



# “Your Car Matters”

Tom Dwyer Automotive Services Monthly Newsletter for July, 2020

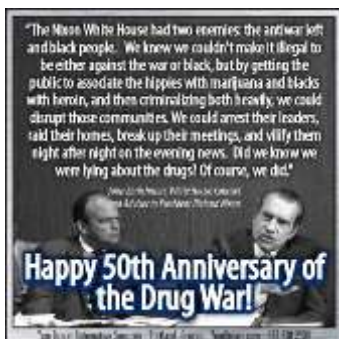
## Asset Recycling

Private companies taking over the assets WE paid for... what could possibly go wrong?

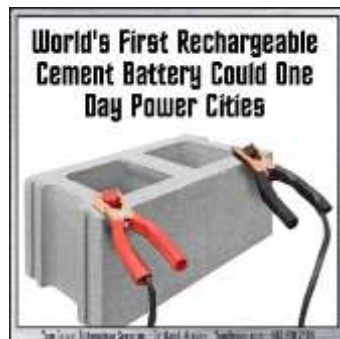


## Longtime client passes a major milestone

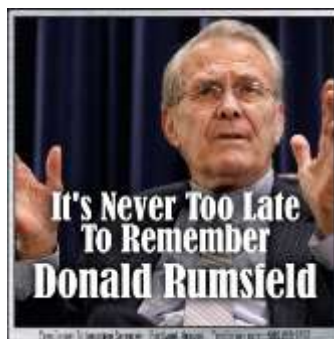
So let us tell you about our 15-years-and-newer policy



The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Drug War



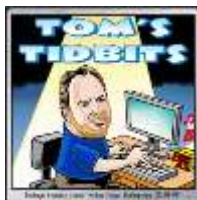
World's First Rechargeable Battery Could Power Cities



It's never too late to remember Donald Rumsfeld



Here's what you're missing at the Olympics



Pigs..... in..... SPAAAAACE!



Goodbye to Dick Samuels



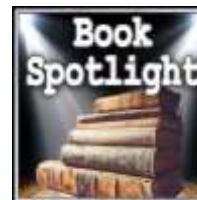
Your source for cartoons, puzzles, memes, jokes, and more



Life in space, how to avoid science, and a 17-year-old creates new sutures



Sleeping your way to Health



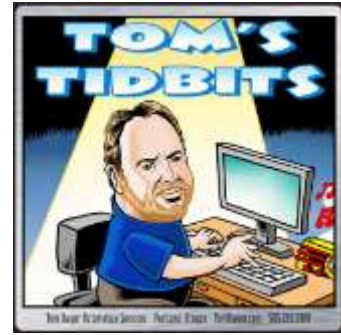
The Trump-Tell-All Final Parade of Shame



Watermelon Lemonade

# Tom's Tidbits

## Pigs... In... Spaaaaace!



Greetings,

For my 9-year-old best friend Greg and I, the Moon was the center of the Universe in 1969. We built the models and listened to the news, and our whole school was transfixed by a black-and-white TV in the gym as Armstrong took his first steps. The Apollo program could have opened a new future, but no. For 50 years humanity has played in the kiddie pool of earth orbit while the ocean of space went unexplored.

I desperately want to be excited, thrilled, and proud that we're getting back into space but I'm ambivalent at best, and it seems I'm not alone. The Billionaire Space Race isn't a story of human achievement as much as a cancerous breakdown of an economic system. When [Bezos returned](#), he thanked "...every Amazon employee and every Amazon customer because you guys paid for all of this." 52 years earlier, to the day, Neil's immortal words were "One small step for a man, one giant leap for [mankind](#)."\* Maybe that's the crux of the problem.

Once upon a time America went to space for 'us', but the 'us' was hazy even then. Having '[Whitey On The Moon](#)' didn't make Blacks part of 'us' in Jim Crow's America. The [women who birthed the space program](#) somehow weren't 'us'. [Cold War Soviets](#) were absolutely not 'us'. Still, common humanity got a nod as Neil congratulated 'mankind', the lunar plaque insisted 'we came in peace for all mankind', and every person with a radio or TV felt part of 'mankind's' achievement. In 1969 it was about humanity, not Neil. In 2021 it was all about one billionaire, barely about [the three human props with him](#), and certainly not about the rest of 'us'.

No, 'we' are still grappling with problems here on Earth just as we were in 1969. Problems like [hunger, poverty, homelessness, war, pollution, and overpopulation, are still here](#), so why waste scarce resources in space? But it's never been an either/or choice, it's always been both/and. The resources of America (and the humanity) are vast and we can apply them to many priorities, in fact we must. Apollo promised [spinoffs that would build industries and change lives back on Earth](#), and we see the benefits in computers, materials, satellites, and more. Elon Musk, to his credit, contributed to 'our' exploration of space by [re-inventing space travel with reusable boosters](#). His Dragon capsule has [routinely delivered cargo to the International Space Station](#) since 2012, and humans since 2020. [SpaceX is now the only way 'our' American astronauts can launch from American soil](#). (Take that, you pesky Russians!) Contrast that with Branson's souped-up airplane flight to upper sky, or Bezos 4-seater-penis ride to the basement of space, neither of which even pretends to benefit anyone other than the ultra-rich.



There's value in sending regular people into space, but a billionaire is not a regular person. [Apollo astronauts were awed by their experiences in space](#), speaking of the unity of humanity, the delicacy of the planet, and the humbling knowledge of mankind's place in the cosmos. Not Bezos, whose [revelatory idea was](#) "...to take all heavy industry, all polluting industry, and move it into space." Space is not, and can never be, a magic dumping ground for Earth's problems. We can no more 'move polluting industries' into space than we can move 9 billion people to space stations if our biosphere collapses. The Apollo astronauts' lessons touched us all because the astronauts realized 'we' are all in this together. A billionaire's wealth divorces them from the needs, wants, and fates of regular people. 'Common humanity' is a lesson they can never learn, and can never be part of their plans.

Humans have dreamed of space since we realized the sky was more than the Earth's ceiling. In many ways I'm still the 9-year-old playing on the floor, dreaming dreams of space with people I'll never meet. The Billionaires aren't helping make those dreams come true, they're stealing them, replacing stars that once called 'us' to explore with dollars calling 'them' to exploit. But space is big, bigger than even a billionaire's greed. None of us need to stop dreaming. Space will still be there... one day... for 'us' too.

Make a great day,



## Digging Deeper...

In closing, here are just a few quotes from real astronauts, back in the days of 'our' space program...

"I really believe that if the political leaders of the world could see their planet from a distance of, let's say 100,000 miles, their outlook would be fundamentally changed. The all-important border would be invisible, that noisy argument suddenly silenced."  
– Michael Collins

I was flabbergasted. I thought that when we went someplace they'd said, 'Well congratulations, you Americans finally did it.' And instead of that, unanimously, the reaction was, 'We did it. We humans finally left this planet. We did it.'" – Michael Collins, in a CBS interview with Jeffrey Kluger, co-author of *Lost Moon: The Perilous Voyage of Apollo 13*.

