

OUR VIEW

Virus isn't a political entity

You can only see them with a microscope.

Viruses are essentially an assortment of genetic code encased inside 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 not 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 communiques from the sheriff's 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 to 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.

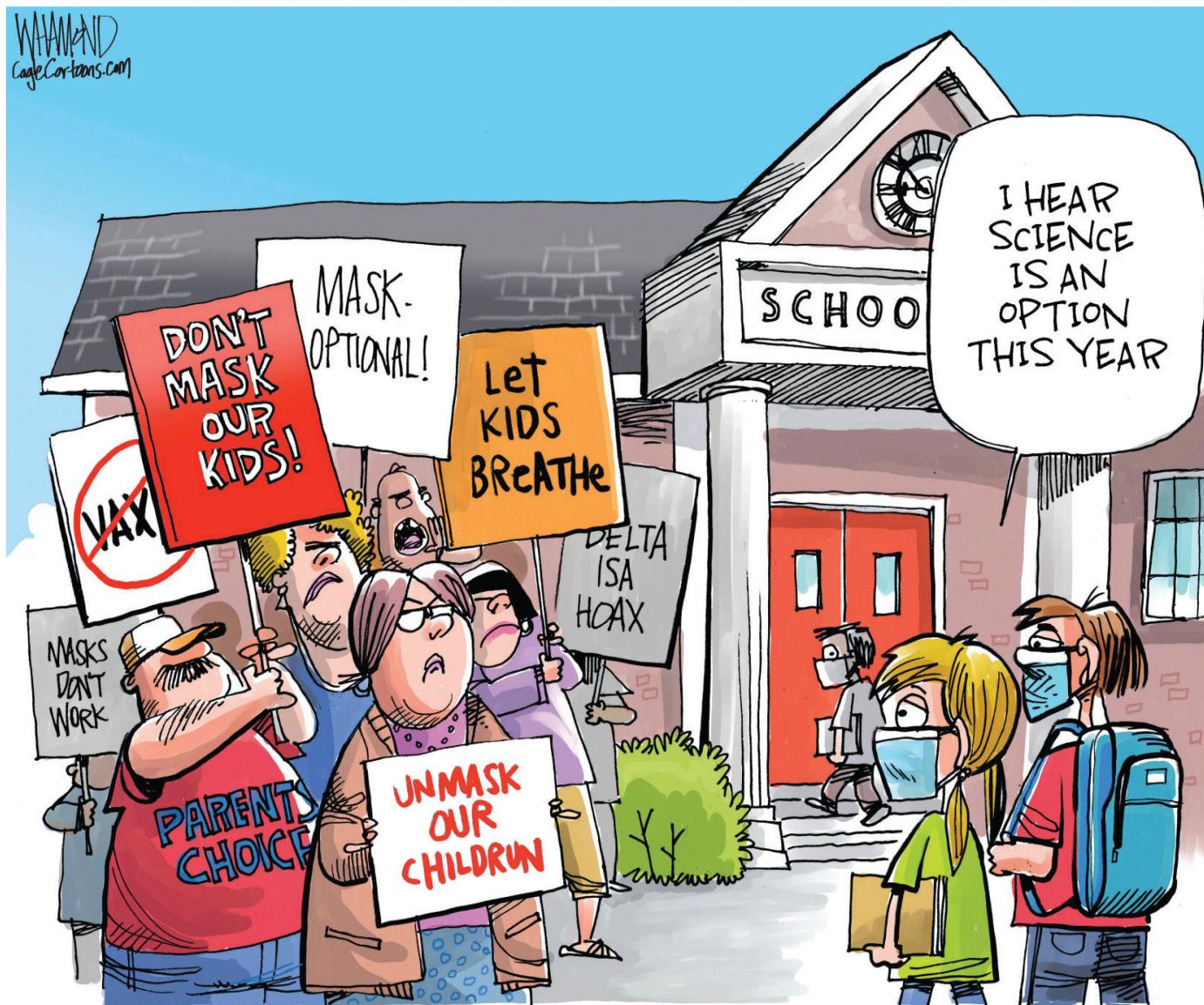
The nation, the state, the community have spent a large amount of time focusing on the political aspects of the virus, and it is time to start asking different questions and do a focus check.

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 their choice, but the emphasis now must be on how to stop the pandemic, not politicizing it. It's a virus. Not a political entity.



State legislators see bipartisan path on climate



ELIZABETH GRASER-LINDSEY
OTHER VIEWS

As the Oregon Legislature ended its 2021 session, an epic heat wave hit the Pacific Northwest, punctuating the importance of a bipartisan breakthrough for climate.

A substantial number of Oregon Republican legislators joined majority Democratic support for a carbon fee and dividend policy at the national level. Senate Joint Memorial 5, asking Congress to pass the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act (currently HR 2307), passed the Oregon Senate in April with a majority of Republicans joining all Democratic senators.

