

Opinion

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Studded tires have their place

From The (Bend) Bulletin:

Winter is coming, and even if it comes with warm El Nino weather conditions, roads will be slippery at times. The Oregon Department of Transportation knows that; it also knows how much damage studded tires do to the state's roads. It would like you to consider other options.

That's all well and good, as long as ODOT and the Legislature don't decide to join forces and simply outlaw studded tires or tax them. Despite the damage they do, studded tires remain a very good option for safe driving in icy conditions.

These days, there are alternatives, particularly if it's snow, not ice, that is your problem.

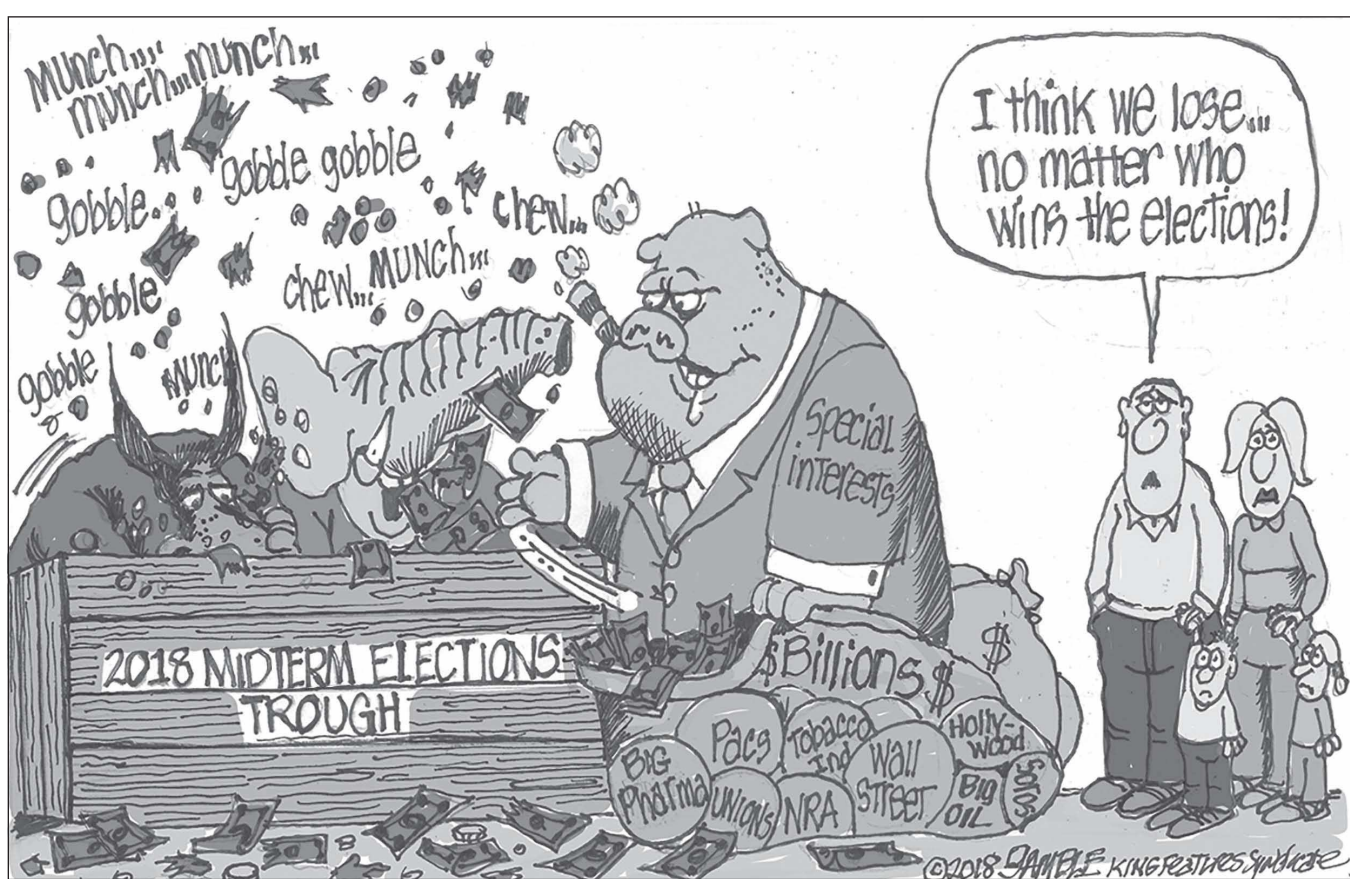
Old-fashioned snow tires are a good choice for all but the iciest conditions. They've been improved in recent years, and those marked with a mountain and snowflake symbol on the sidewall are not only designed differently than they used to be but use a tread compound that was designed to stay pliable in cold weather.

Another old-fashioned idea, chains, can be combined with all-weather tires if you want to avoid studded tires but know you'll be faced with driving on ice from time to time. Yes, chains are a hassle to use, but even they have improved over the years. They require slow driving, and you should practice putting them on well before you need them.

As for studded tires, which you may use legally until the end of March 2019, they do damage roads. The Oregon Department of Transportation estimates studs are responsible for about \$8.5 million of damage to state highways each year, and in a state that's had to scramble to find money for highway maintenance, that adds up.

Yet in some parts of the state and in some conditions, studs are still the best thing going.

That's a strong argument for continuing to allow the use of studs. Lawmakers really should ask themselves if the lives of one or two or 20 Oregonians are a reasonable price to pay for preventing some road damage.



