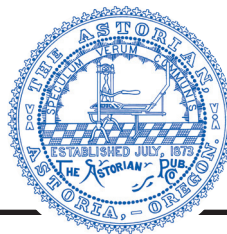


# OPINION

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# the Astorian

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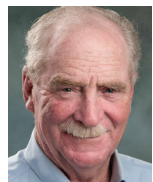
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## GUEST COLUMN

# Getting answers to my virus questions

Since the guest column I wrote for The Astorian about my time in quarantine for the coronavirus, I have been peppered with questions by the people I meet.

I decided to reach out to Ellen Heintz, a naturopathic physician and Clatsop County's community health project manager, for answers to the most frequently asked questions.



**PETER ROSCOE**

**Q: Am I going to be retested? Why or why not?**

**A:** Retesting is not generally recommended after a person has recovered from coronavirus.

The polymerase chain reaction (PCR) nucleic acid amplification test that is considered the "gold standard" tests for the presence of viral DNA.

Unfortunately, live virus and dead virus both have DNA. What studies have shown thus far is that once a person acquires COVID-19 the vast majority are not infectious after 10 days.

Unfortunately, people can test positive weeks after the onset of the infection, however, this is dead virus being shed from the body, not virus that can make others sick. If our standard is to have two PCR tests, 24 hours apart that are both negative, some people wouldn't be back to work for weeks, even though they were not infectious.

The test cost is \$100 per test, so this could be very expensive if people had to have multiple tests before they tested negative.

**Q: Did your wife get tested? Why or why not?**

**A:** People who are contacts to positive cases are not required to be tested. The reason is the timing of when to test



Associated Press

**Retesting is not generally recommended after recovery from the coronavirus.**

can be tricky.

Generally, people who are asymptomatic test negative for the virus. There is a much higher percentage of positive tests in people who have developed symptoms. If we test too early the test can be negative, but then the person can develop symptoms in a couple of days and be positive. Meanwhile, they would have a false sense of security that they were negative.

People can develop an infection from being in contact with someone who is positive for COVID-19 up to two weeks after the contact. Hence the two-week quarantine requirement.

This is why the Public Health Department calls contacts every day to see if they developed symptoms. If they do, we get them tested. If not, they are safe to leave quarantine after two weeks and there is almost no chance of them being infectious even if they had an asymptomatic case.

**Q: Since you are past your quaran-**

**time are you immune?**

**A:** Not necessarily. This is an area we definitely need more research in.

Right now, it looks like neutralizing antibody levels fall within a matter of weeks after an infection. There are some T memory cells which remain and can help increase antibodies in the event of another infection, however, other studies show that a COVID-19 infection can suppress T cells.

All that to say, no one knows yet if someone who had the infection is immune.

It also appears from research that people who experience mild or asymptomatic infections have lower antibody levels that fall very quickly. So, the milder the infection, the less immunity it confers.

Unfortunately, Peter, we don't know if you are immune. That means that people must take precautions to avoid catching the infection in the future.

**Q: Will you have an antibody test**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Authoritarianism

Dear Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici, Gov. Kate Brown and Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum:

The events of the last several days in Portland further demonstrate the Trump administration's embrace of authoritarianism. This aggressive federal campaign to detain protesters and suppress protests violates the U.S. Constitution. These federal policing actions in Portland are political theater designed to serve the reelection campaign, not the rule of law.

Indivisible North Coast Oregon (INCO), a grassroots group based in Clatsop County, applauds your work to stop this abuse of power, and to hold President Donald Trump, Attorney General William Barr and other federal employees accountable.

Our mission is to defend democracy by opposing authoritarianism, bigotry and corruption. We condemn Trump's use of federal law, policy and power to further his own personal and ideological agenda.

We believe the Wyden-Merkley amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act, and Oregon's lawsuit against the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies, are important and essential first steps. We hope you and your colleagues throughout the U.S. will work to stop these obscene and illegal actions. America must reject government storm troopers.

As historian Timothy Snyder writes in "On Tyranny": "Institutions do not protect themselves. They fall one after the other unless each is defended from the beginning." We cannot allow Trump and his administration to endanger political opponents and make political opposition impossible.

Thank you for your work to protect all of us and to defend the U.S. Constitution.

LAURIE CAPLAN

TRACY ABEL

BEEB ASHCROFT

LAURA ALLEN

MARY BETH COTTLE

ERIC HALPERIN

CARMEN HAMMERSMITH

KATHLEEN MACDONALD

BEBE MICHEL

MONICA PEARSON

KEN POTTER

DEB VANASSE

Indivisible North Coast Oregon

### Mob rule

Regarding the editorial "We should demand that they stop," (The Astorian, July 21) and the claim that we, as citizens, should demand that the federal agents be withdrawn from Portland:

This opinion seems to fall in line with

the popular belief that the anarchists' actions are simply being overblown by those on the right and Fox News. As a person who splits his time between our homes in Warrenton and Portland, I have witnessed a once-beautiful city on the verge of looking like San Francisco or Los Angeles.

