

opinion

EDITOR:
KALEIA LAWRENCE

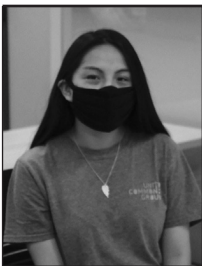
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THEBUZZ

Questions asked to you, our readers.

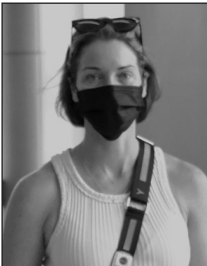
How are you
feeling about
the start of this
school year?



"A little bit overwhelmed ... but still happy that we have school."
- Dayana



"Being online for most of it is very weird for Cosmetologists. The teachers are very helpful and want you to succeed."
- Bre



"Disappointed, but it's good to be here right now."
- Nichole

Become a
shield for
one another

PAIGE ZEULKA
Copy Editor

We live in a time where deadly viruses like COVID-19 exist, where Black lives don't matter enough, and where the LGBTQ+ community battles for equality. With this, trying times have risen. The need for protection is at an all-time high. For our world to rejoice, we need to protect each other.

COVID-19: Whether you believe the coronavirus is a conspiracy or not, it still is alive. It affects every person on this planet. So you think you're the lucky one who isn't affected by this and don't take the proper precautions? You should reconsider your actions. There are people at high risk who's life may depend on you.

When the world is being affected by something as large scale as COVID-19 it's important to not let politics and your own pride to get in the way. This is a universal issue, not a left or right.

You say it's your freedom to not wear a mask; but take a look at it from a different perspective. Even before this pandemic, surgeons wore masks for hours on end while performing surgeries. Soldiers wore masks while fighting for their country.

The fact is, if people can do it while risking their lives, then why can't you?

Black Lives Matter: When people say "All Lives Matter," and ask why all of a sudden are Black lives the main focus...I'm almost speechless. That is like saying, "You know, why are you walking in support for breast cancer, doesn't all cancer matter? You shouldn't just focus on breast cancer." Black Lives Matter is not about all lives. It's about Black lives.

It's 2020 and we find ourselves amongst yet another civil rights movement. Discrimination, hate, and abuse on race is not something we should be debating, especially after all these years. There is right and there is wrong. I would hope we all know the difference.

We are all breathing humans just trying to get by in this world. There is no room for hate. There is only room for love. So during this time of fighting for the equality of Black lives, we need to take care of each other and become a shield for one another.

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OURVIEW

The perspective of the editorial board



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MAIA LATHROP / IMAGES PROVIDED BY TNS

Unidentified agents
are unaccountable

Federal agents should not be immune from prosecution when they violate the Constitutional rights of others

CHRISTOPHER BIRD
Managing Editor

Protests have been happening across the country against police misconduct and bias since May 26, the day after the death of George Floyd during an arrest. There have been incidents of violence and escalation from both protestors and police during protests across the nation, but the response from the Federal Government to the protests in Portland, Ore. has drawn a great deal of concern and debate.

Federal agents are known to have been present in Portland since at least June 27, when they were first reported as present in the city. According to a federal lawsuit that was filed by the Oregon Department of Justice on July 18 over alleged civil rights abuses, the agencies that may be operating against protestors are the Department of Homeland Security, United States Customs and Border Protection, the United States Marshals Service, and The Federal Protective Service.

The lawsuit alleges that federal agents have been "using unmarked vehicles to drive around downtown Portland, detain protesters, and place them into the officers' unmarked vehicles, removing them from public without either arresting them or stating the basis for an arrest, since at least Tuesday, July 14.

The federal agents accused of misconduct in this lawsuit are also described as not having any sort of equipment that would allow them to be easily associated with a certain agency or identified as a particular officer. "The identity of the officers is not known, nor is their agency affiliation, according to videos and reports that the officers in question wear military fatigues with patches simply reading "POLICE," with no other identifying information."

Many other lawsuits have been filed by protes-

tors, journalists, and organizations in Oregon. These lawsuits accuse the federal government of using excessive force on protestors, overstepping the power of Oregon to police its own residents granted by the Tenth Amendment, and a slew of accusations that the federal agents have violated people's rights to assembly, speech, petition, due process, etc.