"I realized up there that our planet is not infinite. It's fragile. That may not be obvious to a lot of folks, and it's tough that people are fighting each other here on earth instead of trying to get together and live on this planet. We look pretty vulnerable in the darkness of space."– Alan Shepard, "What Does Moon Flight Mean Now", *The Seattle Times*

"You develop an instant global consciousness, a people orientation, an intense dissatisfaction with the state of the world, and a compulsion to do something about it. From out there on the Moon, international politics look so petty. You want to grab a politician by the scruff of the neck and drag him a quarter of a million miles out and say, 'Look at that, you son of a bitch.'"— Edgar Mitchell

"The biggest joy was on the way home. In my cockpit window every two minutes — the Earth, the Moon, the Sun, and a whole 360-degree panorama of the heavens. And that was a powerful, overwhelming experience. And suddenly I realized that the molecules of my body, and the molecules of the spacecraft, the molecules in the body of my partners, were prototyped and manufactured in some ancient generation of stars. And that was an overwhelming sense of oneness, of connectedness. It wasn't them and us, it was — that's me, that's all of it, it's one thing. And it was accompanied by an ecstasy, a sense of 'oh my god, wow, yes,' an insight, an epiphany."— Edgar Mitchell – *In the Shadow of the Moon*

"NASA is not about the 'adventure of human space exploration,' we are in the deadly serious business of saving the species. All human exploration's bottom line is about preserving our species over the long haul."— John Young, from his essay, *The Big Picture*

"The Space Program has never been an entitlement, it's an investment in the future — an investment in technology, jobs, international respect and geopolitical leadership, and perhaps most importantly in the inspiration and education of our youth. Those best and brightest minds at NASA and throughout the multitudes of private contractors, large and small, did not join the team to design windmills or redesign gas pedals, but to live their dreams of once again taking us where no man has gone before." — Eugene Cernan, September 2011, testifying before Congress on the future of the Space Program.

\* Yes, we know there's a [controversy about Armstrong's specific words](#), but his point is the same.

[NASA Quotes: The Apollo Missions to the Moon](#), Pilgrimage.space

[Billionaires Race to Privatize & Monopolize Space as Earth Burns & Workers Organize](#), Amy Goodman on Democracy NOW, Jul 2021

[The Space Race](#), History.com editors, History.com, updated Feb 2020

[Space Spinoffs: The Technology To Reach The Moon Was Put To Use Back On Earth](#), Jacob Margolis and Christopher Intagliata on NPR, Jul 2019

[Yep, it's bleak, says expert who tested 1970s end-of-the-world prediction](#), Edward Helmore in *The Guardian*, Jul 2021

[Meet the 82-year-old astronaut who flew on Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin flight](#), Sarah Jackson on Business Insider, Jul 2021

[SpaceX Rocket Flies 10 Times as Reusability Gets Surprisingly Routine](#), Edd Gent in *Singularity Hub*, May 2021

[SpaceX launches first astronauts on a reused rocket](#), Nadia Drake in *National Geographic*, Apr 2021

["One Small Step for Man" or "a Man"?](#) Amy Stamm at Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, Jul 2019

[The Mercury 13: The women who could have been NASA's first female astronauts](#), Swapna Krishna on Space.com, Jul 2020

[Jeff Bezos on future of spaceflight: "We can move all heavy industry and all polluting industry off of Earth"](#), Caitlin Yilek on CBSNews, Jul 2021

[SpaceX Space Station- Transporting Humans To The Orbiting Laboratory In The Sky](#), SpaceX

[Some one-star Yelp reviews of space travel from the near future](#), Alexandra Petri in *Washington Post*, Jul 2021

[The Apollo Program: How NASA sent astronauts to the moon](#), Adam Mann on Space.com, Jun 2020

[Everything to know about Tuesday's Blue Origin space launch with Jeff Bezos](#), Kevin Dugan on Fortune, Jul 2021

[Bezos Landed, Thanked Amazon Workers And Shoppers For Paying, Gave Away \\$200 Million](#), Alina Selyukh on NPR, Jul 2021

[Blue Origin flight one small step for Jeff Bezos, one giant leap for memekind](#), Nicole Lyn Pesce on MarketWatch, Jul 2021

[Jeff Bezos admits critics of his upcoming space flight are 'largely right'](#), Joseph Guzman on The Hill, Jul 2021

[As Bezos completes Blue Origin mission, many ask what's the climate-change impact?](#), Rachel Koning Beals on MarketWatch, Jul 2021

[Jeff Bezos Thanks Amazon Workers and Customers for Making Him So Rich He Can Go to Space](#), Tim Murphy on Mother Jones, Jul 2021

[Jeff Bezos: 'We Need to Move All Polluting Industry Into Space'](#), Brian Kahn on Gizmodo, Jul 2021

