

## 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

## Protect our town

The proponents of Measure 4-188 are using financial fear tactics to try to bully their way into a win. They are stating that Gearhart “needs” unlimited vacation rentals to survive. They are stating that our property values will go down if we don’t allow unlimited short-term rentals and that properties will sit on the market, driving prices down further.

Realtors are reporting that since the passing of the city ordinance limiting short-term rentals that people are buying property to live here full time, and that property values are continuing to rise. Full-time residents contribute to the fabric of our community. This is what will support our future.

Proponents of Measure 4-188 are also claiming they want to protect jobs. Businesses are struggling on the coast to find employees because of the extreme shortage of long-term rentals. A popular restaurant in Manzanita recently closed because it could not find housing for its employees. In Cannon Beach, employers are being forced to buy housing for their employees to rent. There are help wanted signs everywhere you look.

The out-of-town property owners who are pushing this measure do not seem to know or care about our community or our residents’ needs, and as much as they claim to be a part of our town, most of us have not met them.

They forced the city into a battle at the Land Use Board of Appeals at quite some expense, that then upheld our regulations. Now they have forced a ballot measure on the people of Gearhart that is also costly and time-consuming, all to promote their business interests.

Friends, please do not let big business determine the future of our community. Please vote “no” on Measure 4-188.

DEBORAH ALBRECHT  
Gearhart

## Share access to all

I had a friend who moved to Gearhart recently send me a note asking why I support the current ballot measure on vacation rentals. His request prompted me to voice my opinion. As a born and raised proud Gearhart boy, I am really outraged by all of this.

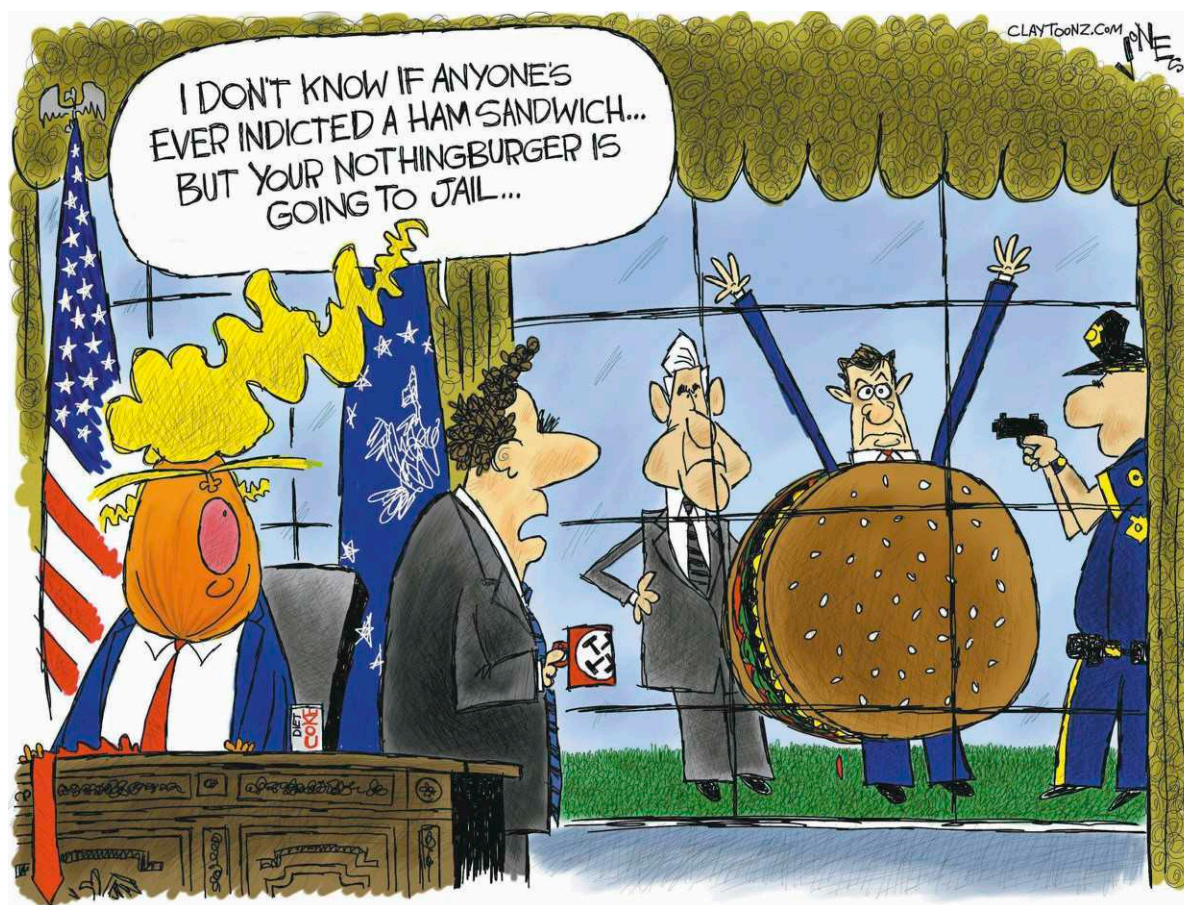
I have had the opportunity to meet and become friends with so many great people vacationing in Gearhart throughout my life. This I feel was because they have been able to rent homes in Gearhart. I really personally have not seen or heard of that many issues pertaining to short-term rentals.

