

with inflation. It looks to me that "read my lips, no new taxes" has backfired. No president should be allowed to squander a U.S. budget surplus and get away with it.

There should be severe and costly penalties for leaving the United States in this kind of a mess.

ROBERT G. SCHULTZE, Riggins

U.S. needs bottom-up economic policies

For a long time, the United States has been dominated by a top-down mindset. The idea is that if we give tax breaks and other welfare to giant corporations, our economy will prosper — that enough crumbs will fall from the corporate table that the rest of us will do OK. It hasn't worked.

Too many Americans are losing ground. Many people working today make less, adjusted for inflation, than someone in the 1970s. People have compensated for this by: 1) working more hours; 2) women going to work; 3) borrowing (home equity loans and other debt). Each of these methods has reached its limit. And while the poor and middle class have hit the end of their rope, the wealthiest Americans grow fatter and the nation's economy is faltering.

It's time to change from the traditional Republican mindset of extreme reverence for the rich and powerful to the Democratic tradition of respect for the average person. We need to

or if your fog lights are not adjusted properly — when traveling on two lane roads, you could be doing something that is very dangerous.

My 3/4-ton Chevy pickup is 79 inches wide; the Kenworth is 105,500 pounds, 102 inches wide. That's 23 inches wider. You do the math.

Blinding a big rig is not a very smart thing to do.

ALAN LASSEN, Caldwell

THANKS

Catholic Charities helped in time of need

Thank goodness for kind-hearted people like Rosio Gonzalez, executive director of Catholic Charities of Idaho in Boise. I have a family member who is too poor to function with the normal health care system, whom I fought for for nearly two years. We have billion-dollar megasystems in our country, but we cannot take care of our own.

After losing hope after hope, we contacted St. Vincent de Paul of Boise. Coming into its simple, small office, we were met by two of the warmest angels on this planet, who seemed not to care about appearance, manner of speech or one's faith. Within two weeks, the matter was resolved, and my attitude toward Catholic Charities has changed dramatically.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God."

DIANE SOWER, Boise

lated to the dangers of secondhand smoke.

The campaign currently focuses on establishing "smoke free environments," which includes all indoor and public work places, including bars, stands, many restaurants and hours and bars do not have regulations on smoking in or around their properties, making secondhand smoke as it relates to smokers and employees an issue.

In an effort to put an end to secondhand smoke exposure in public places and working environments, Smoke-Free Boise is preparing a petition to bring before elected officials. The American Heart Association estimates that 35,052 nonsmokers will die each year from coronary heart disease as a result of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke. I strongly encourage all residents to support this movement led by Smoke-Free Boise and help make our city one of the healthiest in America.

JOSH WHEELER
Gold's Gym Treasurer

ENERGY

NASCAR can give boost to alternative energy

If we truly want to get out of our dependence on oil, I think the answer is to ban internal combustion engines from NASCAR.

Hold on — before you ask "What kind of stupid idea is this?" read on. I'm not tryin

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