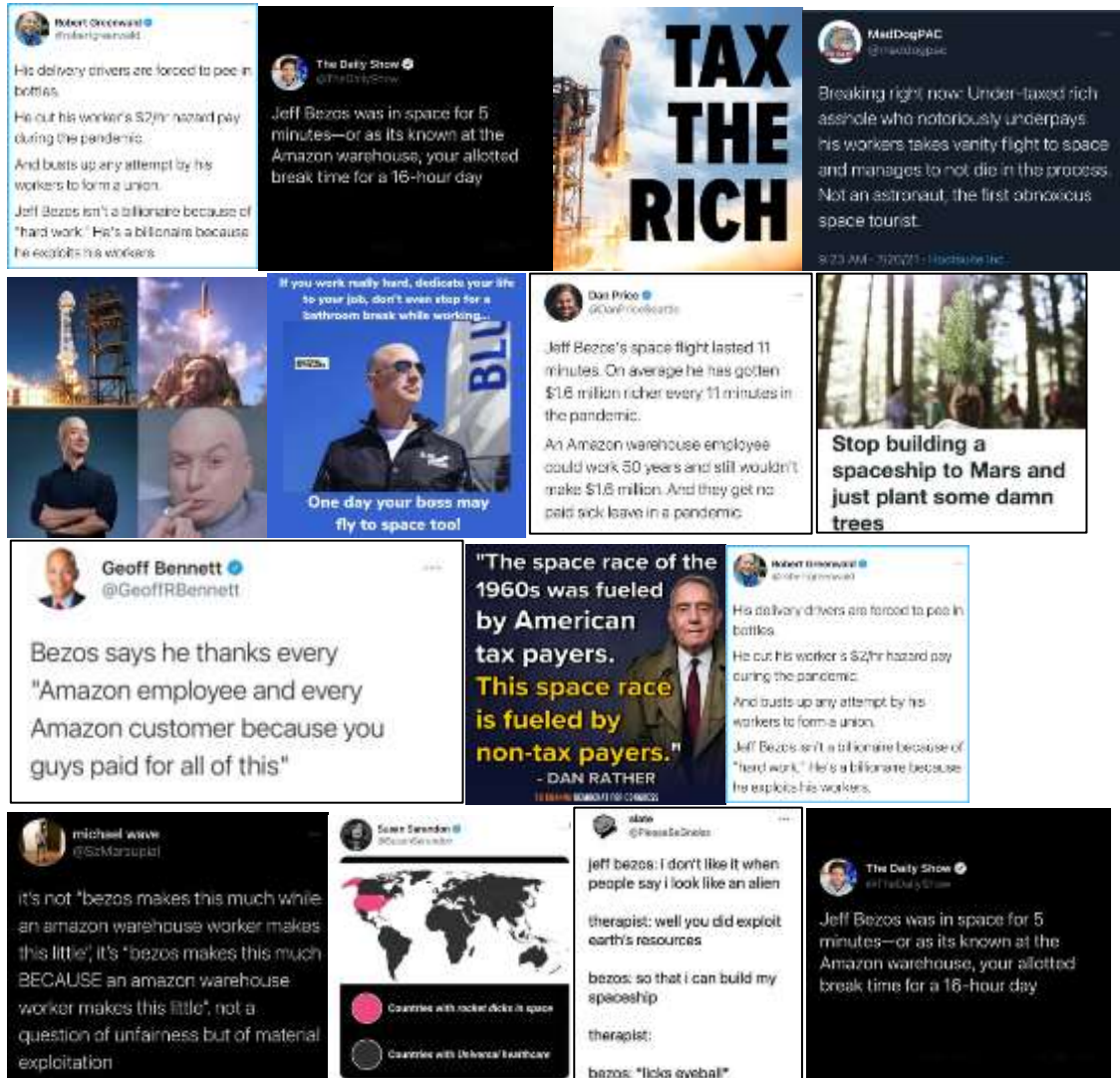
[The Adolescent Spacefaring Dreams of Tech Billionaires](#), Zeynep Tufekci in Scientific American, Dec 2019

[Jeff Bezos's flight to the edge of space: Key questions answered](#), AlJazeera, Jul 2021

[Bezos: Trip to space 'reinforces my commitment to climate change'](#), Olafimihan Oshin on The Hill, Jul 2021

['Human Folly, Not Human Achievement': Oxfam Slams Bezos Space Trip as Billions Suffer on Earth](#), Jake Johnson in Common Dreams, Jul 2021

[Women played crucial roles in the space program, yet we don't know much about them. Why?](#) Megan Burbank in The Seattle Times, Jul 2019





## Asset Recycling

Private companies taking over the assets WE paid for... what could possibly go wrong?

Buried deep within the stalled infrastructure package is a vague list of possible ways to pay for it. Somewhere on that list is something the politicians are being very quiet about... Asset Recycling. What is it? Well, it's an obfuscation designed to 'give an appearance of solidity to pure wind'. Asset Recycling is when a private company leases some public asset (like roads, bridges, or parks) for decades, and charges the citizens who built it to keep using it. It's not a SALE, because the government still OWNS it during the lease, but it's still just a nice name for private plundering of public goods. So settle

back and let your Mechanic tell you about Asset Recycling... because no one else is doing it!

Asset Recycling isn't new. It was tried in Australia from 2013-2016, and Wilbur Ross and Peter Navarro proposed it as part of Donald Trump's never-seen infrastructure plan. The [Democrats rightly howled when Trump did it](#), but Trump is gone and now it's Biden's turn. Flailing around for a way to pay for trillions in investment without (gasp!) raising taxes, Biden proposed using Asset Recycling himself but this time the response has been different. The Republicans are still quiet, possibly because the big-money donors on their side of the aisle would rake in avalanches of cash if it went through. But this time the Democrats' response is different. The CorporaDems have forgotten their objections to Trump and fallen in line, again possibly because their big-money sources would dry up. But the Bernie wing, the wing that opposed Trump's policies for principles rather than expediency, is still upset.

In all the stories we read for this, two ideas kept cropping up... 1) Australia is the place where Asset Recycling has the longest history, and 2) Chicago's lease of parking meters is the poster case for Asset Recycling here in the US. Let's just look at those two points.

### Asset Recycling in Australia

Australia had 6 years' experience with Asset Recycling, so how did it work for them? On the whole, not well. Libertarian think tanks like [the Reason Foundation see nothing wrong with it](#), but the Australians themselves? Not so much. "Australia's federal treasurer on Friday ruled out a return to an infrastructure investment incentive scheme, closing out a policy that spurred billion-dollar privatizations ahead of a meeting with state counterparts on increasing infrastructure spending."



### The Chicago Parking Meters

For a US example of Asset Recycling in action, almost every source pointed to Chicago. [Here's one of their summations](#): "The city of Chicago sold off 36,000 parking meters to a Wall Street-led investor group in 2009, taking back \$1.15 billion to plug budget holes. Chicago drivers will pay \$11.6 billion over the 75-year life of the deal to park, and fees are scheduled to rise as much as 800 percent. When the city shuts down a street for a festival or parade, it has to pay the private company for the parking revenue it loses. And the city cannot make improvements like bike lanes or sidewalk widening on metered streets, again because the privatizers might lose revenue." The company that leased the meters made its money back in about 10 years, and they've made an additional half billion beyond that... so far. Not coincidentally, parking fees have gone from \$3 to \$7 per hour.

### General Issues with the idea

One issue with Asset Recycling is that private investors are usually guaranteed a minimum profit margin to make the deal enticing. (The Trump plan specified 10%). This is an [immediate problem, because](#) "The government doesn't require a 10 percent margin on equity, tax credits, and interest payments. That's a layer of profit that gets built into the expenditure."

Most government assets are low- or no-profit, [so](#) “There are only two ways for these companies to reduce ownership and operation costs below what the public sector would spend, while still being profitable. They can cut back, either on safety or labor or maintenance; or they can extract a lot of profit from users of the infrastructure (think toll roads).” So privatization means either unusable or unaffordable infrastructure. After all, if it’s attractive enough to sell to a private investor, seeing as how they have to deliver the same service for less money to make it profitable, why wouldn’t that be an income stream for the government?

Another issue is that most leases require cash up-front, a situation ONLY POSSIBLE if a company has sufficient untaxed reserves to work with. This means that the Billionaires and Corporations that have become rich buying the tax code are now, solely because of that tax code, in the position to buy the assets that the tax code is supposed to protect.

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

Whatever else Asset Recycling might be, it’s a pretty dry subject. If you want to Dig Deeper we take our hats off to you... you’re a trooper! But for the dedicated, we have what you’re looking for...

