserved - Jen Rombach on Instagram

A few of our memes



Humor from around the InterTubes





The funniest thing we've seen all month...



For all your snarky holiday humor needs, check out [Obvious Plant](#). It's a whole toy store full of toys offered by a comedian. The joy is the care he's put into each toy, creating unique packaging for each. Feel the happiness of "Birthday for One", or try "Leg", or "Nihilist Palls". These won't be stocking stuffers for most folks as each one costs several hundred dollars, but the laughs and the Obvious Plant website are FREE!

More or Less Solution for December



Shop Talk

THE Story of 2020



THE Story of 2020

THE story around the shop this year, obviously, as it was for literally every other person and business on the planet, was Covid. Some of our team have had friends and family who have experienced the virus, but fortunately so far, we haven't been touched directly. Summing up Shop Talk for 2020 means summing up our Covid response. It reshaped the way we did business from the ground up, in the shop and in the office. As the science changed and the masks became mandatory, it became a source of controversy among our clients. But now, going into 2021 and the hope of a vaccine, we're staying clean and safe and masked. It's no fun, but it's responsible and temporary... a small price to pay to keep our staff and clients for the long term!



Tom Dwyer Holiday Schedule

Vehicle maintenance may not be high on *your* priority list during the Holiday season, but *your vehicle* may have other ideas. If you need an appointment with us in November or December, here's our schedule...

Open Mondays thru Fridays 8a-6p for full service; office-only Saturdays 10a-1p

We will be OPEN Nov 25, but CLOSED for Thanksgiving on Nov 26&27

We will be OPEN Dec 23, but OPEN UNTIL NOON on Dec 24 and CLOSED for Christmas on Dec 25

We will be OPEN on Dec 31, but CLOSED for New Years Day on Jan 1, 2021

Tom Dwyer Gift Certificates



Time to think about gifting... and save 15%

If you like what you've found with Tom Dwyer Automotive Services, the Holidays are the perfect time to share it. We offer Gift Certificates in any amount so you can introduce the people you care about to trustworthy, professional auto care. And of course, we want to make it easy in this Holiday season

Take 15% off your Gift Certificate purchase

It's almost that easy, but there is one catch...

Certificates can't be applied to your own vehicle... you must give them to someone else!

Current Special Offers



The economy is strengthening, but it's not strong yet. If you're making tough choices about where to spend your money then our Auto Amnesty offer can still save you **30% off Labor Charges on service recommendations already in your file** as of 11/13/20. Even during a pandemic your vehicle needs consistent care, and Auto Amnesty is a great way to catch up on the services you may have been putting off.

Offer expires 1/15/21

\$200 minimum purchase required

Discount limited to service recommendations in your Tom Dwyer file as of 12/21/20

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

Offer is VOID AFTER SERVICE IS COMPLETE



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

Offer expires 1/15/21

\$200 minimum purchase required

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

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

Offer is VOID AFTER SERVICE IS COMPLETE



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!

Maximum value \$90, Offer expires 5/31/19

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



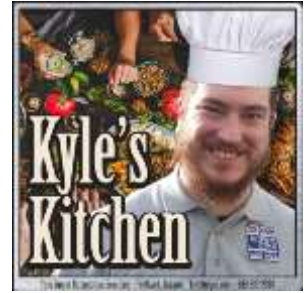
We are constantly grateful for the supportive and loyal clients we have developed over the years. Your comments and appreciation keep us on the right road to providing the superior automotive service you deserve. Your reviews and referrals are not only the highest compliments we can receive, but they're 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.

Monte Cristo Casserole



It's like a Monte Cristo sandwich, but a gigantic, mouth-watering version you've only dreamed of.

