

## No assault weapons

This letter is in response to the articles covering the recent shooting in Las Vegas (“Sniper in high-rise hotel kills at least 58 in Las Vegas,” The Daily Astorian, Oct. 2).

The Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states: “A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.” Obviously the need for a state militia has been replaced by the National Guard and Coast Guard, whereby trained military personnel are entrusted with the defense of this country against domestic enemies. Their weapons are tightly controlled and safeguarded.

The only two reasons for a citizen to own a firearm are for hunting or defense of the household from intruders. In either case, ownership of a handgun, shotgun or rifle is more than adequate to satisfy these purposes. There is absolutely no need for any U.S. civilian to own any weapon more powerful or sophisticated than these.

Accordingly, all handguns, shotguns and rifles must be licensed and registered to the degree necessary to match weapon to owner at the click of a computer key. Furthermore, we must guarantee that the mentally ill do not gain access to them under any circumstances. Finally, if we had prohibited the purchase of more sophisticated weapons several innocent victims would not have died or been harmed at shopping malls, college campuses, Congressional meetings, churches and now concerts.

We as a country must deal with this issue immediately lest our society fall back to the days when everyone carried a holster.

JOE BIALEK  
Cleveland, Ohio

## Crossing thanks

I would like to thank all the volunteers and organizations for the Great Columbia Crossing on Sunday, Oct. 15. This was my first walk, and I was so impressed with all the walkers, the atmosphere and all of the families. I was fortunate to do the walk with my two sisters, one of whom had brain surgery just three weeks, prior, so this was a huge accomplishment for her.

We are all blessed to live in the Pacific Northwest, and when it came to the weather on Sunday, all we can say is “amen.” See you next year.

TERRI L. HUNT  
Cathlamet, Washington

## Uphold city principles

For the past 30 years, the slow pace, friendly neighbors, and quiet neighborhoods of Gearhart have been my refuge after a hard day's work. It's not a tourist destination; it's our hometown.

But its very existence as such is now threatened by the internet-fueled short-term rental business, and by Measure 4-188, which would overturn the city's comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and laws that protect residential neighborhoods from the high-impact commercial activity of vacation rentals.

As a planning commissioner and city councilor for many years, I've witnessed the growth of the problem and the city's solution to it, worked out over a two-year process of citizen involvement, testimony and deliberation. The resulting ordinance 901 was a fair compromise for all competing interests and is now affording our citizens protection from moneyed interests that would obliterate the character of Gearhart.

It is founded on the principles of Gearhart's comprehensive land use plan as adopted in 1994, which requires the city to “recognize the importance of the city's residential neighborhoods and the need to protect them from the negative impacts of the transient rental of property, and to discourage increased levels of traffic and similar disruptions” (www.cityofgearhart.com).

I implore my fellow Gearhart voters to vote no on Measure 4-188. A yes vote would threaten every Gearhart citizen's quality of life.

PAULINA COCKRUM  
Gearhart

## Keep quality of life

It's just over a week before Gearhart voters are asked if they should overturn Ordinance 901, which regulates transient rentals.

Now, the sponsors of Measure 4-188 are pitching brand new arguments. They say Measure 4-188 is now about jobs and Gearhart's economy. How nice.

Justin Adams, a Sacramento resident wrote, “The Economic Impact of Short-Term Vacation Rentals in Gearhart.” He advertises himself as “providing insightful economic research and analysis to help clients achieve their policy objectives.” If this measure passes, Adams' “cli-



ents” will profit handsomely. David Townsend, a key measure supporter, also resides in Sacramento.

The report states Gearhart's economy needs tourist dollars. Gearhart hardly suffered before internet facilitated nightly rentals began. Adams says nightly lodgers generate needed tax dollars. Gearhart was doing just fine long before room tax collections began this year.

Mr. Adams argues Gearhart real estate is so expensive that owners must rent their property in order to afford it. The report peddles this myth over and over. Rental permit holders aren't homeowners struggling to make a mortgage payment. They are out-of-town rental property owners and businesses out to make a profit. Most permit holders live out-of-town. There are few lodging permits held by Gearhart residents.

Gearhart councilors and planners were very aware of our history of short-term rentals during the ordinance development process. Eliminating nightly rentals was never intended. There will always be potentially at least 200-plus nightly rentals in Gearhart. Adam's report also neglects the influx of new full-time residents. Full-time residents help sustain Gearhart's economy year-round.

Vacation rental management corporations gain if Measure 4-188 passes. Do these corporations think Gearhart voters believe that their motive for supporting this measure is jobs? Not the dollars they will make managing even more nightly rentals?

Measure 4-188 is not about protecting jobs or Gearhart's economy. It's about people wanting to profit at the expense of Gearhart residents' rights and quality of life.

