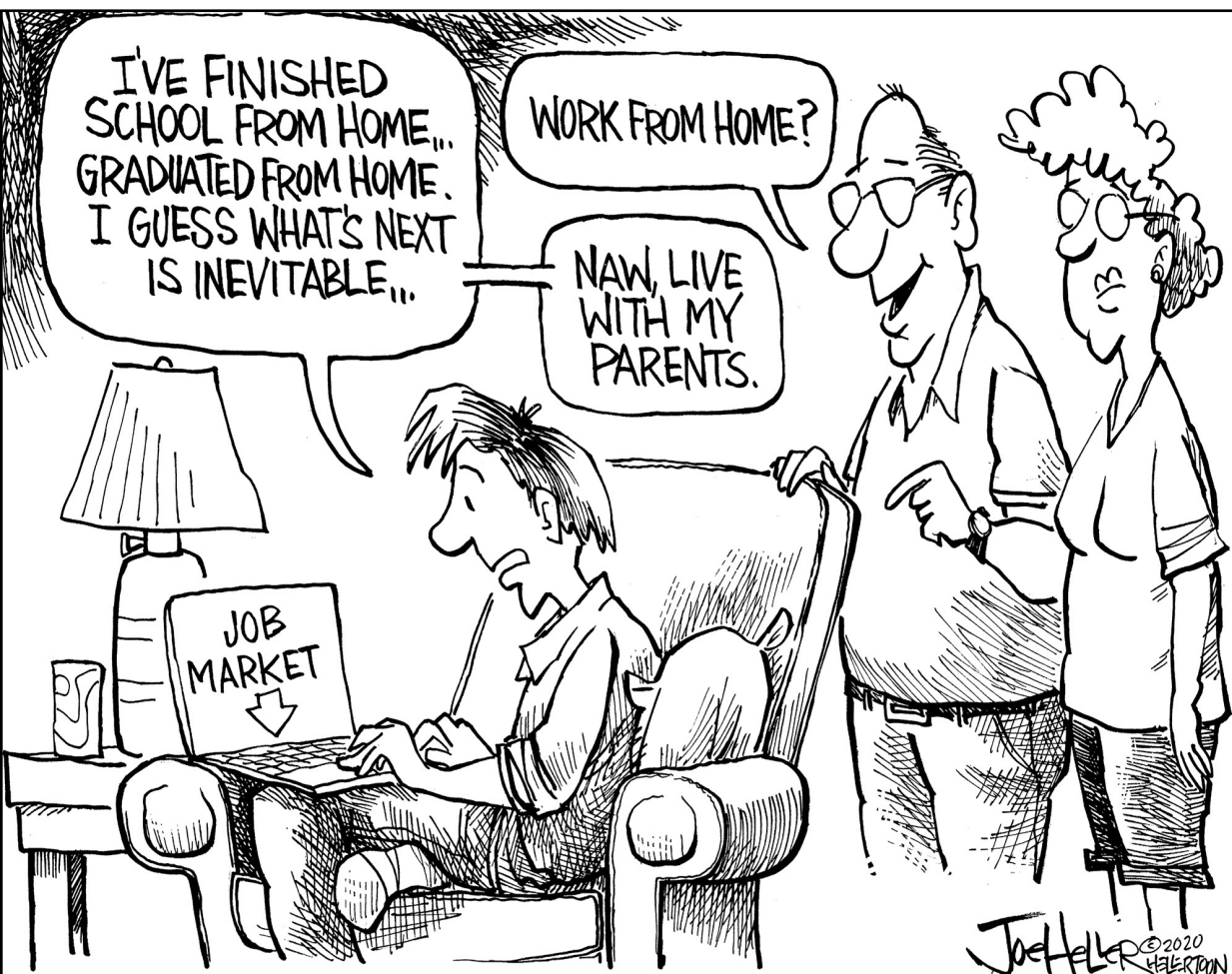


**Cottage Grove Sentinel**  
 116 N. Sixth St.  
 Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

# Opinion

**The First Amendment**  
 Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



## LETTERS

**WEARING A FACE MASK IS A CHOICE, NOT A STATEMENT**  
 Memorial Day was observed in Cottage Grove. Some wore face coverings, which is a personal choice.

The day before, I was at Coiner Park with a pink bandana around my face and was rudely called out for donning a face covering.

I stepped backwards several times as this person's verbal attack continued.

I had ridden my bike to the park with a friend who prefers to wear a helmet.

I don't care to wear one. I don't feel the need to verbally attack her about wearing a helmet; she doesn't yell at me for my choice to wear a face covering.

—Sue Flint  
 Cottage Grove

**SHOULD WE RELY ON PROVEN SCIENCE OR SCAPEGOATS?**

As we work our way through what is proving to be one of the most severe public crises in the past century (excluding wars), there is certain to be great controversy. In that regard, consider these points.

Much has been made of the inaccuracy in projections promulgated through numerical modeling.

No surprise there. Of course the models, having little real data to work with, are all

based on assumptions — and thus results will differ, sometimes widely, based on variations in those assumptions.

That is not the point. The truth is that serious people were throwing up warnings and were ignored.

The reality is that between 100,000 and 200,000 Americans are going to die.

The point is, every element of our great government denied and diddled for too long, playing politics, back when we might have been able to take reasonable actions to greatly reduce this number.

All right, maybe not. Or maybe yes. The key word is "maybe."

There are two things about all this that really scare me.

First is that rampant ignorance is tolerating the denigration of serious science and the people who practice it. How many of the people tweeting outrageous attacks on Dr. Fauci and his ilk can, if asked, describe how science *actually* works?

From hypothesis, to experimentation, through peer review, to resolution of theory; that is the progression of science *fact*.

I want to punch the wall every time I hear somebody say, "Oh, that's just a theory."

Again, profound ignorance of even the most basic principles

about. In less than 170 years, we have gone — quite literally — from a world lit only by fire to one where microwaves cook our food using power obtained by harnessing the atom. It was the scientific method — hypothesis through theory — that achieved this. Along the way, science made many wrong turns and some serious errors.

But that is an integral part of the process. Over the long haul, science has delivered the goods.

The second worry is what will happen next time. And there *will* be a next time; it is only a question of when.

What will happen when the transmission rate of some new pathogen is perhaps only 50 percent greater than COVID-19, and the fatality rate is maybe five times greater?

Do we accept that mistakes were made here — some, quite foolish — and try as best we can to develop in advance the systems and procedures needed to deal with it? Or do we stick to the current method of keeping our heads where the moon don't shine, wait until it's over and start looking for a scapegoat?

Knowing, of course, that the scapegoat will always be someone of the opposing political party.

—Jim Zinn  
 Cottage Grove

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**Letters to the Editor Policy**

The Sentinel welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The Sentinel readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

**Political/Election Letters:**

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must: 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

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