

Balance is important, even if it's unpopular

Gov. Kate Brown's nomination of Enterprise rancher and big game hunter James Nash to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission shouldn't have been controversial.

Far from it, in fact. Vibrant and varied engagement in the lawmaking process has always been critical to the success of democracy. But it only works when those fostering such a venue exercise the virtue and integrity demanded of this ideological hallowed ground.

Instead, Nash's nomination was rejected by the Senate in response to complaints by environmental groups.

The opposition to Nash's appointment — which came loud and fast — stemmed neither from incompetence or a lack of prudential judgment. Nash's evident qualifications generated fear among his ideological opponents.

From a young age, Nash always led by the example of his convictions. Convictions not crafted by political expediency but informed by genuine reverence for the terrain of Eastern Oregon and all that comes with it.

Defined by courage, leadership and fierce passion for the natural environment that shaped his character, Nash's qualifications, evidenced by a lifetime of experience, speak for themselves.

But his nomination nonetheless enraged conservationists whose environmental policy is to give no quarter and offer no compromise when it comes to the state they believe is wholly theirs. Steve Pedery, the director of Oregon Wild, levied what surely was the most devastating put-down he could muster — he compared Brown to President Trump.

We struggle to follow the analogy, as the nomination represented a willingness on the governor's part to engage with ideological opponents and offer a seat at the table where actual policy is debated and crafted.

The environmental groups also objected to appointees Robert Spelbrink, a retired fisherman from Siletz, and Mark Labhart, a retired state forester and Tillamook County commissioner, though with less vitriol. And the groups have said they plan to run attack ads

against Brown for suggesting a commission with balanced membership.

Their argument is that Brown is unwilling to pursue the aggressive environmental policies that she affirmed during the campaign and is more interested in placating rural Democrats whose votes she will need to fulfill other legislative goals. Even if that is Brown's only motivation, it's how a state should be governed. If Oregon Wild and the other seven groups who opposed the nomination were in charge, their decisions wouldn't come close to representing all Oregonians.

Nash's biggest liability was a social media trail of big game hunting photos depicting him standing over slain hippos, crocodiles and, most notably, wolves. But the truth is, no matter how reprehensible hunting may be to some, it's a big part of life for many of us. Bringing that viewpoint into the discussion on wolves is essential, as long as the everyone is willing to work together.

Oregon can't afford to emulate the disturbing national trend of blind and automatic dismissal of opposing viewpoints. The politically cheap attempt to discredit a combat veteran with a profound understanding of wildlife management is a disgrace not only to Nash but a slap in the face to Gov. Brown's judgment and a declaration of war against both fact and the diversity so critical to effective decision-making at any level of government.

Conjuring a false narrative of a combat veteran like Nash is not only negligent, it's a shameful waste of a rare asset within Oregon's political climate. Nash came to the table equipped with both the intangible and tangible assets essential to his proposed role. He's hardly a political ally of Gov. Brown, but should have been respected across the political spectrum.

Nash's reverence and passion for wildlife management and the protection of natural order was matched by his dedication to the rule of law. His intellect was outshined only by his prudential judgment, integrity and enthusiasm for the natural world.

To allow political stunts to prevent diverse voices in the political process is a loss for Oregon.



FARMER'S FATE

Inflation and the Tibetan memory trick

Late Thursday evening, I receive a text message from my dad.

"So I signed us up to do something at a talent show this Sunday afternoon and then I forgot all about it. Would you be able to do something?"

"Sure," I responded. Who needs talent or practice to sign up for a talent show? Without more than a few texts, "Up next, Steve and Brianna Walker ..."

My dad and I gave each other "here goes nothing" looks, and we stepped out into the spotlight, carrying chairs for a pretend car, having not once rehearsed.

"Can you believe the price of fuel?" he asked as we drove our imaginary car into a gas station. "Everything just keeps going up: fuel, mortgages, the scales..." he paused. "Everything except language."

"How's that?" I questioned.

"Well," he continued, "inflation affects everything else. Why not numbers? Tuesday would become THREEsday. Forgive — FIVE-give. Tulips — THREE-lips and so on and so FIFTH?"

"I could make a great (er, gr-NINE) story with that!" I grabbed a notebook and began scribbling furiously while my dad continued throwing out inflated phrases: Behind the NINE ball. On cloud TEN. EIGHTH Heaven. FOUR Dog Night. The SECOND Noel. TRIPLED over with laughter. Stand at at-ELEVEN-tion.

"Finished!" I shout. "Wanna hear?"

TWICE upon a time, there was a farmer. His FIVE-fathers had farmed in ELEVEN-nessee, but since you're only young TWICE, he decided THREE go FIFTH and seek his FIVE-tune in Cali-FIVE-nia."

"THREE-da-loo, THREE-da-loo," his mother called after him as he set off FIVE the wild blue yonder. He didn't believe in Dolly Parton's "Working 10-6," he was more of a Beatles' "NINE Days a Week" kind of guy, so be-FIVE long, he had cre-NINE-d himself a



Brianna Walker

TWO-derful little farm. He had worked long and hard and now had several PENTA-track tractors that he mounted his bale-FIVE-k on. He also had a hyster FIVE-klift,

a TRI-cicle built for THREE and even an orange-beaked THREE-can. It was now time FIVE him to get a wife.

