

OUR VIEW

Virus isn't a political entity

You can see them only with a microscope. Viruses are essentially an assortment of genetic code encased in a coat of protein. Viruses infect cells, hijack the machinery of the cell and make more copies of themselves.

A virus can't vote. Viruses — as far as we know — don't belong to any American political party. They can't use Twitter or Facebook or Snapchat.

A decade ago — even two years ago — the concept that a collection of genetic code could become politicized and used by any number of different special interest groups would have seemed, if impossible, then certainly absurd.

Yet, here we are.

During the past week a string of county sheriffs across the state have issued missives regarding how they will not enforce mandates from Gov. Kate Brown regarding some aspect of her COVID-19 restrictions. The assorted epistles were issued even though Brown, as far as we know, never directed any county sheriff to enforce any type of COVID-19 mandate.

But the communiqués from the sheriffs continue an ongoing, deep distrust of authority by many Americans and Oregonians that is as American as baseball and apple pie.

Part of the American ethos revolves around distrusting government — in any form — and just as important to our national collective consciousness is the concept of individual rights.

Those two elements of our nature — coupled with false information — have combined to create a situation where a microscopic virus has become a politicized issue, not much different than health care, the economy and foreign policy.

Perhaps it was inevitable. Hard to say.

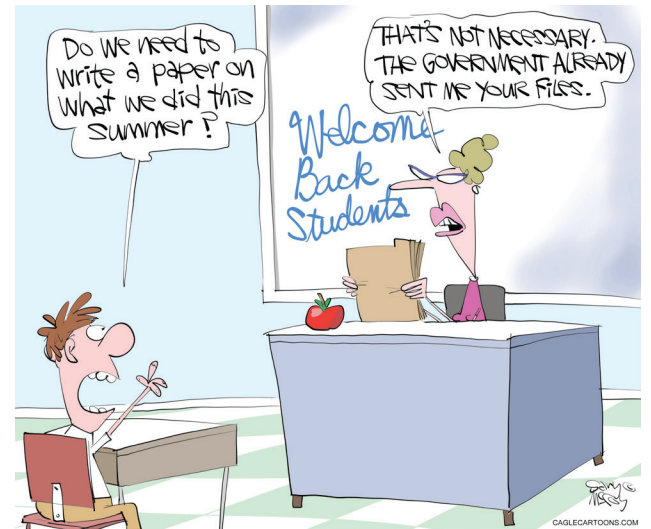
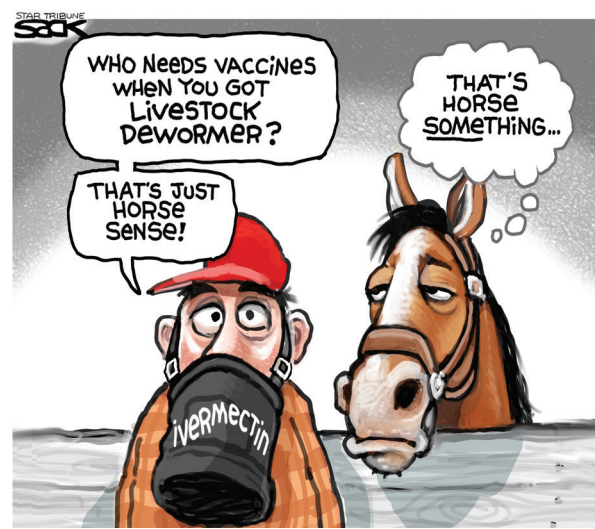
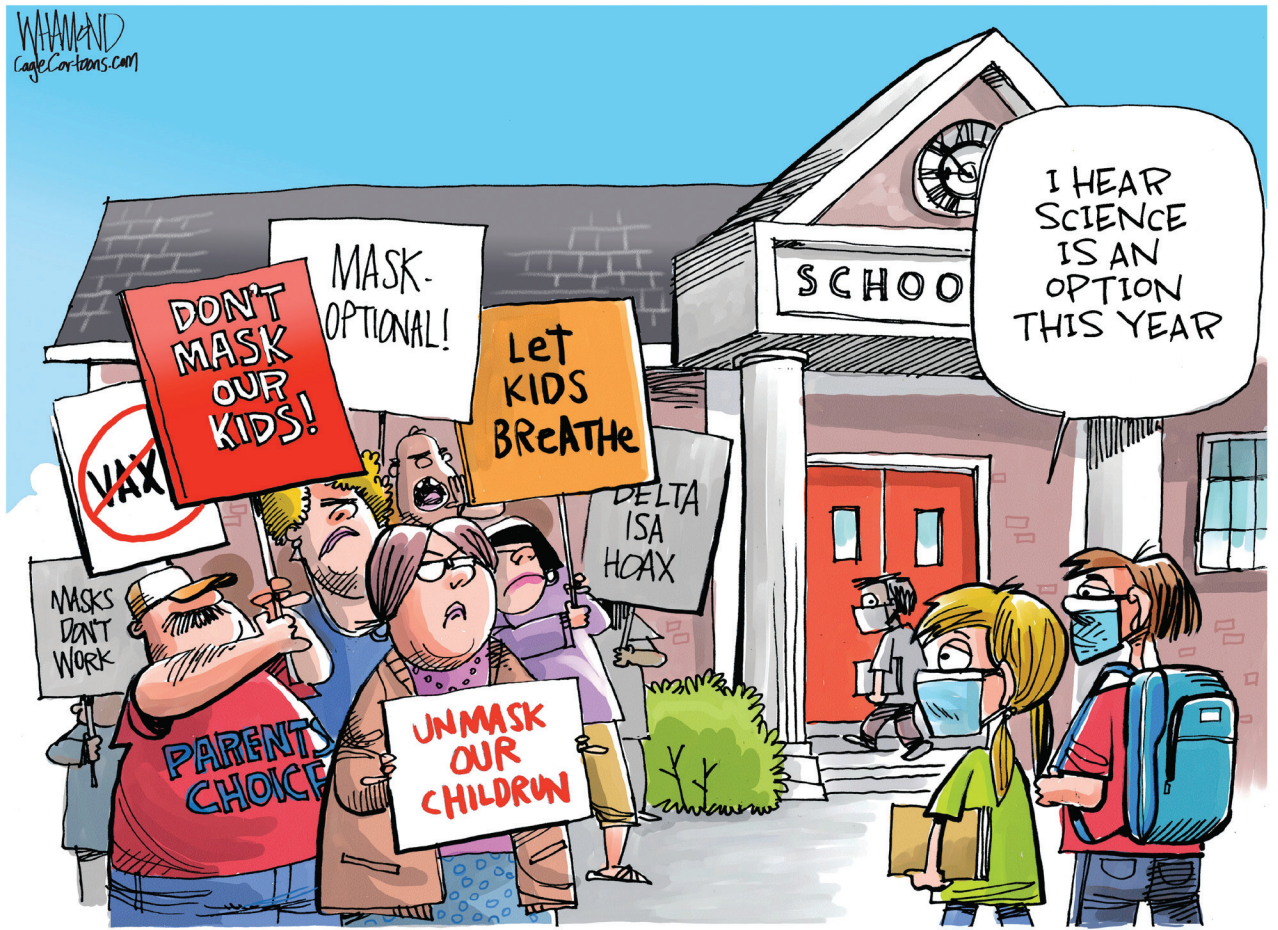
The nation, the state, the community have spent a large amount of time focusing on the political aspects of the virus and it is time to start asking different questions and do a focus check.