Vote “no” on Measure 4-188.  
TERRY AND CATHY GRAFF  
Gearhart

## News, not gossip

A huge kudo to George Gideon of Seaside (“Really disgusted,” The Daily Astorian, Oct. 13). He hit the nail on the head, referring to the horrific, tragic accident that happened in Seaside. Why are the parents, who are innocent, raked over the coals like two old biddies gossiping over their backyard fence?

This newspaper has turned into a miniature National Enquirer. I thought I was subscribing to news, not gossip.

JOYCE HOFFMAN  
Warrenton

## All must prepare

I read with great interest the column “It's up to us to plan to survive” (Chinook Observer, Oct. 10). I completely agree with most of what the editor has written, and the opinions he expressed so eloquently, yet on one point I must respectfully, albeit somewhat vehemently, disagree.

On March 30, 2011, during testimony in front of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee, the Federal Emergency Management Agency director (at that time) Craig Fugate said: “Government can and will continue to serve disaster survivors. However, we fully recognize that a government-centric approach to disaster management will not be enough to meet the challenges posed by a catastrophic incident. That is why we must fully engage our entire societal capacity ...”

As a matter of absolute fact, the U.S., state government, and by extension local and county governments, do not have the financial or logistical resources to preplan and prestage all of the assets necessary to sustain our communities in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. It is not practical to assume that those governments could even foresee all of the potential eventualities that may occur following an unknown future disaster.

## LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian.

Letters should be fewer than 350 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone numbers. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and, on occasion, factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are printed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than

mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner.

Submissions may be sent in any of these ways:

E-mail to editor@dailyastorian.com; online at www.dailyastorian.com; delivered to the Astorian offices at 949 Exchange St. and 1555 N. Roosevelt in Seaside or by mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103.

In December 2011, FEMA published a document, “A Whole Community Approach to Emergency Management: Principles, Themes and Pathways for Action” This whole community approach dictates that personal responsibility is vital to being prepared for a disaster. In other words, it is imperative that each of us takes steps to ensure we are prepared to survive a catastrophic emergency, and be self-sufficient for at least two weeks. This must be a personal responsibility, not a governmental responsibility.

Many of the items the editor mentioned in his column — helicopter pads, airstrips, wi-fi hotspots and generators — are included in the extensive planning effort that is currently taking place, and will be a part of the national response. It must, however, be an individual responsibility to ensure you have enough to survive in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. As the editor said in his headline: It's up to us to plan to survive.

SCOTT W. McDOUGALL  
Director, Pacific County Emergency Management Agency

## Our neighborhood

As a Gearhart resident, I ask myself: What will our community look like in five years, should our well researched and considered limits on short-term rentals be removed?

Would we want our neighbors to be renting to 90 short-term renters in a given year? One Gearhart resident claims to be doing this, as stated in a letter to the editor, “Other side of rentals” (The Daily Astorian, Sept. 29). He evidently wants all Gearhart homeowners to do the same.

This is not my vision for my neighborhood, or my community. Referring to short-term rentals as being a part of Gearhart for the past 100 years is no longer relevant. Short-term rentals have become big business, with lots of money to be made.

If Measure 4-188 passes, it will be at the expense of our quality of life and the Gearhart comprehensive plan.

Vote no on Measure 4-188. Keep Gearhart residential.

JUDY REDEKOP  
Gearhart

## Delightful witches

Yesterday my grandkids and I enjoyed one of our favorite autumn activities — Downtown Witches Tour. We cruise up and down Astoria main streets and stop to consider each witch. We notice what is different about each one and keep a count of total witches.

It's kind of like a practice in scientific observation, combined with an art tour.

We conclude our witch tour with huge cups of hot chocolate, mounded with whipped cream at a local restaurant on Commercial. This includes a delightful discussion of our nominees for favorite witches. I remind them we are lucky to live in a small town with lots of volunteers who make these things happen.

This year's selections of favor-

ite witches — witch dressed as a lifeguard and witch with a rubber chicken on her broom. We're not telling where they are — you have to find them yourselves!

CHERYL JOHNSON  
Brownsmead

## Don't let it happen

Full-page, spendy ads in the Seaside Signal and The Daily Astorian speak volumes about the deep pockets and big money that's funding Gearhart's Measure 4-188, an initiative that's working to tear down the integrity of our coastal community. Add to this the paid canvassers, phone surveys, full-color glossy mailers. And who's paying for this? Out-of-state, out-of-area big money is paying. They're paying to sway this election and it's not in your best interest, dear Gearhart friends and neighbors.