[‘Asset recycling’ is 1 piece of the bipartisan infrastructure deal that could prove controversial](#), Brigid Kennedy in The Week, Jun 2021

Critics, however, are far less convinced. In practice, they argue, asset recycling would "fleece the country's public works, the common institutions we all paid to build, and allow private companies to control them," writes The American Prospect. As HuffPost's Kevin Robillard notes, we can take Australia, the birthplace of asset recycling, as an example. Officials ended the practice after just two years, saying they were "concerned" the initiative encouraged privatization "without appropriate consideration or analysis of future costs," per ITPI. A similar venture in Chicago wherein the city sold 36,000 parking meters to Wall Street investors has continued to prove itself a headache for officials and taxpayers alike, reports the Prospect.

Although Democrats condemned the practice when it was favored by the Trump administration, they appear to be "mostly silent" in their criticism now, the Prospect notes. However, as Robillard points out, it might be just the progressives who stick up their nose this time around.

[Bipartisan Senate Infrastructure Plan Is a Stalking Horse for Privatization](#), David Dayen in The American Prospect, June 2021

There was a time when Democrats did oppose such schemes; it was during the Trump administration. To the extent that Trump had an infrastructure vision, it was rooted in privatization. Wilbur Ross and Peter Navarro, who would each take high-level jobs in the Trump administration, wrote a paper before the 2016 election outlining their vision: \$1 trillion in investment provided by private bond buyers, who would be guaranteed a tax credit to buy the bonds, interest on the debt, and an equity stake with dividends (with up to a 10 percent profit margin). It adds the usual song and dance about how private enterprise is so much more efficient than the public sector, therefore saving money overall.

It takes about two seconds to recognize how ridiculous this is. The government doesn’t require a 10 percent margin on equity, tax credits, and interest payments. That’s a layer of profit that gets built into the expenditure. Governments usually contract out design and construction to private contractors, but there are only two ways for these companies to reduce ownership and operation costs below what the public sector would spend, while still being profitable. They can cut back, either on safety or labor or maintenance; or they can extract a lot of profit from users of the infrastructure (think toll roads). If the infrastructure isn’t inherently profitable, like a bridge in New York City or a toll road in southern California might be, the upgrade probably won’t get built.

[How could “asset recycling” work in the United States?](#), Jake Varn and Sarah Kline in Bipartisan Policy Center, Jun 2017  
How it Works

The first step in asset recycling is for public agencies to identify assets that are unused or underutilized such as vacant lots or buildings?and assets they may no longer want to own or manage such as airports, bridges, or parking facilities. Ideally, agencies would do this after taking a comprehensive look at all existing assets through a formal asset inventory. At that point, agencies have two options: they can either have a “garage sale” and sell the asset, or they can lease the asset to a private company who is tasked with handling its operation and maintenance, including all attendant costs. Ownership remains unchanged, and the owner



receives compensation for the negotiated term of the rental. However, many of the risks of ownership, like unexpected repairs, are fully transferred to the lessee. It's as if you rented out your home and the tenant fixed it up for you before handing back the keys.

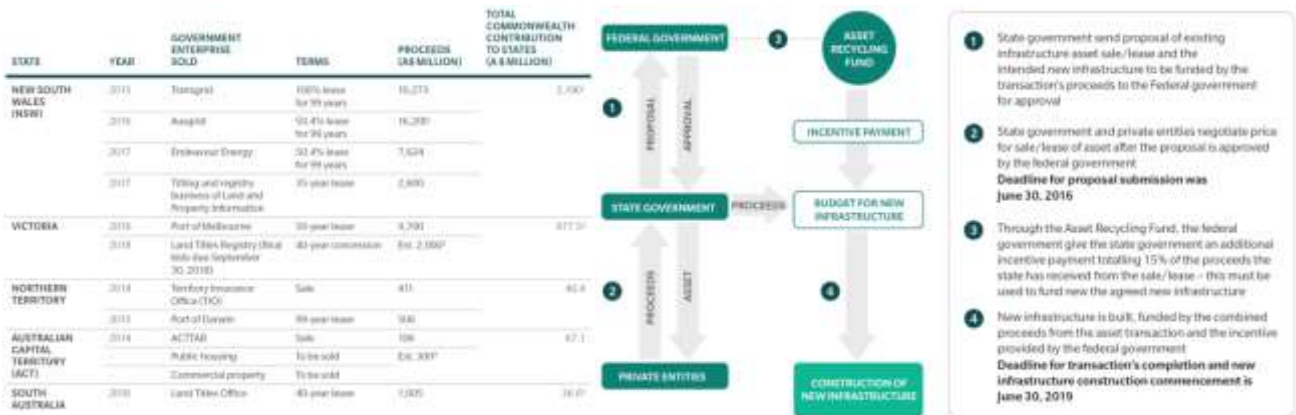
[What the U.S. Can Learn From Australia's Asset Recycling](#), Robert Poole at the Reason Foundation, Apr 2016

So Schmidt's adaptation of the Australian federal government's incentive for asset recycling would be to allow tax-exempt debt to be used to finance long-term P3 lease concessions of brownfield infrastructure. As he argued in a piece for InfraAmericas, "The discrimination against privatized operations with respect to tax-exempt debt is a historical remnant of a time before privatization of these types of assets became commonplace around the world. There is no policy reason for the discrimination. Toll roads and bridges, airports, and ports do not cease to serve their public purpose when they are privatized; in fact, they serve them better with the enhanced quality of service that comes from experienced private management. And allowing continued use of tax-exempt debt in privatized infrastructure would result in no loss to the federal government of taxes on taxable debt interest, since these facilities are using tax-exempt debt now."

[Using Asset Recycling To Rebuild America's Infrastructure](#), Robert Poole at the Reason Foundation, Nov 2018

In typical long-term leases, most or all of the lease payments are provided up-front. These proceeds are dedicated to investment in needed, but currently unfunded, infrastructure projects. Provisions in the long-term lease of an existing facility include performance requirements, which in most cases of aging infrastructure, will require significant additional private investment to refurbish and modernize the facility. Hence, asset recycling is intended to fix both of America's serious infrastructure problems: aging and inadequate existing facilities and lack of funding for a large array of new infrastructure facilities.

[Does asset recycling actually work?](#), Blair Chalmers in GreenBiz, Aug 2018



[Australia rules out return to state infrastructure incentive scheme](#), Hans Lee on Reuters, Oct 2019

Australia's federal treasurer on Friday ruled out a return to an infrastructure investment incentive scheme, closing out a policy that spurred billion-dollar privatizations ahead of a meeting with state counterparts on increasing infrastructure spending. The decision shuts down a proposal backed by the most populous of Australia's eight states and territories, New South Wales (NSW), to reinvigorate a subdued economy.

