

## GUEST EDITORIAL

### THE ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD Cats and dogs run rampant in Legislature

It's early in the legislative session, which means it's time for what legislators like to call "cats and dogs" — bills on matters that are somewhat less weighty than measures to, say, balance the state's budget. These cats and dogs scurry around underfoot in the state Capitol until somebody spays or neuters them.

One surprise in this year's batch of cats and dogs is that many of them involve actual cats and dogs.

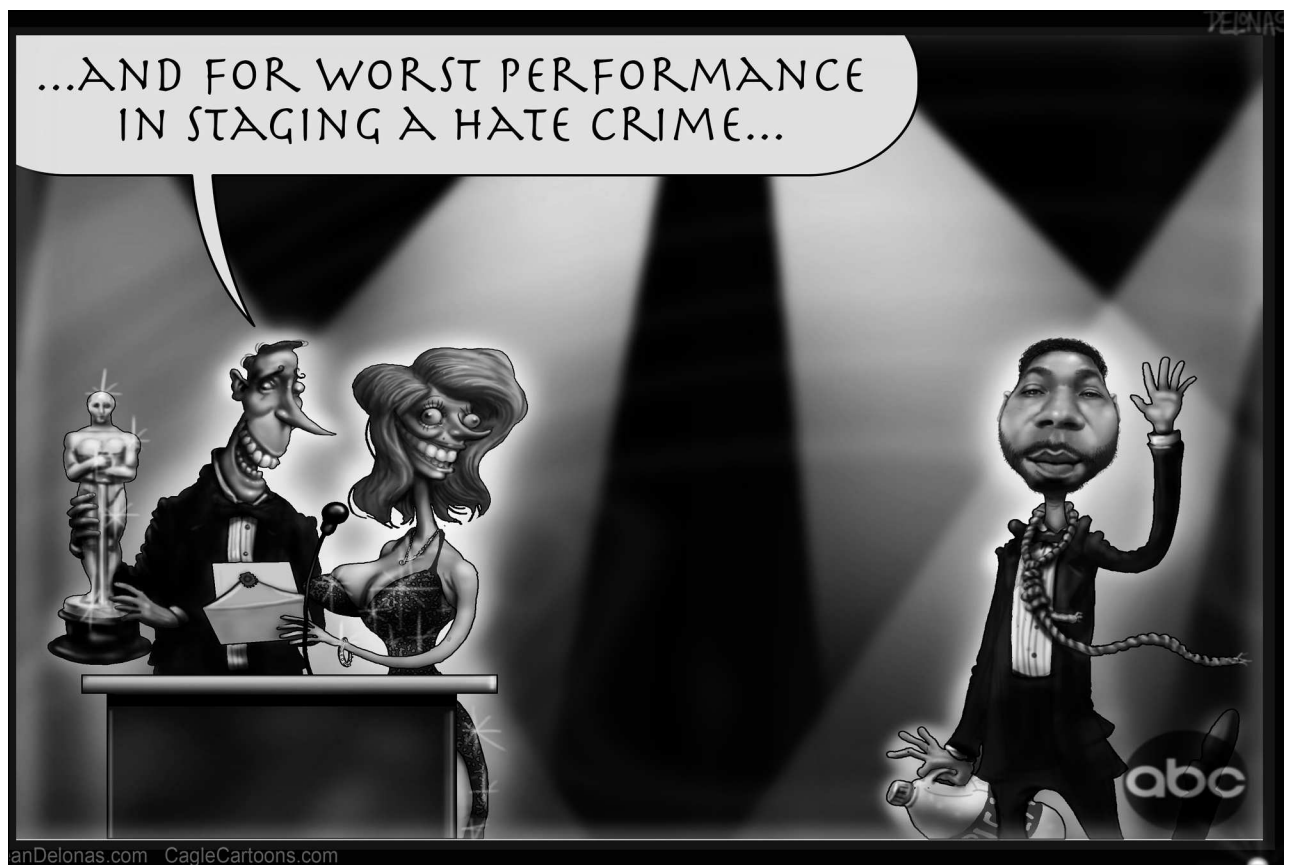
Take a gander at these (we're indebted to The Oregonian, which herded some of these critters into a readable list):

- House Bill 2683 would prohibit landlords who allow pets from charging tenants additional rent or fees based on possession of pets. Our hunch here is the bill would be counterproductive, in that landlords overall would become somewhat less likely to allow pets in the first place.

- House Bill 2758 would make it a crime, punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, to misrepresent an animal as an assistance animal in hopes of bringing the animal into a place of public accommodation. We have noticed an increase in the number of these assistance animals, but it never had occurred to us that some of them might not be officially sanctioned.

- House Concurrent Resolution 7 would designate the border collie as the state's official dog. The resolution makes a strong case for the border collie, citing the breed's intelligence and unstoppable work ethic. Although no one has anything bad to say about border collies, this is the kind of measure that can draw some controversy. Just ask Sen. Fred Girod of Stayton, who got into a fight in 2017 over a proposal to designate the osprey the state bird, which would have deposed the western meadowlark. Eventually, though, a measure to name the osprey the official state raptor passed the Legislature.

- House Concurrent Resolution 12 would designate rescued shelter dogs and cats as the "official state pet." Rep. Dan Rayfield of Corvallis is among the 21 listed sponsors of this resolution, which should have a good chance of passing, even though the measure's language sometimes lays it on a little thick: At one point, it states "like Oregonians, shelter dogs and cats are eager to leave their indoor confines and join their friends in the freedom, beauty and adventure of Oregon's great outdoors." Well, we can't speak for those rescue dogs, but we do know one of our rescue cats has positioned herself right above a heat vent in the house and shows no signs of moving until May.



## Your views

### Swart: Language can augment the divisions among us

To the Editor:

Yes, the country is divided; and yes, we should work together in a bipartisan way; and yes, we need to be willing to compromise. One thing we all agree upon is that we are divided and we should work together and compromise. The trouble is we seem to have no idea what it means to "work together and compromise." Just to make sure, I checked three different dictionaries, and they all say "compromise is a settlement in which each side makes concessions."

To be clear, the dictionaries do not say, "Compromise means we meet and I convince you to agree with me." They

do not mean "Let's get together and choose my way of thinking." Compromise does mean getting together and finding a way we can agree on some things, each side getting a little and each side giving up a little.

I want to go a little further in linguistics to suggest that the words we are using currently are causing a lot of the trouble and keeping us from getting together. Take the word "hate." It is being used to confuse "disagreement" with "hatred." I believe most of us in most circumstances could use other words instead of "hate." How about trying a few substitutions, such as disagree, misunderstand, wrong, conflicting, differ, disapprove, unwilling, and contrary. If you disagree with me, it is not

necessary to hate me, is it? And please do not accuse me of hating someone because I disagree with them.

Labels are other words that cause problems when talking about politics. I would do away with using "left" and "right" as well as terms such as "conservative" and "progressive" or "liberal." These words are intended to describe every single person you put under that label. It would be better to have true discussions about what we believe and why we as individuals have those beliefs. Do not tell me you are a Democrat or a Republican. Instead, tell me your own ideas, beliefs, opinions and your reasons for them.

Let's be careful with our language, because

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our language is augmenting the divisions among us.

Evelyn Swart Joseph

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