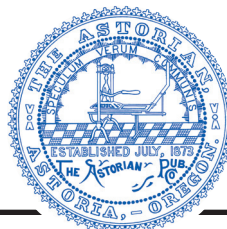


# OPINION



# the Astorian

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## GUEST COLUMN

# The time for mink farms has passed

Contagious not just to people, COVID-19 is devastating captive mink populations across the world. Prominent veterinarians and scientists believe mink are almost uniquely capable of animal to human transmission. There is even concern that such transmission could create a mutant strain of COVID that would be resistant to the vaccine.

Clatsop County is home to two mink farms, both legal businesses.



**JOSHUA MARQUIS**

The Oregon Department of Agriculture disclosed that a mink farm was placed in quarantine in November after a farmer and several mink tested positive for the virus. The state has not publicly disclosed the location of the farm, citing medical privacy reasons.

While the state veterinarian said there was “no evidence that SARS-CoV-2 is in circulation or has been established in the wild,” others pointed out that makes it appear infected mink escaped.

In December, The New York Times reported on the extraordinary events related to mink farming and COVID-19 cases from Denmark: “Not only are mink the only nonhuman animal known to become severely ill and die from the virus, they are the only animal known to have caught the virus from humans and then passed it back. What terrified Danish officials was that the virus that jumped back to people carried mutations that seemed as if they might affect how well vaccines work, although that worry has faded.”

In response to a series of outbreaks from Denmark to Greece to Lithuania, European countries have conducted mass slaughters of thousands of the animals, with an astonishing 17 million mink killed in Denmark alone.

The Netherlands has taken it a step further. There, the government has banned all fur farming effective in March. While concerns over animal cruelty were fac-



Henning Bagger/Ritzau Scanpix

**A breeder holds up a mink after police forcibly gained access to his mink farm in Denmark in October.**

*‘MINKS ARE SUPERSPREADERS OF THIS VIRUS. THEY ARE ALSO WILD ANIMALS, AND THEY DON’T BELONG JAMMED IN CAGES ON FACTORY FARMS.’*

Wayne Pacelle | president of the Center for a Humane Economy

tors in the original discussion, the impetus for the expedited action was the concern about mink farms becoming superspreader venues.

The concerns about mink farming and COVID-19 warrants immediate action in the U.S., just as we’ve seen in Europe. But even without that perilous circumstance, there are plenty of good reasons to ban fur farming. It is an outdated business, much like ivory harvesting, Styrofoam packag-

ing and cigarette advertising.

As we are told in a widely accepted text of spiritual wisdom, “For everything there is a season.” For our health and out of respect for the nearly universal aversion to animal cruelty, government should begin a buyout of all mink farms, fairly compensating the breeders and permanently ending the practice. This process has been used in other parts of the world to discourage farmers of plants like coca and pop-

pies that are easily made into cocaine and heroin.

The world is replete with examples of past practices considered commonplace, if considered at all, that for reasons relating to health, the environment or changing sensitivities, are simply no longer appropriate. There is no need to engage in moral virtue signaling, either by condemning those who wear mink, or by refusing to acknowledge that mink farming has been a legal industry.

As Wayne Pacelle, president of the Center for a Humane Economy notes, “Minks are superspreaders of this virus. They are also wild animals, and they don’t belong jammed in cages on factory farms.”

Joshua Marquis, a former Clatsop County district attorney, is director of legal affairs for Animal Wellness Action.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Great promise fulfilled

A moderately cynical Democrat friend from abroad called to congratulate us on President Donald Trump’s fulfillment of the promise to make America great again.

First, his personality and leadership style produced the House of Representatives a Democrat majority; secondly, his actions with respect to the election in Georgia threw the Senate back to the Democrats; and thirdly, he delivered the White House back to the Democrats for at least the next four years.

Only Trump could have achieved that.  
ERHARD GROSS  
Astoria

### Wondering

I wonder if President Donald Trump would accept immunity from all prosecution in exchange for the public admission that he lied to the country about COVID-19 and about voter fraud.

DONNA LEE ROLLINS  
Astoria

### Duty to perform

We still don’t know exactly who stormed the Capitol and vandalized the building, left pipe bombs in Washington, D.C., and searched for the vice president and members of Congress in order to hold them hostage, or maybe harm them.

But we do know that they were a violent mob, maybe even terrorists, encouraged by the president. One problem now is that the mob escaped, and have returned home or are still on the run. Most of them look like us, and appear like regular folks and some are Oregonians.