In the House, over half of the representatives co-sponsored it, including two-thirds of Democrats and a third of Republicans. An additional 10% had already endorsed the federal act. (The bill didn't come to a vote in the Oregon House despite the clear majority support.)

The epic June 26-28 heat wave brought home how agriculture and natural resource operations are facing increasing, severe effects from climate change in the Pacific Northwest. On my

farm near Oregon City the heat wave killed chickens, stressed the goats and killed some of the blueberry and raspberry crops, causing a personal "red alert." My husband and I are wondering how our farm can remain productive with continued heat waves and drought.

Our experience mirrored United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' assessment of the recently released Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, calling it "a code red for humanity."

The magnitude of the challenges to agriculture and natural resources in the past year highlights the urgent need for climate solutions that protect the agricultural and natural resource industry in the Pacific Northwest. Because solutions can be slow to implement and to achieve reductions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, quickly initiated and quick-acting solutions are needed. Bipartisan solutions are needed to bypass the partisan infighting and to allow stable solutions continued when either party is in power.

The carbon fee with border adjustment and dividend approach is simple and effective.

The gradually increasing fee on

fossil fuels is applied at the well, mine or border to provide the financial incentive to nudge the economy toward non-emitting practices with this clear and predictable market signal. The dividend evenly returns the money to all Americans as a monthly payment without growing government, thereby protecting poor and middle income Americans from the increased cost.

Agricultural diesel is exempt from the fee. The border adjustment keeps the fee from disadvantaging American industry in the face of international competition. And many economists and computer models see the fee being

the single most important step getting us to being carbon neutral by 2050, as science says is necessary.

A strong and bipartisan majority of Oregon's legislators recognize carbon fee and dividend as a fair and needed way to solve the climate impacts on us. They join a growing, bipartisan, nationwide recognition. It's time for Congress to take note and take urgent action.

Elizabeth Graser-Lindsey is a Citizens' Climate Lobby volunteer and with her husband owns and operates a small farm in Beaver Creek.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Do you have a point you'd like to make or an issue you feel strongly about? Submit a letter to the editor or a guest column.

YOUR VIEWS

Pendleton's shining stars deserve recognition

Let's clean up Main Street and decorate each empty window with pictures of the amazing and wonderful people who have grown up in Pendleton and became famous, and the amazing people who stayed in Pendleton and made it an even better place to live.

1. Use the fire department to get the outside of downtown business property real clean.

2. Rip off those filthy black coverings because now these windows makes Pendleton look like a town that has been abandoned and left behind. Those of us who call this home, and love living here, know that is just not true.

3. I have suggested four old-fashioned on-the-building billboards so everyone in town will see them — something like the old circus billboards in 1920 and later — to let the locals know the purpose of Pendleton Underground Comes To Life. You can put your flyers up all over town, but I am telling you, the people who live in Pendleton are not coming out. They do not know what is going on; I know because I have asked about 75 of them since June.

4. Fill each window with photo-

graphs, posters and anything else to show what people who were raised in Pendleton can really do.

I have been tooling around town (quietly) in my Veterans Affairs-provided cherry red hot rod, as a friendly disabled Vietnam-era woman Marine. What I noticed was how filthy the fronts of the Main Street business are, most now closed. The filthy windows, hastily covered with black paper, are a disgrace to our hometown, known far and wide as a real friendly place to visit. Entering Pendleton from any direction provides a breathtaking view of the perfect village setting in the valley. Now we need to show our visitors why they might just consider moving their family to live in "the real West."

All that tourism money is being spent, and they do not even know that what brings the city folks back to Pendleton for Round-Up each year. It is the connections they have made with people who live in Pendleton. While the Pendleton Underground is great, it is relatively new to Pendleton, and what has been bringing folks back to Pendleton is the friendships that have developed between Pendletonians and the city folk.

My husband, the late Art Merriman, had sometimes up to 10 people that

came year after year and stayed with us. I would tease him that those women were his girlfriends — some were damn cute buckle bunnies. The men were real men, who cleaned up real well and smelled good. Eye candy for the ladies.

I am narrowing in on my windows. My window will have my internationally famous music maestro daughter, Jacie Sites, then my Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association cowboy brother Dave Murphey and goat roping Bobbi Beers, who, with a couple in California started the Western States Ranch Rodeo Association. All Pendleton High School graduates.

I challenge some of these families to jump on board, and clean and decorate a window: the Melton family (Tom Melton/Marla Royal, Emil and Betty Holdman) Butch Knowles, Cindy Newton Severe, Dean Foulquette, Dick Keizer, Peter Willis, Dan and Andy Emert, Emily Mueller-Cary, Morgan Matteson and our own sweet sunshine, Sattley Mayberry, who always brings in light when she sings "You Are My Sunshine."

Let's shine our lights, and show our real Pendleton stars.

**Rose Murphey
Pendleton**

EDITORIALS

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

LETTERS

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published.

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