It seems interesting to me that many of the people pushing for the present city ordinance really are not longtime Gearhart residents and probably arrived here as a tourist at first, but now really don’t want others to enjoy what they found here.

In my opinion, it’s all about equal rights for all. It’s not fair that the only rentals allowed are the 80 or so that applied a few months ago. Many never know when they may want or need to rent their homes. So having to get a license now and pay \$600 a year till that day comes seems unfair.

I feel this whole area is and always has been a tourist-driven area. Much of all the amenities this area has to offer that we enjoy daily would not be here if we did not have tourism to support it.

You may be one of the residents who started coming here as



a tourist and renting. What if you couldn’t have stayed here? Maybe you would be living in Corvallis next to some rowdy college students.

I just feel the current City Council wants to put a wall up around Gearhart. The mayor wants more homes to be available for low-income workers to live in, that would be great but the only way that is going to happen is for property values to drop considerably, which would not make the present property owners happy at all.

I am all for regulations on how vacation rentals are rented. Limits on number of occupants, motor vehicles, appearance of the house and yard, along with other issues that could become a problem. I feel both the present ordinance and the proposed ordinance cover that area properly. Actually a drive around Gearhart would reveal that many homes that are occupied by these regulations. As a matter of fact, I believe there are more police calls to permanent homes than short-term rental homes. I really feel that vacation rentals with both of these ordinances will be controlled properly, just feel it is very unfair to limit them to a select few.

In closing, I hope everyone understands the beach belongs to everyone and we should share access to all. Please vote “yes” on Measure 4-188.

JEFF TERHAR  
Gearhart

## Keep property rights

Gearhart’s small town government is a never-ending source of amused frustration to me. First it was the ludicrous kerfuffle over Gearhart Crossing. Now, it’s short-term rentals.

I will be voting “yes” on Measure 4-188 because Gearhart’s current vacation rental dwellings ordinance is an ill-considered, authoritarian, anti-property rights effort at governance. It aims to fix a problem that, quite frankly, doesn’t exist.

The reality is, there is literally no enforcement of pretty much anything on homeowners, long-term rentals and second-home owners in this community. There are no septic inspections or residency inspections. Off-street parking issues are ignored unless neighbors complain.

Full-time residents (and long-term renters) are the friend/family with a place at the beach, and resultant periodic house overflowing with visitors, off-street parking jams and parties.

Gearhart’s second-home owners frequently roll into town, especially on holidays, invite the whole extended family, party hardy, set off their fireworks at 3 a.m., then leave. I bet every voter opposed to Measure 4-188 has been guilty, at one time or the other, of one or more of these issues. Welcome to the beach.

Every single problem that city leaders are trying to lay at the feet of short-term rentals is also generated by full-time home owners, long-term rentals and second-home ownership. At least with the short-term rentals, the city gets some extra income out of it.

The Gearhart City Council’s dream of eventually eliminating short-term rentals speaks directly to the local mindset that is trying to turn Gearhart into a private members-only community.