Some of the mob are openly proud of what they did, and others are keeping quiet. The law-abiding citizens of this country have a duty to perform. We must report the mob to lawful authorities. We would do this any time, if we had information on violent crime.

Anyone who has seen something, or heard something, should call the FBI’s tip line at 800-225-5324, or go online to tips.fbi.gov

JACK OSTERBERG  
Astoria

### Double down

Most of us are still absorbing the horror of the Jan. 6 insurrection at our nation’s Capitol.

The mob vandalized, stole and destroyed public and private property; threatened the lives and safety of Vice President Mike Pence, members of Congress, staff, journalists and police; contributed to the murder of at least one Capitol Police officer; and defied the rule of law.

A few hours later, 145 Republican members of Congress tried to overthrow what the courts and all 50 states confirm was a free-and-fair election. One of them is Rep. Cliff Bentz, whose district covers about two-thirds of Oregon. Many of us call them the Sedition Caucus.

They did not carry Confederate or Trump flags, or wear clothing with racist and antisemitic slogans, as did the terrorists who ransacked the Capitol, but their purpose was the same: to deny the choice of America’s voters.

These elected leaders publicly violated their oath of office to uphold and defend the Constitution of the U.S. Along with President Donald Trump, they must be held accountable.

What can we do to save our democracy? Ask your members of Congress to censure and expel all members of the Sedition Caucus.

Get active in local government and in pro-democracy groups. Stay in touch with your elected leaders. Make them accountable for upholding the rule of law.

Run for office. Don’t let elected offices be filled by extremists or other anti-democratic candidates.

Let’s double down on democracy. Stay hopeful, stay active. Let’s get to work.

LAURIE CAPLAN  
Astoria

### Worn out

... The citizen who thinks he sees that the commonwealth’s political clothes are worn out, and yet holds his peace and does not agitate for a new suit,

is disloyal; he is a traitor.” — Mark Twain

Joe Biden’s election has solidified the U.S. as a worn out representative republic. Instead of the new suit Twain mentions, Biden brings his half-century old, soiled political rags to plop down behind the Big Desk.

For starters, Jill Biden is spending \$1.2 million on the White House’s East Wing restrooms. I wonder what Twain would write about the incoming residents to the executive mansion and their fascination with new indoor facilities.

And now that the commonwealth will soon be swirling in a different direction, it’s clear that bullying and intimidation will continue. The questionable election of 2020 has placed America as a country without rules.

In Portland, for instance, unchecked peaceful protests (riots) will no doubt continue. The Rose City’s chaos of New Year’s Eve party (sans port-a-potties) will be the standard in all areas where authorities refuse to plunge.

Accordingly, cancel culture will flush all opposition to legal agitation, examples being Missouri Sen. Josh Hawley’s canceled book deal over his challenging election integrity, and President Donald Trump being silenced on Twitter and Facebook speak volumes.

And, given Nancy Pelosi’s disconcerting call to end President Trump’s control of “the football,” I’d venture to guess the swamp is hysterically scared the commonwealth’s plumbing, clothing and existence is in the tank.

MATT JANES  
Jeffers Gardens

### Broken

Now that President Donald Trump has been broken, we will move forward into the brave new world of big media and big government. How we got here is questionable.

## LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Astorian. Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer’s name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship. All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month. Letters written in response

to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil. Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at bit.ly/astorianletters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR., 97103.

### Shame

For many of us, the events that unfolded on Jan. 6 have been deeply upsetting. I watched in horror as the violence unfolded in our nation’s capital when a mob of lunatic extremists, acting on the lies and encouragement of a deranged president, laid siege to the heart of our democracy.

Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that I would witness members of Congress sheltering in place as armed thugs roamed the halls of the U.S. Capitol. For the first time in our nation’s 244-year history, we failed to have a peaceful transfer of power. This seditious and unprecedented attack on democracy has left a stain that will take a generation to fade.

While many of us were grieving and wondering whether President Donald Trump’s cult would manage to overthrow a free-and-fair election, ending democracy in this country, how did The Astorian choose to cover the events? By burying a wire piece on page A3.

The Astorian is a local paper with limited resources, but what they put on the front page matters. This paper’s failure to highlight the significance of these seditious actions works to normalize them to its readers.

I believe in the importance of local journalism, and I value The Astorian for its regional coverage. I hope the next time a U.S. president and his delusional followers endeavor to overthrow our republic, The Astorian will apply better editorial judgment by putting an article on the front page — maybe even above the fold.

ANDY KIPP  
Astoria