There were some reports of the federal agents having made a deal with the government of Oregon and Portland but looking at recent events and statements by the DHS it is clear that the Federal agents are still present. At least as recently as August 21, the federal agents dispersed a protest near the Multnomah County Justice Center in Oregon. On Aug. 4, the DHS itself made a press release denying the idea that they have recalled federal agents from the state and that "no determination of timetables for reduction of protective forces has yet been made. Evaluations remain ongoing."

It is the opinion of The Clarion that these Federal agencies are overstepping their purpose, and that the way they are choosing to carry out what they claim is their duty is incredibly troubling.

The Federal agencies that are present, such as the Department of Homeland Security, exist for the purpose of protecting this country and its citizens. To see them turned into what are essentially a federally controlled force that is armed to control protests, seems to not be in the interest of protecting American citizens, especially considering the consistent complaints against these agents for excessive use of weapons such as tear gas, pepper balls, rubber bullets, and other complaints that amount to a concerning pattern of extreme force being used against protestors, legal observers, and journalists.

The lack of identification on the uniforms or vehicles being used by these agencies is also a very big problem. From the perspective of a citizen, it would be difficult to identify officers as members of authority that can issue any sort of legal order. The reports that officers wearing extremely basic

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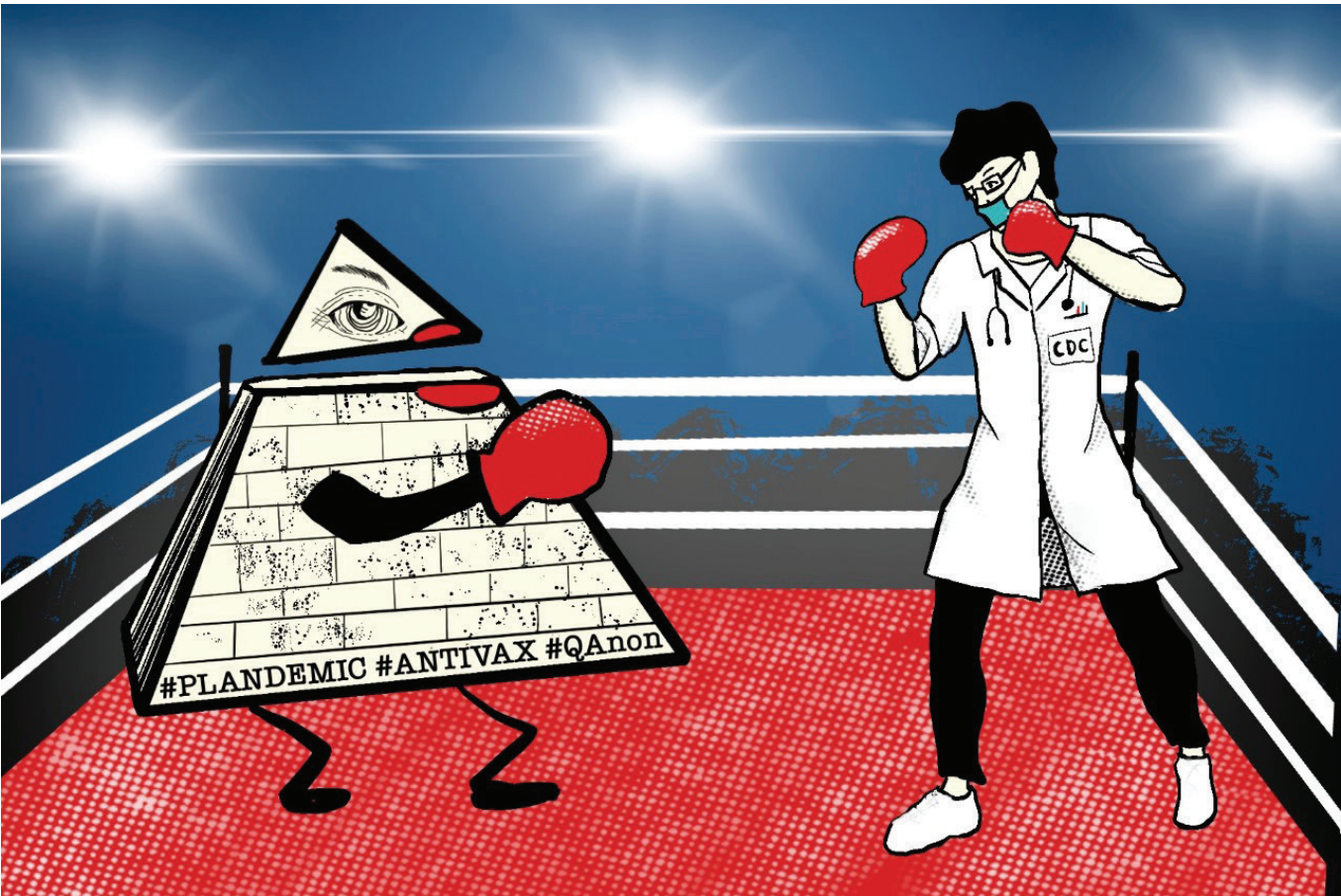