The task at hand is a COVID-19 pandemic that is, in many cases, deadly and spreads easily and rapidly. The second issue is the capability of our entire medical system to respond to a pandemic, whether it is COVID-19 or some other pathogen.

Hospitals are, indeed, becoming packed with COVID-19 cases. They are running out of room. The key question should be — and until now hasn't been — why?

It will seem at first glance to have an easy answer — because there are not enough beds. Why?

If one does not want to be vaccinated then that is one's choice, but the emphasis now must be on how to stop the pandemic, not politicizing it. It's a virus. Not a political entity.



LETTERS

This virus is no joke

Cody Bowen, your position is more of a law enforcement position than speaking for everyone in Union County. You are elected into that position and can have a prospective recall petition filed for your public office. This isn't where you can make wild false accusations about the accurate current state of public health and safety, which you are meant to uphold requests by law and ordinance through the position elected into. What you can do and should do is support the medical staff as they are on the frontline of this fight. Not you, not yet, and certainly not speaking for all of Union County.

Cody, please let us all know when you have received a medical degree, one of many that allow you to stand up for our so-called injustices in mask-wearing. Mask-wearing is far from an injustice. What is an injustice is the fact that some families have gone without their parents, grandparents, etc., because they decided not to wear a mask or get vaccinated, and unfortunately those persons lost their lives with new variants.

My fellow brothers and sisters in blue, I truly have the most love and appreciation for what you all do on any given day. You put yourselves out there with your vests, duty belts and gear, and taking care of things so we can rest peacefully. You all have such a fight on your hands. I hear what some of my brothers and sisters in blue are going through in other states.

Here is what I have an issue with: When I went into law enforcement we had to make certain our vaccinations were current with the requirements of the department, and the same goes for

our military personnel. So what makes this any different for you, Cody, or anyone else when we are trying to preserve what we have left?

Union County, I have already heard so very many medical personnel state that "this virus is no joke." Please, please take care of yourself.

Jeanmarie Warren
Elgin

Sheriff's letter to governor is misleading and reckless

Regarding recent letter from the Union County Sheriff to the governor of Oregon, I applaud the first 11 words but would like a public retraction of the remainder of the letter. I found it to be nothing more than a thinly veiled political statement given at the expense of the health and well-being of the citizens of Union County. The letter reads like a transcript from a local radio talk show (these are for entertainment only, not to be taken seriously).

Lacking any apparent corroboration with local health officials, this letter proclaiming a "line in the sand" from the people of Union County is misleading, divisive and reckless.

I expect elected officials to adhere to acceptable standards of behavior and make use of reasonable protocols to assess risks to public health and safety. Appropriate action by officials during a crisis can inspire young leaders and instill confidence in our government (lacking in today's environment). Future generations will be facing many challenges for Oregon in the near future and we need to do our part to provide a functioning government.

For me this letter raises serious doubt about the sheriff's loyalties to the best interests of the people of Union County and also his ability to prioritize issues without a political bias. I would like to see an accounting of the rationale for issuing this statement at this time in the midst of a resurgence of COVID-19 and the county and state medical facilities being strained.

Chuck LeBold
Union

Controlling disease is about science, not politics

Vaccine shots have been one of the world's greatest scientific accomplishments. Here are several diseases that vaccine shots have controlled or eliminated: polio, tetanus, measles, common flu, hepatitis A and B, whooping cough (pertussis), smallpox, chickenpox, diphtheria, mumps, hives, and the list goes on. Millions of people have had a shot for shingles and pneumonia. There is a history that you can read on each of these diseases.

The COVID vaccine and wearing a mask to prevent this disease and sickness/death have been proven. You probably had a DPT shot (diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus) right after you were born.

The recent Observer letter from Krisandra Kellogg was great reading, and I hope thousands read it. Her statements on Sheriff Cody Bowen were so true. He is speaking for himself and not the public. He has some backers that elected him. He does not have the background to make the statements he does.

His statements and wishes are political and made for reelection.

Gary L. Feasel
La Grande

LETTERS

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