Under the "asset recycling" scheme which ran from 2013 to 2016, states which sold infrastructure such as roads, ports and electricity grids would receive an extra 15% of the sale price from the federal government to spend on new infrastructure. The scheme coincided with a wave of big-ticket deals including the 99-year partial lease by New South Wales state of electricity grid Ausgrid to two local pension funds for A\$16 billion (\$11 billion), the country's biggest privatization.

[Review of the National Partnership Agreement on Recycling](#), Australian Treasury Dept, Sep 2018

Effectiveness in achieving the outcomes and objectives of the NPA Based on stakeholder comments, the NPA has been effective in achieving its outcomes and objectives in relation to reducing funding constraints for additional infrastructure, increasing economic activity and enhancing productive capacity, for jurisdictions that participated in the NPA. For those jurisdictions that participated, these outcomes and objectives were achieved by selling state owned assets and investing in additional economic infrastructure. The NPA supported the achievement of certain state-led reforms to divest assets and to invest in economic infrastructure, and in some cases brought forward the timing of those reforms but generally did not catalyse consideration of new divestments or reinvestments.

The effectiveness of the NPA overall in achieving its outcomes and objectives was constrained:

- Many jurisdictions did not participate by nominating assets for divestment, either because asset divestment was not a policy priority at the time, or because there were no assets ready for sale within the NPA timeframes.
- Non-physical assets were not considered eligible for consideration as asset divestment or required lengthy negotiations prior to being approved, and assets already considered as state priorities did not qualify as “additional” infrastructure.
- Some jurisdictions reported difficulties in reaching agreement on what was “additional” investment, and that the NPA effectively encouraged them to put forward projects that were not necessarily considered the highest priority under well considered state infrastructure strategies, since in some cases, the highest priority projects already have funding committed and was not considered additional.
- The funding pool was reduced when not all of the funding available at 30 June 2016 had been allocated. A cap was placed on the reduced funding pool with some jurisdictions commenting that they were unable to receive additional funding where actual sale proceeds exceeded initial estimates.

[Asset recycling 2.0 the way to kick-start the economy](#), Mark Ludlow on Financial Review, Jun 2019

Infrastructure asset recycling involves the monetization of existing public assets through sale or lease to the private sector, with all funds received being reinvested in new infrastructure. Asset recycling offers the opportunity to provide newly needed infrastructure without adding to public debt, all while maintaining or potentially improving existing infrastructure service delivery.

Experience shows that asset recycling is not always a straightforward process. This can be seen in the case of Australia, the most recent champion of asset recycling. Australia’s asset recycling scheme may not have reached initial government investment targets, but it is broadly considered to have been a success.

Australia’s experience has provided a number of valuable lessons for other governments and private investors to learn from. A key takeaway is that asset recycling is not always a suitable solution to a country’s infrastructure needs. The decision-making process must take account of future infrastructure needs and the government’s ability to fund those needs.

Having enough public assets to potentially monetize is a key pre-requisite for an asset recycling scheme, but equally important is the willingness of the general public to accept private investment and management of infrastructure. Previous negative experiences with privatization in a country may cause lasting damage to public perception of asset recycling.

[Asset Recycling In America](#), The Hon Joe Hockey, Australian Ambassador to the United States, Nov 2018

[Asset recycling- a concept that taxpayers need to understand!](#), Mary Scott Nabers on Strategic Partnerships Inc., Jun 2017

Often misstated, misinterpreted or misunderstood, asset recycling is simply a practice that allows government entities to either sell or offer a long-term lease of public infrastructure to private-sector investors. Any public asset, such as an airport, toll road, utility or parking facility, if sold and repurposed, could generate its own revenue stream. That concept appeals to private-sector investors. And, in exchange for the sale or lease of those assets, governmental entities can receive a large up-front, lump-sum payment. The proceeds can then be used to finance new and critical infrastructure needs. It’s important for taxpayers and the public at large to understand this concept because the Trump administration is considering paying a bonus to state or local governments that enter into asset recycling agreements.

[Vital Signs: No, Joe, America should not be copying Australia’s ‘asset recycling’ misdirection](#), Richard Holden in The Conversation, Dec 2018



But there is an even more fundamental objection. When the government sells the hypothetical airport it gives up \$300 million in revenue every year to get \$4.2 billion immediately. Unless the private operator values the cash flow stream more than the government does, or can generate more cash flow, there has been no value created. All that has happened is that the government gets money sooner rather than later, over time. Since the government ought to be at least as patient as the private sector, and can borrow long term at 3%, it is unlikely the government values future cash flows less than some infrastructure fund. So the only value that might be created is from a private operator running the airport more efficiently. It's probably true it will – but by how much? Even if it does, will the government cut a good enough deal to capture a good chunk of that value for the public?

[Asset Recycling and its Potential for Infrastructure Savings](#), Brianna Fernandez in American Action Forum, July 2017

While asset recycling could be a viable strategy for state and local governments to adopt, a federal asset recycling initiative would be difficult to implement as part of the administration's anticipated infrastructure bill. The U.S. government has only \$267.6 billion in non-defense fixed assets, also known as property, plant, and equipment (PP&E), for potential recycle, with many assets unlikely to attract permanent or temporary private sector operation.

While there is no definitive model for asset recycling, it is understood as a way for governments to fund new assets or revitalize existing assets using proceeds from the sale or lease of preexisting public assets. Asset recycling has primarily been advertised as a measure to fund infrastructure at no cost to taxpayers—and no additional government debt.

Unfortunately, very few federal fixed assets have profitable revenue streams and therefore are unlikely to pique the interest of the private sector to purchase or lease. The Department of Defense, Department of Energy, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Interior, Department of State, and Department of Transportation, along with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), General Services Administration, and the United States Postal Service comprise 95 percent of the federal government's related PP&E net. TVA is the only entity with earned revenues exceeding gross costs.

[Asset Recycling: Can it close the infrastructure gap for future generations?](#) Jonathan Spear in SNC/Lavalin

[Does asset recycling actually work?](#) Blair Chalmers in GreenBiz, Aug 2018

[Asset recycling could be the best fix with crumbling national infrastructure](#), Richard Geddes in The Hill, Mar 2021

[Asset recycling may look new and exciting. But it's the last gasp of a failed model](#), John Quiggin in The New York Times, Jun 2017

[Senators Want to Pay for Infrastructure With "Asset Recycling." That's Just a Fancy Term for Privatization](#), Hannah Levintova and Noah Lanard in Mother Jones, Jul 2021



## Longtime Client Passes a Major Milestone

So let us tell you about our 15-years-and-newer policy

It was late on a busy Friday afternoon when Client Paul G. asked us to look at his car... RIGHT THEN. Paul's 2001 Subaru was about to hit 333,333 miles; in fact, it was so close that he was actually driving around the neighborhood so that it would be EXACTLY 333,333 when it hit our lot! Paul wanted to share the good news with the Mechanic that's kept his baby going for so long. He bought the car new in September of 2001, and somewhat ominously watched the Twin Towers fall as he took delivery. The Subie overcame its dark origins to be a dependable workhorse until 248,000 miles, when serious mechanical problems forced the question... repair or replace? A very expensive engine replacement was still cheaper than a new vehicle, so 85,333 miles later it looks like Paul made the right call. He thinks our care and attention helped bring him this far, and he says he'll be back in another 111,111 miles when he hits 444,444!