Over 50 nights of violence, graffiti sprayed everywhere and the overall general fear that the antifa uses to keep the taxpaying citizens out of their own downtown area — and I haven't even touched on the hundreds of businesses that have simply boarded up their businesses and quit. Will these "hardworking" antifa thugs make up the large tax base now lost? Well, I kind of doubt it.

Finally, you may have noticed I refrained from using the word "protesters" ... well, for good reason. That ship sailed weeks ago. Yes, there still are peaceful protests happening, but I am not referring to those. The terror and destruction that is happening in Portland, Seattle and other major cities are not protests; this is a concerted effort to destroy our way of life, and to do away with capitalist democracy, all by mob rule.

If local leaders are not going to make any attempt to stop it, it falls on the federal government to protect citizens and their property.

JEFF BRYANT  
Portland/Warrenton

### Stigmatism

For years, as a clinician, I've been frustrated by how society addresses mental illness and substance abuse, and the lack of progress made. Advances in psychotherapy and medication have had little impact.

Two reasons, of many, are the issues of stigma and the poor understanding of the dynamics involved. Stigma is so pervasive in society. We're blind to it, and it makes mental illness and substance abuse so reprehensible no one wants to be associated with either, let alone admit to being one. This goes for family, friends and many treatment professionals.

The stigma of substance abuse is so negative most would prefer a diagnosis of mental illness instead. Certain attitudes, theories and treatment regimens make it difficult — if not impossible — to effectively treat either disorder, especially since they most often co-occur. Some professionals give inconsistent and conflicting advice, which confuse and unknowingly enable substance use.

Unless we learn to destigmatize both, we'll struggle and fail in reducing their presence. Stigma motivates people to work hard on finding less offensive causes (usually wrong), for mental illness and substance abuse. What we resist will persist. Before we can achieve a better under-



standing and create more effective strategies in treating mental illness and substance abuse, we must learn to feel more comfortable in how we view them. The above may offend some, but I ask: Why is it that 95% of addicts don't believe they have a problem, or only 1% to 3% of them ever get help? Do cancer patients typically behave this way?

BRENTON KAHLE  
Astoria

### Stand up

The Oregon Department of Forestry has been working on a Habitat Conservation Plan for several years now. This plan, if approved, sets forth a new pathway for state forest management. Elected officials of Clatsop County should be monitoring the plan carefully, as all management of state forestlands in our county is critical.

A Habitat Conservation Plan is a federally approved plan that places agreed upon conservation areas in places where wildlife is either known to exist, or could likely exist. All other acres are available for harvest — but still have a strict set of protections such as stream buffers, wildlife trees, etc.

It has been said that 50% of our state forest will be in a conservation zone, which would result in less harvest on our forest. Clatsop County schools, fire departments and at least 10 other taxing districts all receive money from harvests on state forests.

During a time where jobs have been lost, and communities are looking to keep people employed the best they can, it is imperative that county leaders make sure they stand up for a state forest management plan that does not place environmen-

**and what will that show?**

**A:** Currently, the antibody tests are qualitative. That means that they show if you have antibodies present, but they don't show how high your antibody level is.

This kind of test is one that the answer is a "yes" or "no" — yes, you have some antibodies, or no, you do not. It isn't a quantitative test that shows how high your level of antibody is.

Studies have not proven how high an antibody level needs to be to confer immunity. A good analogy is a pregnancy test. The home pregnancy test shows if you are pregnant or not. The blood test you can receive at a doctor's office shows how high your level of human chorionic gonadotropin (HCG) is and therefore if the pregnancy is progressing normally.

The current antibody tests are also not very specific. They only have to be 90% specific to be approved by the Food and Drug Administration, which is really low for a medical test. That means that 90% of the time when they are positive it is because you have antibodies to COVID-19, but 10% of the time they are positive because of antibodies to something else.

For instance, some of the viral infections that we think of as the common cold are caused by mild coronaviruses which could cause a false positive test. Then people might think they have immunity to COVID-19 when they don't.

Hopefully, antibody testing will improve in the future, and enough research can be done to determine what level of antibodies is necessary for a people to have immunity.

Peter Roscoe is the former owner of Fulio's and served on the Astoria City Council.

tal protections over protections of people and jobs.

JENNY JOHNSON  
Astoria

### All lives matter

Of course all lives matter. That much should be self-evident. So what is the problem? Consider this proposition in a setting that is not an emotional one for us: The question of equality for women in a country like Saudi Arabia.

Liberals in this hypothetical country came up with a slogan, "equality for women," which was an embarrassment for the government. The government, in turn, came up with a counterslogan "equality for all."

It was hard to argue against the obvious sense of this new slogan, which neatly sidestepped the fact that it was women, and not men, who were not treated as equals. With this new slogan, the government took the moral high ground, but it also allowed it to continue treating women as second-class citizens.

In the same way, "all lives matter" avoids confronting the reality that in many instances in the past and present, Black lives do not seem to matter as much as white lives. That justice is not the same for Blacks as it is for whites. It echoes the declaration that, "all men are created equal," which, at the time, specifically excluded Black men.

We need to keep insisting that "Black lives" be made part of "all lives matter." If we continue to do so, hopefully a time might be reached when we can proudly proclaim, "all lives actually do matter."

JOHN ROGAN  
Tillamook