Ingredients:

- Butter, for greasing pan
- 16 slices of white sandwich bread
- 1 lb. deli ham
- 2 c. shredded Gruyère
- 6 large eggs
- 2/3 c. milk
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
- Powdered sugar, for sprinkling
- Raspberry preserves, for serving

Preparation:

- Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Grease a large, deep baking dish with butter.
- Lay 6-8 slices of bread in an even layer in the bottom of the pan. Fold ham slices in half and place on top of the bread. Sprinkle about two-thirds of the cheese over the ham then top with more bread slices.
- In a large bowl, whisk together egg, milk, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Pour mixture evenly over the bread slices. If you have time, cover the casserole and let it sit in the fridge for 30 minutes. Otherwise, top with remaining cheese and transfer immediately to oven to bake until the cheese is bubbly and the top is golden, about 35 minutes.
- Sift powdered sugar over the casserole. Serve warm with raspberry preserves.

Original recipe by Lauren Miyashiro on Delish

Prep time: 10 min, Cook time: 35 min



2020 Wrap-up Bonus!

In 2020 we said goodbye to Drew Pearson, the original chef for Drew's Kitchen. You can [read about his departure here](#), or find the [full more-than-a-decade Drew's Kitchen menu here](#). And next time you're at the shop, ask for your FREE copy of the Drew's Kitchen Cookbook while supplies last!

Health Notes

Breaking addiction means changing our thinking



Everyone knows why addicts are addicted... they're weak people who make bad individual choices and are too lazy to get better. No? Well, you'll probably appreciate this nugget we found about someone rethinking the way we approach addiction. In the view of Bruce K. Alexander, addiction is at least as much a societal and environmental problem as an individual one. We found out about Bruce through this brief post by Johann Hari, from his TED Talk speech about Alexander...

"Get a rat and put it in a cage and give it two water bottles. One is just water, and one is water laced with either heroin or cocaine. If you do that, the rat will almost always prefer the drugged water and almost always kill itself very quickly, right, within a couple of weeks. So there you go. It's our theory of addiction.

Bruce comes along in the '70s and said, "Well, hang on a minute. We're putting the rat in an empty cage. It's got nothing to do. Let's try this a little bit differently." So Bruce built Rat Park, and Rat Park is like heaven for rats. Everything your rat about town could want, it's got in Rat Park. It's got lovely food. It's got sex. It's got loads of other rats to be friends with. It's got loads of colored balls. Everything your rat could want. And they've got both the water bottles. They've got the drugged water and the normal water. But here's the fascinating thing. In Rat Park, they don't like the drugged water. They hardly use any of it. None of them ever overdose. None of them ever use in a way that looks like compulsion or addiction. There's a really interesting human example I'll tell you about in a minute, but what Bruce says shows that both the right-wing and left-wing theories of addiction are wrong. So the right-wing theory is it's a moral failing, you're a hedonist, you party too hard. The left-wing theory is it takes you over, your brain is hijacked. Bruce says it's not your morality, it's not your brain; it's your cage. Addiction is largely an adaptation to your environment.

We've created a society where significant numbers of our fellow citizens cannot bear to be present in their lives without being drugged, right? We've created a hyperconsumerist, hyperindividualist, isolated world that is, for a lot of people, much more like that first cage than it is like the bonded, connected cages that we need.

The opposite of addiction is not sobriety. The opposite of addiction is connection. And our whole society, the engine of our society, is geared towards making us connect with things not people. If you are not a good consumer capitalist citizen, if you're spending your time bonding with the people around you and not buying stuff—in fact, we are trained from a very young age to focus our hopes and our dreams and our ambitions on things we can buy and consume. And drug addiction is really a subset of that."

For [the rest of Hari's TED Talk, click here](#). And [for more on Bruce K. Alexander, start here](#).