Though few of our clients come in when their vehicles hit high-mileage milestones, Paul's not the only one. In 2015, [Client Anne W. stopped by when she hit 333333](#) with her Toyota truck.

And for anyone curious, this is a perfect illustration of our "15 years old and newer" policy. [We enforce the 15-year limit for NEW CLIENTS](#), because we don't want to try to build a



service relationship around a vehicle that isn't worth saving (as older vehicles too-often are). BUT, once we've seen the vehicle, you can count on us to care for it as long as you'll give us the privilege... just like Paul and Anne!







## The Funny Page

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

Keith Tucker's "What NOW?!!" Toon for July



**"WHAT NOW?!!!"**

© KEITH TUCKER  
WWW.WHATNOWTOONS.COM



Jen Rombach's "More Or Less" puzzle for July

**More or Less**  
A play-with-words puzzle by Jen Rombach

**THEME:**  
EVER COUNTED

**THEME WORDS:**

**THEME LETTERS (+/-)**  
E  
V  
E  
R  
C  
O  
U  
N  
T  
E  
D

**START LIST:**  
AD      PIN  
FACTION    PRIM  
FOR      ROT  
MATCH     TENT  
ON        UNITE

**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 in the spaces 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!**

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

This month's 'Funniest Thing' is a 4:30 video of a Russian robotic farm of the future. The special effects are seamless, but it's hard to even describe the cleverness that oozes from each frame. Cue it up and meet Russian Farmers, the masters of Applied Robotics.





# Laughs from around the InterTubes



**gabby**  
@gabby\_UCMaroon

What's the difference between Taxes and Texas?

Taxes can keep your electrical grid operational.

9:05 PM · 04 Jul 21



**ARGUING WITH A TOXIC PERSON IS LIKE TRYING TO ARGUE WITH AN ACTOR IN A PLAY. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, THEY WILL STICK TO THEIR LINES, BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY ROLE THEY KNOW.**

- ANTHONY GUCCARDI



I know you believe you've seen the worst shoes ever, but no. You have

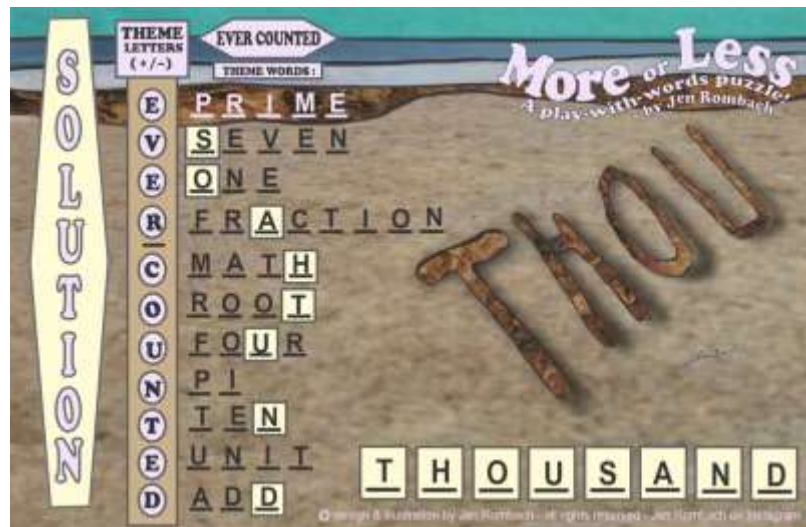


# Memes from your Mechanic

We said a sad goodbye to astronaut Michael Collins this month. The 3 MLK memes were in response to someone who wished for memes with these quotes, and we obliged.



# "More Or Less" Solution for May





# Shop Talk

The owner of Sellwood's Railroad passed away



## Comment of the Month



This month's Comment is a whole article by David Ashton at the Sellwood Bee, recognizing the passing of Richard Samuels. Dick was the owner of the Oregon Pacific Railroad, the short-line railroad that operates in Sellwood and Portland along the Springwater Corridor.

### [Sellwood's railroad owner, Richard Samuels, dies](#)

David F. Ashton, July 03 2021

Some of our clients have been with us for decades, and many have become friends. Too often we hear of someone's passing but we can't really extend our sympathies to the whole Tom Dwyer audience. We're passing on this goodbye to Dick Samuels not only to recognize the passing of someone who shaped our precious neighborhood for years, but in some way to recognize the passing of friends of the shop we never get to mention. Goodbye Dick, and goodbye to the many wonderful people who have passed through our shop doors and on to their next phase over the years. You will all be missed.

## Current Special Offers



## [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**

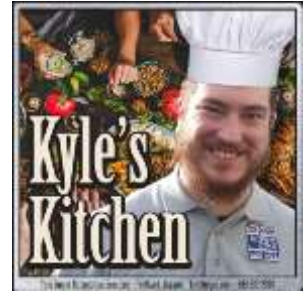


Automobiles are just like any other product; occasional flaws in manufacture or design can cause problems once they leave the factory. When an issue is identified the manufacturers and government work hard to bring the vehicles back in for refit or repair, but not all recalls make the front pages. The 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.

# Kyle's Kitchen

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## Watermelon Lemonade



We're coming up on peak summer in Oregon with a fire the size of Rhode Island, severe drought conditions for years, and still recovering from a thousand-year heat smack. All of us could use a cool and refreshing break, and Kyle's here to help...

### Ingredients:

- 4 cups cubed ripe seedless watermelon (about ½ of an 8-lb watermelon)
- ¾ cup fresh squeezed lemon juice (3-4 large lemons)
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 cups ice
- Ice
- Fresh mint for garnish

### Preparation:

If you're going to make this then only use fresh, in-season watermelon. Here's a trick to find a ripe one: the 'field spot' is a lighter spot on the melon where it rested in the field. If the field spot is white, it's unripe: if the spot is yellow, it's ripe.

- Chop the watermelon. Place it in a blender and blend until liquid.
- Strain the liquid with a fine mesh sieve or strainer back into the blender.
- Juice the lemons.
- Add the lemon juice, sugar and ice and blend again until smooth. Pour into a pitcher.
- Serve garnished with watermelon and lemon slices, and a few additional ice cubes.
- This will be a wonderful refresher for the whole family, but if the kids aren't around you might consider adding your favorite liquor. Kyle recommends vodka, but it's totally up to you!