Measure 4-188 would allow unlimited short-term rentals, with no restrictions. It would undermine the fabric of the local community — the permanent and seasonal homeowners and long-term renters. Our comprehensive plan defines Gearhart as a residential community, and aims to keep it that way; Measure 4-188 promotes the opposite — a destination resort for transient vacationers. The result? No more full-time community to give Gearhart its small-town character. No more Gearhart.

That would be the most obvious effect of 4-188 on the community. Beyond that, the potential physical damages to the town's infrastructure multiply. Short-term rental owners who have complied with the city's existing rules — the rules 4-188 would do away with, like inspection of septic systems — are updating systems that often have needed repairs for years. That has been good for the city, and helps prevent the need for a costly municipal sewer. Rampant short-term rentals with no restrictions and almost unlimited numbers of paying guests per household would have far-reaching implications for the town as a whole — for those of us, that is, who decided to remain in Gearhart, amid a sea of virtual motels and all the nuisances that would go with them.

Don't let that nightmare come true. Vote “no” on 4-188!

JEANNE MARK  
Gearhart

## Save small-town life

A wonderful aspect of small-town life is the ability to participate in local government and have input into the important decisions. It's the closest most of us get to true participatory democracy. Gearhart set a great example with a two-year series of lively town meetings to work through the issues that were created when short-term rentals in residential zones were supercharged by the internet and by sales pushes from national vacation rental management companies such as Vacasa.

Our town hall process led to the passage of the existing short-term rental regulations, which were crafted with input from all viewpoints. Our regulations grandfather existing short-term rentals and

impose safety and other requirements on them, yet stay true to Gearhart's 1994 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which requires the city to protect residential neighborhoods.

However, ballot Measure 4-188 would require Gearhart to “remove current limitation on the number of vacation rentals.” Worse yet, its final provision would “require public vote for amendment of the vacation rental ordinance or any subsequent ordinance relating to vacation rentals.” That final provision means that the only way to modify the rules in any way would be by ballot initiative. As we are seeing, a ballot initiative is a big deal, costing Gearhart over \$10,000 and a huge amount of time and attention.

In a practical sense, it would become extremely difficult to make any changes to the rules. The mayor, town council, and town hall process would be hamstrung. And we can be certain that if we remove any limit on the number of vacation rentals, there will be problems and there will be needed changes! Please vote “no” on 4-188.

JANET ELLIOTT  
Gearhart

## Reasonable regs

We have lived in Gearhart for almost 24 years and feel so lucky to call this little town our home. However, over the years vacation rentals have changed from a low-impact, minimally invasive activity to a major business fueled by internet rental offerings and aggressive marketing of properties.

The regulations enacted by the city in response to concerned citizens have helped noticeably to reduce the impact of vacation rentals on our predominantly residential community. They serve to keep density at vacation rentals realistic for the size of the home and the surrounding property. The regulations affecting safety, septic capacity and street overflow are reasonable for the rental properties and the neighborhood.

Friends, please join me in voting “no” on Measure 4-188. Let's maintain the current city legislation that has already reduced the impact of unregulated vacation rentals. Let's not give away the town that we love.

NANCY TAGGARD  
Gearhart

## 'Yes' for the library

Warrenton Community Library made a long awaited and historical move this summer to a larger and more centrally located building. The newly rented space comes with a much-needed parking lot and an outside covered space for summer activities.

While many lament the loss of the previous setting, the new location is meeting community needs in a variety of ways. Saturday morning story time for children, expanded Saturday hours and a later closing time on Wednesday are examples of ways library staff are working toward accommodating the patrons of the library.

The library cannot sustain the current level of service without additional funding. The library budget has remained static for several years and now you have the opportunity to show your support for this valuable resource. Vote “yes” for Measure 4-189 and the Warrenton Community Library.

ROCHELLE COULOMBE  
Warrenton

## Library a foundation

I wanted to thank The Daily Astorian for the recent editorial about the Warrenton library. One important point that I think was missed is that at the present “starvation diet” that the current library operates on, I believe cost is about 22 cents per thousand, with the difference from the current 9 cents funding made up by the city.

The city has many facets that enhance the livability and quality of life here in Warrenton, for example, our dog park, the trail system, our marinas, our fire department activities, our Fourth of July parade and our library.

With the reduction of the grade school library, I found it very interesting when I met with the second-grade classes that one of the things they asked for is “more books at the library.” Our user numbers have also greatly expanded in response to the recent relocation of our library. Other cities consider their libraries to be one of the foundations of their community.

The Warrenton library needs readers “yes” votes to move forward into the future and meet expanded user requests, needs and possibilities, helping to make Warrenton a great city to grow up in for our children.

COMMISSIONER  
RICK NEWTON  
Warrenton