2020 Health in Review

[Health Notes- The absolute worst pain you can experience](#)

[Health Notes- 50 lies you believe about your own body](#)

[Health Notes- This is the healthiest community in the US. Here's why...](#)

[Health Notes- Battling Alzheimer's with light and sound](#)

[Health Notes- Cure 'em all and let God sort 'em out](#)

[Health Notes- The Syndrome so toxic we can't even say it](#)

[Health Notes- How Coronavirus kills](#)

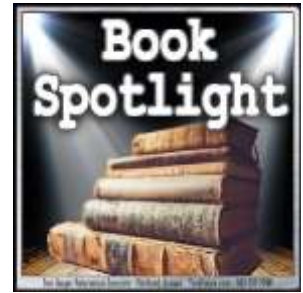
[Health Notes- Real facts on Coronavirus](#)

[Health Notes- 10 ways to exercise more... without even trying](#)

[Health Notes- Oh, nothing much... just a cure for cancer.](#)

Book Spotlight

Our full 2020 library



Our Book Spotlight might not shine on every book, but it shines on some of the books we think are the most interesting and useful out there. For the last decade we've featured one book per month, but the chaos of 2020 touched even the Spotlight... in October we started to feature two or even THREE books per month! We'll keep the increased volume of volumes into 2021, and who knows where it might go from there. Maybe (gasp) videos? Stay tuned!

In the meantime, here's everything we brought to the Tom Dwyer 2020 bookshelves...



Department of Reality Studies

The science of Santa, the Big Bang, vertical farms, and new glues



“My ignorance is just as good as your knowledge.” Do you believe that? We don’t.

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

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

[An earlier universe existed before the Big Bang, and can still be observed today, says Nobel winner](#)

An earlier universe existed before the Big Bang and can still be observed today, Sir Roger Penrose has said, as he received the Nobel Prize for Physics. The Big Bang was not the beginning. There was something before the Big Bang and that something is what we will have in our future. “We have a universe that expands and expands, and all mass decays away, and in this crazy theory of mine, that remote future becomes the Big Bang of another aeon. So our Big Bang began with something which was the remote future of a previous aeon and there would have been similar black holes evaporating away, via Hawking evaporation, and they would produce these points in the sky, that I call Hawking Points...”

[Europe’s Biggest Vertical Farm Will Be Powered by Wind and Planted by Robots](#)

There are vertical farms all over the world, from Singapore to the UK to the US. And this week, the first phase of construction was completed on what will be a major addition to the industry. The new facility is in Denmark, in an area called Taastrup outside of Copenhagen. At 7,000 square meters (just over 73,000 square feet), it will be the biggest vertical farm in Europe. Crops will grow in stacks 14 layers high and will use more than 20,000 LED lights. Beyond the abundance of layers and lights, it takes automation to the next level; little robots on wheels will be tasked with delivering seeds to the various rows of stacked growing shelves. Sensors combined with smart software will monitor and process more than 5,000 different data points; a key one, for example, is the intensity of the LED light as it relates to the stage of growth the plant is in...

[Scientists Invent New Glue That’s Activated by Magnetic Field – Saves on Energy, Time and Space](#)

Scientists from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore), have developed a new way to cure adhesives using a magnetic field. Conventional adhesives like epoxy which are used to bond plastic, ceramics, and wood are typically designed to cure using moisture, heat, or light. NTU's new "magnetocuring" glue can cure by passing it through a magnetic field. Nanoparticles are designed to heat up when electromagnetic energy is passed through them, activating the curing process. The maximum temperature and rate of heating can be controlled by these special nanoparticles, eliminating overheating and hotspot formation. Without the need for large industrial ovens, the activation of the glue has a smaller footprint in space and energy consumption terms. The energy efficiency in the curing process is crucial for green manufacturing, where products are made at lower temperatures, and use less energy for heating and cooling...