He rubbed his FIVE-head. "How THREE best go about this?" he TWO-dered. Well, SECOND, TWO can't think str-NINE on an empty stomach, so he pulled his NINE-TEEN-wheeler in-THREE the little 8-12 on the corner.

Standing in line FIVE an 8-up and a marin-NINE-d THREE-na fish sandwich, he

separ-NINE ways.

But how would it end? Should the farmer find a TWO-derful girl with THREE eyes the color of blue waterfalls sitting in a diner eating thousand AND ONE island dressing while reading a book of poetry by Lord Alfred ELEVEN-yson?

Or should the Lieu-ELEVEN-ant be a THREE-faced, TRIPLE-crosser and the men have to fight a TRIPLE, or maybe a little taek-TWO-do action THREE see who will win her heart? This back and FIFTH would continue until she shouts, "You lads are both DOUBLE-minded, and my women's in-THREE-ition says you THREE don't have the DOLLARS God gave a flea! Your elev-NINE-rs don't go all the way up!"

Perhaps I should stop be-FIVE another TWO bites the dust?

My dad rolled his eyes at me, fascin-NINE-ted. "You know you can also inflate birds," he says.

Now it was my turn to question — "Birds?"

"Yup, it's called the Tibetan memory trick. You have to repeat after me as

fast as you can. One hen—" "One hen," I said, slowly, questioningly.

"One hen. Two duck. Three squawking geese."

I look dubious, but tried keeping up with him as he continued on faster and faster.

One hen; two duck; three squawking geese; four lim-erick oysters; five corpulent porpoises; six pairs of Don Alverzo's tweezers; seven thousand Macedonians in full battle array; eight brass monkeys from the ancient sacred crypts of Egypt; nine apathetic, sympathetic, diabetic old men on roller skates with a marked propensity toward procrastination and sloth; ten lyrical, spherical, diabolical denizens of the deep who haul quay around the quo of the Quivie of the quarry all at the same time!

Out of breath, and out of talent, we took our unrehearsed, magnifi-DOLLAR Tibetan memory trick off the stage and home to recuper-NINE!

"SO I SIGNED US UP TO DO SOMETHING AT A TALENT SHOW THIS SUNDAY AFTERNOON AND THEN I FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT. WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING? 'SURE,' I RESPONDED. WHO NEEDS TALENT OR PRACTICE TO SIGN UP FOR A TALENT SHOW? WITHOUT MORE THAN A FEW TEXTS, 'UP NEXT, STEVE AND BRIANNA WALKER ...'"

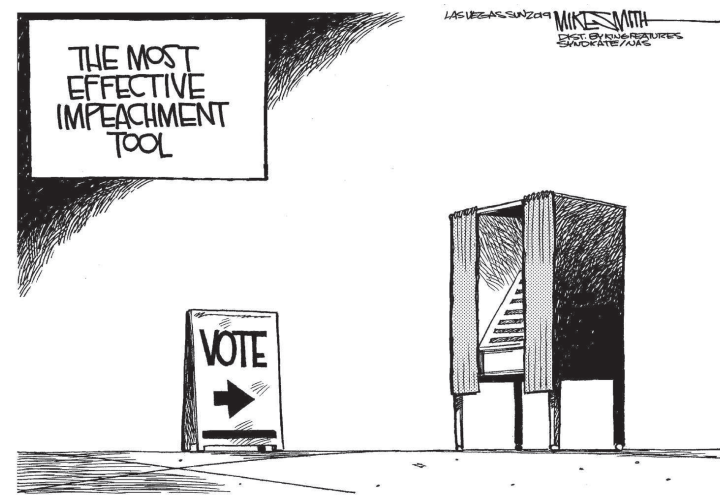
met a Lieu-ELEVEN-ant from the nearby air-FIVE's base. The Lieu-ELEVEN-ant gave the young farmer the TWICE-over before introducing himself as Don-TWO as he str-NINE-tened his THREE-pee.

"Why does your consti-THREE-tion look so down?" the Lieu-ELEVEN-ant asked the farmer.

So the farmer spilled out his sad story about cre-NINE-ing the perfect farm, but still sleeping DOUBLE in a TRIPLE bed.

Don-TWO said he would be more than happy to help teach the farmer the ba-SEVEN of d-NINE-ing.

"SECOND," he said, "you must get yourself a FOUR-piece suit and learn THREE play an instrument. Women love the THREE-ba," he suggested, "or maybe the QUAD-rangle. You just need to get your hands on Love Potion No. 10. The men gave each other high-SIX-es and agreed to stay in touch be-FIVE going their own



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Publisher.....Chris Rush, crush@emediagroup.com
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Reporter.....Richard Hanners, rick@bmeagle.com
Community News.....Angel Carpenter, angel@bmeagle.com
Sports.....Angel Carpenter, angel@bmeagle.com
Marketing Rep.....Kim Kell, ads@bmeagle.com
Administrative Assistant.....Makenna Adair, office@bmeagle.com
Office Assistant.....Alexandra Hand, office@bmeagle.com

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