ILLUSTRATION BY MAIA LATHROP / CLARION

AGENTS

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uniforms and driving unmarked cars have been detaining citizens is disturbing, because these agents are essentially immune to investigation or being held accountable for their actions because they can't be identified.

The Oregon police have also been accused of excessive force and similar charges, but by the virtue of being easily identified as police, it is still possible to file a complaint and investigate the situation because there is an established line of contact and ideally a system that will investigate and clear or punish those involved. An unidentified officer, who is a part of an undefined organization, is above almost any effort to investigate wrongdoings.

The precedent being set by the Federal agents that are active in Oregon, along with the cryptic warnings from President Trump and members of his administration speaking of taking similar action in other areas with major protests is unsettling. The government is coming dangerously close to having an unrepachable police that are not required to identify themselves or follow any sort of protocol or standards that we have tried to hold our regular police to. This type of force is inherently vulnerable to allowing abuses because of how hard it can be to regulate and the incredibly loose purpose that is assigned to them.

Federal agents should not be acting as a police force, especially one that is noticeably reacting with great force to protestors. Most federal agents have likely never been trained for the situations that they are being put in because they were never intended to be police. These protestors are seeking change that they see as for the betterment of their country. The many reports of incidents where federal agents have used crowd dispersal techniques on non-violent protestors and even legal watchdogs, or journalists, makes it seem that the stated purpose of their presence, which is to keep the federal buildings safe and keep the peace, is disingenuous.

SHIELD

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Here are some ways to help: protest, sign petitions, donate, vote in the next election, and support locally owned Black businesses.

LGBTQ+: The LGBTQ+ community has illuminated our country with pride, dignity, individualism, and endless love for years. Though, it was never always like this for members of this family. From the Stonewall Riots, to conversion therapy, to discrimination in the workplace, LGBTQ+ individuals have faced high levels of inequality.

Nobody should feel shunned from the rest of the world just because of who they are and who they love. The LGBTQ+ community has come a long way. From legalizing gay marriage in all fifty states, to just recently making it illegal for work-place discrimination based off sexual orientation and identification.

Even though there have been great improvements for this community, there needs to be continuous added support to the LGBTQ+ movement. Next time there is a pride parade, join in! When you witness anti-gay harassment be sure to speak up. Always be a support system to those around you who come out.

Unity is a crucial step for things to change. It is time for us to come together and to protect one another not because we have to, but because it is the right thing to do.

Battling COVID-19 conspiracies

We must amplify the voices of medical experts over others in the public arena

KALEIA LAWRENCE
Opinion Editor

The U.S. economy was doing well, and that's why the Chinese government released the coronavirus. They were spraying it via aerosol cans to unknowing persons in airports. The government killed the people spraying it to clean up all the loose ends.

This sounds like a great sci-fi horror film, but not like real life. Conspiracy theories like these are being shared and believed at alarming rates.

Why are they believed over science and empirical studies?

It's no surprise that social media plays a critical role in normaliz-

ing conspiracy theories. In April, Facebook made a change. It showed a link to factual COVID-19 news to users that had engaged with false information earlier. This might help some people, but the damage has already been done.

Instead of listening to memes on Facebook or Reddit threads, we should listen to health experts. Organizations like the Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization provide the most accurate and up to date information.

Voices of virologists and epidemiologists should be amplified. Health experts should be taking precedence over any other voices during a pandemic. If we want to stay safe, we can't ignore what they have to say.