The science behind kids' belief in Santa

You'd think that this Santa saturation might make kids doubt that each one was the real deal. For one thing, they look quite different. Brewery Santa's beard was a joke, while Christmas-tree-lighting Santa's beard was legit. Add to that variations in outfits and jolliness levels. But as I delved into the Santa-related research, I found I was wrong to think his omnipresence might throw kids off. It turns out that the more kids see real, live Santa Clauses, the more likely they are to think he's real. More exposure actually tracked with stronger belief, scientists reported in *Cognitive Development* in 2016. Many of these former children had their Christmas beliefs shattered around age 8, other studies suggest. A fascinating paper from 1978 found that 85 percent of 4-year-olds believed in Santa. Five percent didn't, and 10 percent were still thinking about it. But only 25 percent of 8-year-olds believed in Santa, with 20 percent not believing and 55 percent transitioning in their beliefs. Funnily enough, 60 percent of these same 8-year-olds still believed in the tooth fairy...

A new iron-based catalyst converts carbon dioxide into jet fuel

Today, airplanes pump a lot of climate-warming carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. But someday, carbon dioxide sucked from the atmosphere could be used to power airplanes.

A new iron-based catalyst converts carbon dioxide into jet fuel, researchers report online December 22 in *Nature Communications*. If CO₂, rather than oil, were used to make jet fuel, that could reduce the air travel industry's carbon footprint — which currently makes up 12 percent of all transportation-related CO₂ emissions. The new catalyst powder is made of inexpensive ingredients, including iron, and transforms CO₂ in a single step...

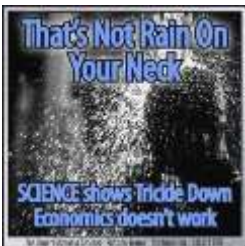
Popcorn Shorts

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!



Trickle-Down Economics... that's not rain on your neck.



For about 50 years Republicans have been pushing 'trickle-down' economics with a straight face, but science comes to the rescue again as new research confirms the drizzle on your neck is not rain. "[The Economic Consequences of Major Tax Cuts for the Rich](#)" uses data from the last 50 years in the advanced economies to show that "...major tax cuts for the rich increase the top 1% share of pre-tax national income in the years following the reform. "...on average, each major reform leads to a rise in top 1% share of pre-tax national income of 0.8 percentage points. The results also show that economic performance, as measured by real GDP per capita and the unemployment rate, is not significantly affected by major tax cuts for the rich. The estimated effects for these variables are statistically indistinguishable from zero."

It's not too late to get YOUR \$1 Italian house



[from CNN Travel](#)- "Castropignano -- a village topped by a ruined medieval castle, 140 miles southeast of Rome -- is the latest community to offer up its abandoned buildings to newcomers. It follows in the steps of Salemi in Sicily and Santo Stefano di Sessanio in Abruzzo, both of which have launched initiatives to encourage newcomers in the last month. However, unlike most of the schemes, which auction off dilapidated buildings from €1, or \$1.20, Castropignano is doing things differently. There are roughly 100 abandoned buildings here, but rather than sell to the highest bidder, mayor Nicola Scapillati wants to match interested parties with the right house for them..."

The quick way to defrost your windshield



[from LifeHacker.com](#)- One of the more annoying parts of colder weather is all the extra work it means for those who drive. Between putting snow tires on, scraping snow and ice off, and waiting for your vehicle to warm up, everything takes a little bit longer. And even though not as many people are making their daily commute to work, that doesn't mean everyone will escape the dreaded feeling of going to start the car and realizing their windshield is all fogged up. But if you find yourself in this position, it's not as bad as it seems: a former NASA engineer has shared his science-based defogging technique, designed to get the job done faster. Here's what to know..

Metro officials propose to bury toxic waste in a potential park as 'cleanup'



[from Willamette Week, 12/8/20](#)- "The soil of Willamette Cove is soaked in dioxins, PCBs, heavy metals, and other toxic chemicals... In 1996, Metro bought the 27-acre parcel, home to a Port of Portland dry dock where ships were repaired. After 40 years lying fallow, the site is finally poised for cleanup... the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality in March recommended... leaving 23,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil buried onsite... That option would cost \$8.8 million and keep much of the property, including the beach, fenced off from the public forever."

Good News Update? ["Metro Will Now Consider Full Cleanup of Contamination at Willamette Cove"](#), *Willamette Week*, 12/10/20