Trump loves military from afar

JOHN M. CRISP

Andy Thomas's painting, "The Republican Club," achieved some notoriety recently when it was discovered hanging in a prominent location in the Trump White House. You've probably seen his kitschy rendering of nine Republican presidents — Reagan, the two Bushes, Lincoln, Eisenhower, Ford, Teddy Roosevelt, Nixon and Trump — huddling together for a drink and a few laughs.

Lesser-known Republicans of the past, such as Taft and Coolidge, appear less distinctly in the painting, but the focus is on the more recognizable presidents around the table in the foreground.

At the center of the group is President Donald Trump, portrayed as handsome, relaxed, convivial and extremely fit. Which probably explains why the painting is hanging in the White House.

Ordinary personalities might see a certain droll humor in such a painting, the kind found in the bullfight posters that you can buy in Mexico with your own name printed on the same cartel with two famous matadors. But this kind of self-deprecatory, ironic jest is lost on Trump, who has never been shy about comparing himself with the greatest presidents, including Washington and Lincoln.

But it took a few moments of staring at this portrayal of Trump among the presidents to realize that he is different from the rest in a significant way: All eight of the other presidents gathered around the table with Trump served their country in uniform.

At least four of them — Roosevelt,

Ford, Eisenhower and Bush Sr. — saw real combat. George H.W. Bush, shot down in the Pacific, is a true war hero.

The rest served in war, as well, including Lincoln, who volunteered during the Black Hawk War of 1832 and was promptly elected captain of his company.

Among the lesser-known Republican presidents, some of whom are in the painting's background, James Garfield was a major general in the Union Army; Rutherford B. Hayes was wounded five times in the Civil War; Chester Arthur served in the war, as well; Benjamin Harrison commanded men in combat in at least nine battles; William McKinley saw heavy combat at Antietam and elsewhere; and then there is Ulysses S. Grant.

Trump missed his generation's war — Vietnam — because of bone spurs and four college deferments. But my own four years as a humble enlisted man in the U.S. Navy suggest to me that the military might not have been a good fit for Trump. Military service, even in peacetime, requires a bit of selflessness and a dash of humility. It calls for a willingness to be part of a unit in service of a bigger cause, to take orders and to give up being the center of attention, all for comparatively modest pay. These are qualities that are hard to associate with Donald Trump.

Of course, military service isn't essential to good leadership, and our na-

tion has had good presidents who were never in the military.

But if Trump had left the real estate empire into which he was born long enough to serve in the military and perhaps even in Vietnam, he might be less casual about the use of force and less confident about its ability to solve complicated problems.

He might be less fond of military parades, less likely to deploy troops to the border, less likely to build up our nuclear forces and abrogate arms-limiting treaties. And he might be less inclined to threaten Korea and Iran with "fire and fury."

Trump once claimed that he knows "more than the generals." But few are more conservative about the use of force than generals and other soldiers who have actually been in combat. They understand that military power is a blunt instrument and that the consequences of its use are unpredictable, except for its one extremely predictable consequence: human suffering. They have seen the costs up close.

Now, unfortunately, the commander of the world's most powerful military never learned, neither from battle nor books, the limits and dangers of force that many of his predecessors understood from seeing war itself. That Trump is not awed by his awesome power is extremely dangerous.

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Letters to the editor

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Why the economy looks so bright

From The Chicago Tribune:

Remember the start to Donald Trump's presidency? Feels like a million years ago, and a million news cycles, we know. But on Jan. 23, 2017, his first work day in office, Trump made it clear that his Job One would be boosting economic growth. The president said he wanted to reduce the corporate tax rate and relieve the burden of federal regulation. Good, we wrote at the time: "Those are the kinds of moves that encourage companies to invest more and add jobs."

Trump and the Republican-controlled Congress did their part by cutting red tape and passing tax reform. The economy is responding. Actually, it's booming in a way Americans haven't experienced in years. The business climate looks great and employers are hiring, and paying more. These are terrific times for American workers.

According to Friday's Labor Department report, employers added

250,000 jobs in October, a far higher number than economists expected. The unemployment rate held at 3.7 percent, a figure not seen in nearly 50 years. With more job openings across the country than job seekers, wages are rising: Average earnings increased 3.1 percent from a year earlier. Congrats if you got a raise.

The jobless rate would have dropped, except that the participation rate is higher, meaning some people who previously gave up looking for work re-entered the job market. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate for Hispanics hit a record low 4.4 percent. It was near a record low for African-Americans at 6.2 percent.

Employers are hiring for a reason: The business climate is exceptionally strong. Growth last quarter was 3.5 percent, significantly higher than the 2 percent average of the past decade.

Tuesday's midterm elections will be decided on many issues, and

influenced by the totality of Trump's chaotic, divisive leadership. But it's undeniable the president and Congress get credit for this era of healthy job growth. This is why we endorsed several Illinois Republicans seeking re-election to the U.S. House, including Rep. Peter Roskam in the 6th Congressional District and Rep. Randy Hultgren in the 14th District. They supported tax reform. Roskam was one of the architects.

There are plenty of measures of American satisfaction and security, but having a job is fundamentally important. Growth creates prosperity. And by the way, employees pay taxes. Sustaining this growth is the only option besides higher taxes for generating government revenue to help reduce the national debt of \$21 trillion. That revenue also will help pay for tax reform, which fixed the outdated tax code.

In other words, everything positive starts with jobs.