**Original recipe by Sonja Overhiser on [ACoupleCooks.com](http://ACoupleCooks.com)**

**Prep time: 10 min, Cook time: 0 min Yields: 4 drinks**



# **Health Notes**

Sleeping your way to Health



## **The new science of sleep: Everything we know about how it affects your health and brain**

**Dr. Matthew Walker on ScienceFocus.com, Jul 2021**

(from the article) “There is no major health system within your body or operation within your brain, that isn’t wonderfully enhanced by sleep when you get it, or demonstrably impaired when you don’t get enough.

Unfortunately, sleep is also not like the bank. Let’s say I deprive you of sleep for a night (eight hours) at my Center for Human Sleep Science. Then I give you all of the recovery sleep you want on a second or even third night. While you will sleep more on those nights, you will never claim back all that slumber that you lost. Indeed, you may claim back less than 50 per cent of that missing eight hours.

As a result, you will always carry that debt. In other words, you cannot accumulate a sleep debt during the week, and then hope to pay it off in full at the weekend. Try as you may, you can never get back all that you lost. Week after week, this sleep debt escalates, like compounding interest on an unpaid loan.

We should therefore think of sleep as the very best life- and health-insurance policy you could ever wish for. Thankfully, in terms of medical recommendations, it is largely painless, free, and available to pick up on repeat prescription each night, if you choose.

Sleep is the single most effective thing we do each day to reset the health of our brain and body. It’s an extraordinary elixir that can help you age well and live longer. Here’s what we know about Mother Nature’s cure-all...”

[\*keep reading...\*](#)

# Book Spotlight

## The Trump-Tell-All Final Parade of Shame



A wave of Trump horrifying Trump anecdotes hit the airwaves this month. It's not that he did anything new, it's that three new political tell-all books are about to hit the shelves. Trump himself has been a pathetic, doddering irrelevancy for over six months now, so one could easily ask why books about his alleged presidential misdeeds are any more relevant than he is. The answer, or at least our answer, is that though we were worried America was fast becoming a fascist hell-state, those were just suspicions. Everyone, even the most slavering critics, were just being naïve and these books show just how bad we were all underestimating the reality. As best we can tell no one of these books is 'better' than any other, but we thought we'd Spotlight them all just in case you wanted to confirm the latest story you heard on CNN.

### [“Frankly, We Did Win This Election”](#)



**Michael C. Bender, senior White House reporter for the Wall Street Journal**

*(from the publisher)* Beginning with President Trump's first impeachment and ending with his second, FRANKLY, WE DID WIN THIS ELECTION chronicles the inside-the-room deliberations between Trump and his campaign team as they opened 2020 with a sleek political operation built to harness a surge of momentum from a bullish economy, a unified Republican Party, and a string of domestic and foreign policy successes—only to watch everything unravel when fortunes suddenly turned.

### [“Landslide: The Final Days of the Trump Presidency”](#)



**Michael Wolff, author of “Fire and Fury”**

Wolff embedded himself in the White House in 2017 and gave us a vivid picture of the chaos that had descended on Washington. Almost four years later, Wolff finds the Oval Office even more chaotic and bizarre, a kind of Star Wars bar scene. At all times of the day, Trump, behind the Resolute desk, is surrounded by schemers and unqualified sycophants who spoon-feed him the “alternative facts” he hungers to hear—about COVID-19, Black Lives Matter protests, and, most of all, his chance of winning reelection. Once again, Wolff has gotten top-level access and takes us front row as Trump's circle of plotters whittles down to the most enabling and the president reaches beyond the

bounds of democracy as he entertains the idea of martial law and balks at calling off the insurrectionist mob that threatens the institution of democracy itself.

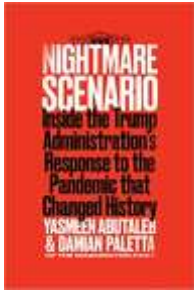
### [“I Alone Can Fix It: Donald J. Trump's Catastrophic Final Year”](#)



**Phil Rucker and Carol Leonnig, authors of “A Very Stable Genius”**

The true story of what took place in Donald Trump's White House during a disastrous 2020 has never before been told in full. What was really going on around the president, as the government failed to contain the coronavirus and over half a million Americans perished? Who was influencing Trump after he refused to concede an election he had clearly lost and spread lies about election fraud? To answer these questions, Phil Rucker and Carol Leonnig reveal a dysfunctional and bumbling presidency's inner workings in unprecedented, stunning detail.

## [“Nightmare Scenario: Inside the Trump Administration's Response to the Pandemic That Changed History”](#)



**Yasmeen Abutaleb & Damian Paletta, Washington Post reporters**

“Since the day Donald Trump was elected, his critics warned that an unexpected crisis would test the former reality-television host—and they predicted that the president would prove unable to meet the moment. In 2020, that crisis came to pass, with the outcomes more devastating and consequential than anyone dared to imagine. Nightmare Scenario is the complete story of Donald Trump’s handling—and mishandling—of the COVID-19 catastrophe, during the period of January 2020 up to Election Day that year. Yasmeen Abutaleb and Damian Paletta take us deep inside the White House, from the Situation Room to the Oval Office, to show how the members of the administration

launched an all-out war against the health agencies, doctors, and scientific communities, all in their futile attempts to wish away the worst global pandemic in a century.”

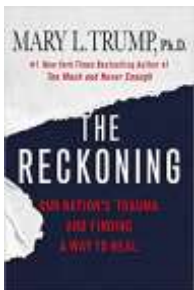
## [Betrayal: The Final Act of the Trump Show](#)



**Jonathan Karl, ABCNews Chief Washington Correspondent**

Nobody is in a better position to tell the story of the shocking final chapter of the Trump show than Jonathan Karl. As the reporter who has known Donald Trump longer than any other White House correspondent, Karl told the story of Trump’s rise in the New York Times bestseller Front Row at the Trump Show. Now he tells the story of Trump’s downfall, complete with riveting behind-the-scenes accounts of some of the darkest days in the history of the American presidency and packed with original reporting and on-the-record interviews with central figures in this drama who are telling their stories for the first time.

## [The Reckoning: Our Nation's Trauma and Finding a Way to Heal](#)



**Mary L. Trump, Donald Trump’s niece**

The Reckoning will examine America’s national trauma, rooted in our history but dramatically exacerbated by the impact of current events and the Trump administration’s corrupt and immoral policies. Our failure to acknowledge this trauma, let alone root it out, has allowed it to metastasize. Whether it manifests itself in rising levels of rage and hatred, or hopelessness and apathy, the stress of living in a country we no longer recognize has affected all of us. America is suffering from PTSD—a new leader alone cannot fix us.



# Department of Reality Studies

## Life in space, how to avoid science, and concrete batteries



“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. 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!

[Carbon-ring molecules tied to life were found in space for the first time](#), Lisa Grossman on ScienceNews.org, Mar 2021

Complex carbon-bearing molecules that could help explain how life got started have been identified in space for the first time. These molecules, called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, or PAHs, consist of several linked hexagonal rings of carbon with hydrogen atoms at the edges. Astronomers have suspected for decades that these molecules are abundant in space, but none had been directly spotted before.