Sure, it might be interesting or funny to learn about the conspiracy theories, but it won't save any lives. Listening to the experts is what is going to save people.

People are in needless danger every day. Wisconsin has seen 50,000 cases so far with rising numbers every day.

How many of these cases could have been prevented if guidelines were followed? If people wore their masks since the first case back in January? If health experts were listened to instead of bashed by political leaders?

It's time to place science over stories. Spreading conspiracy theories is hurting people.

Do what you can to make sure that the truth about the virus is prioritized. Get into an argument on Facebook with your aunt who shared yet another COVID-19 meme, maybe she'll learn something new. Share sources that are filled with scientific evidence.

Make sure you're amplifying the voices of experts, not the opinions of others.

Find a way to make this year work for you

ANICA GRANEY
Editor in Chief

Hello. My name is Anica Graney. I am the editor-in-chief of The Clarion for the 2020-21 school year. This is the introduction I have settled on.

Whew! Starting articles is always the hardest part for me. I'm glad I could just get that over with. And now that you know two things about me (my name and position at The Clarion), here's a few more: I'm a journalism major that will transfer to UW-Madison after this year, I was the design director and managing editor for The Clarion last year, and my social security number is [information redacted due to Clarion guidelines].

It's been quite a summer, hasn't it? Feels like it started in March instead of May, yet somehow, here we are in September wondering where the last six months went. I guess that's what a global pandemic will do to you.

This letter from the editor is mainly supposed to be about introducing myself and over-viewing the year ahead. So, let's begin the latter part, shall we?

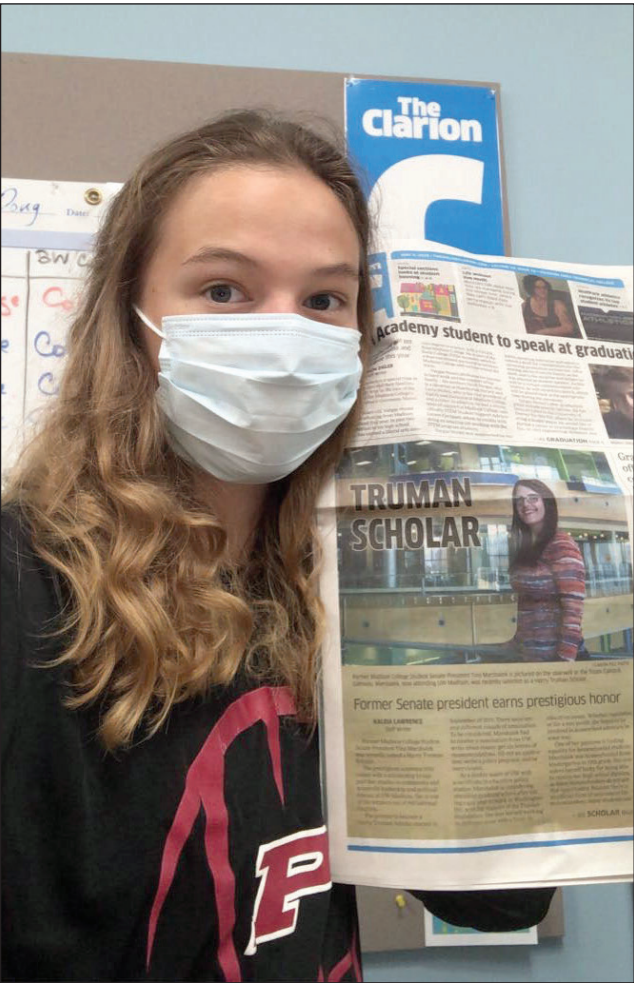
I suppose I should comfort everyone and tell you all that this year will be OK and that even though 2020 has been a massive defecation presentation, we'll still get through it all right.

The problem is, is that I hate pity parties and excuses. Blaming a year for being terrible doesn't do anything to resolve issues. Instead, we all need to pick our heads up and look forward.

The way to make your life better is to begin with you. Adapt to this new world we're in and make it work for you. At least that's my two cents about it.

As a final note, I'd just like to say good luck to everyone this school year.

Stay determined, stay confident, and stay passionate. You got this.



CHRIS BIRD / CLARION

Anica Graney is the new editor in chief of The Clarion, Madison College's student newspaper. The newspaper is available in both print and at www.theonlineclarion.com.