Simpler molecules with a single ring of carbon have been seen before. But “we’re now excited to see that we’re able to detect these larger PAHs for the first time in space,” says astrochemist Brett McGuire of MIT, whose team reports the discovery in the March 19 Science. Studying these molecules and others like them could help scientists understand how the chemical precursors to life might get started in space. “Carbon is such a fundamental part of chemical reactions, especially reactions leading to life’s essential molecules,” McGuire says. “This is our window into a huge reservoir of them.”...

[Why I’m Inoculating My Kids Against The Dangers Of Scientific Evidence](#), Hannah Kane in McSweeney’s, Jul 2019

Hi, I’m Nancy, mother of five beautiful children, none of whom have stepped foot in a science classroom or seen a Bunsen burner in three years. I work every day to protect them from the harmful consequences of knowing too much about how things actually work. Some people downplay the risks of scientific knowledge, arguing that the benefits outweigh the costs. They make this claim based solely on the fact that science has led to important life-saving medical advances, revealed many wonders of the universe, and opened up vast new frontiers of human potential. But they are not considering the unintended negative side effects such as the possibility of learning something scary or feeling extremely overwhelmed...

[17-year-old makes color changing sutures that detect infection](#), Stephanie Sy on PBS NewsHour, Jul 2021

All over the world, infections in the place where surgical incisions are made are a major cause of new illnesses, extended hospital stays, and even death. In the U.S. alone, these infections cost more than \$3 billion annually. But in developing countries, those statistics are much worse. Stephanie Sy reports on one scientist who’s working on a more affordable way to detect these infections early. Healthy skin is naturally acidic, but if a surgical site gets infected, that acidity decreases. When that change happens, Taylor’s sutures go from a bright red to a grayish-purple color.

By the way, Taylor is only 17.

# 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!



## Here's what you're missing at the Olympics



Amid controversy and ceremony, the Tokyo Olympics opened this week. The Olympics are a showcase of the best of human potential and achievement, and though they're popular around the world, we have to admit our Your Car Matters staff probably won't be watching. Still, one Olympics piece caught our eye; [a magnificent article in the NY Times about Brooke Raboutou, a 20-year-old competing in the first-year Olympic sport of rock climbing](#). It's an amazing look into the sport, but even more amazing is the Times breakdown of Raboutou's skill and challenges in each of the three events. AMAZING video, well worth the watch even if you won't be watching the rest of the Olympics.

## It's Never Too Late Too Remember Donald Rumsfeld



June 29, 2021, was a big day in American Politics as Donald Henry Rumsfeld shuffled off his mortal coil. We didn't take the time to properly mark his passing then, but he's still dead so it's not too late. Partisans may prefer he be remembered for his charming "[knowns unknowns](#)" speech, but would prefer he be less-remembered for his less-charming shaping of American policy for over 40 years. It may be a rule not to speak ill of the dead, but that's a hard rule to follow when there's so much ill to speak of. You rightly skipped over the platitudes when he died, but slow down for these remembrances of the real Donald Rumsfeld, a guy who sent tens of thousands to the grave before him...

[Donald Rumsfeld obituary](#), Harold Jackson in The Guardian, Jun 2021

[Donald Rumsfeld Apparently Forgot the Times He Said the Iraq War Was Good for Democracy](#), Miles Johnson on Mother Jones, Jun 2015

[The Night Of The Generals](#), David Margolick in Vanity Fair, Sep 2013

Donald Rumsfeld, Killer of 400,000 People, Dies [Peacefully](#), Spencer Ackerman on The Daily Beast, Jul 2021

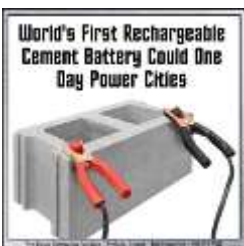
[Why do people hate Donald Rumsfeld?](#), Quora.com

[Rumsfeld's much-vaunted 'courage' was a smokescreen for lies, crime and death](#), Richard Wolffe in The Guardian, Jul 2021

['Iron-ass' Cheney and 'arrogant' Rumsfeld damaged America, says George Bush Sr](#), Claire Phipps on The Guardian, Nov 2015

[Donald Rumsfeld Was a Monster Only Washington Could Create](#), Branko Marcetic in Jacobin, Jul 2, 2021

## World's First Rechargeable Concrete Battery



*(from the ThomasNet article...)* "Researchers from Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden have created the first rechargeable cement battery. One day, the work could lead to large concrete buildings that store and deliver energy like giant municipal batteries. The cement batteries have an iron-coated carbon fiber mesh that acts as the anode layer on top of a conductive cement-based mixture sandwiched by a nickel-coated carbon-fiber mesh cathode layer. The team added a small amount of short, electroplated carbon fibers to the cement mix to make it conductive.

Research of concrete batteries is rare. The few previous efforts to make cement-based

batteries weren't rechargeable, and the output was meager. The applications are many, including powering LEDs, providing 4G connectivity in remote areas, and even supporting infrastructure monitoring systems. For example, they could use solar panels to power sensors used to detect cracking or corrosion..."

## Happy 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Drug War



Depending on where you start from, the War on Drugs started about 50-ish years ago. Sparked by nightmarish heroin addiction in our returning Vietnam veterans, the Drug War expanded to destroy lives, communities, futures, and respect for the rule of law across people of all races for decades. While most people can see some legitimate governmental interest in reducing drug dependence among its citizenry, few know (though many suspected all along) what a shallow, deceitful, and self-serving fig leaf for fascism the US Drug War actually was. John Erlichman laid it out in the clearest and most offensive terms possible, but others had something to say on it too. Let's take a brief look at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the

Drug War; America's longest war no matter what those amateurs in Afghanistan say!

"You want to know what this [war on drugs] was really all about? The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news." [John Ehrlichman, Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs under President Nixon](#)

[The failed legacy of the 50-year War on Drugs started with a lie](#), Alfred McCoy on TomDispatch, Jul 2021

[Was Nixon's war on drugs a racially motivated crusade? It's a bit more complicated](#), German Lopez on VOX, Mar 2016

[Fifty failed years later — it's time to end and dismantle the war on drugs](#), Emma Andersson and Grey Gardner in The Hill, Jun 17, 2021

[On 50th Anniversary of "War on Drugs," New Poll Shows Majority of Voters Support Ending Criminal Penalties for Drug Possession, Think Drug War is a Failure](#), Matt Sutton on DrugPolicy.org, Jun 2021

[After 50 Years Of The War On Drugs, 'What Good Is It Doing For Us?'](#), Brian Mann on NPR, Jun 2021

[War on Drugs](#), History.com editors on History.com, May 2017

[The war on drugs destroys communities of color — it's time for it to end](#), Adriana Vazquez in Rare, Jan 2018