Measure 4-188 is not perfect — agreed. But vote “yes” to protect your property rights while you still have some. Then we can fix Measure 4-188.

BILL GRAFFIUS  
Gearhart

## Residents have rights

My wife, Donna, and I moved to Gearhart from Portland just before the 2016 election. We learned about Gearhart’s short-term rental regulations while house hunting last year. Our home used to be a short-term rental. As Gearhart’s new residents, none of the city’s short-term rental law sounded extreme to us, just common sense provisions for the health and safety of the residents and the renters, as well as to protect the livability of the community.

The supporters of Measure 4-188 seem less interested in livability than in the potential profits to be had by the possibility of turning any house in Gearhart into a motel. That passion for profit, disguised as a defense of property rights, ignores the rights of residents to live in the community that they have invested in. While city government is open to amending the short-term rental code in the future — the proper course to balance between residents and renters — the opponents would throw out all regulation of short-term rentals.

The “repeal and replace” measure also seems to be a direct attack on the Gearhart city government. The prohibition of any future city council to act on short-term rental regulations without a public vote seems to be more of a slap in the face to the city leaders than anything else.

The Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals has upheld Gearhart’s right to regulate short-term rentals, simply stating that any Oregon city with a comprehensive plan has the right to enact regulations to abide by it. For me, that was the end of the discussion. The city hadn’t over-stepped its authority. The pro-rental lobby played their only card, the initiative petition that led to Measure 4-188.

The passage of Measure 4-188 isn’t a threat, it is a sentence, to a radically different Gearhart. By design, Gearhart has chosen to stay small, to preserve a close-knit community where neighbors remember each others’ names, where they wave and say hello when they see you. In Gearhart, even the dogs know each other.

I urge my treasured new neighbors to vote “no” on Measure 4-188. Residents have rights, too.

MICHAEL LLOYD  
Gearhart

## Contentious politics

The Daily Astorian’s Oct. 19 editorial “Gearhart should vote ‘no’ on repealing vacation rental rules” says, among other things, that Measure 4-188 is a “nuclear option” because it would require a public vote of the people to change the short-term rental rules in Gearhart.

Since when is a public vote the “nuclear option”? Last I checked Russia, North Korea and China don’t like to have their people vote, either.

I don’t own a short-term rental in Gearhart, so I don’t have a dog in this fight — yet. I did own in Gearhart once, and recently investigated purchasing a home there. When I found out I couldn’t rent it out occasionally, it no longer made economic sense. My wife and I have put on hold the idea of having a family vacation home in Gearhart.

This whole “not-in-my-backyard” thing is an extension of the current national isolationist movement sweeping the country. It makes for contentious local politics: Please note the recent mayoral recall efforts in Gearhart, and the City Council’s running up a \$250,000 legal bill for Gearhart

taxpayers in the last five years.

If Measure 4-188 does not pass, Gearhart residents won’t know what hit them. Say goodbye to the Sweet Shop, Pacific Way Café, the corner store, the several small retail shops, and the many local residents they employ. If the current rules remain in place it will take years to repair the damage to property values and the local economy it will cause.

It should be more worrisome to the residents of Gearhart that it appears their city leaders do not possess the skills to lead the city, nor the vision and talent it takes to allow the community to grow and thrive.

Like many, I will be eager to hear the final vote on this important property rights matter.

PAT COONEY  
Portland

## Goose’s golden egg

The rise of the vacation rental industry changed things. Our residential properties were being snatched up for short-term rentals. In an effort to be fair and accommodate everyone already involved, the city of Gearhart held years of public meetings, and eventually passed a very generous vacation rental ordinance.

Now those running these businesses (those who had been violating our plan) could continue in the residential zones, but a cap was put on the future spread of this neighborhood-destroying blight. This leaves more than 80 short-term rentals in our residential zones, and Gearhart is a very small town.

But rather than be pleased with this very generous compromise, some want our whole town. Hence our current election. Forget residential zones. They just make lifestyle in those zones pleasant for the actual residents. Just go for the money and a wild west attitude, masquerading as property rights. I guess they have forgotten the story of the goose that laid the golden egg?

It is imperative, if you are a Gearhart resident, that you take the time to vote no on Measure 4-188. We need a mandate. These folks will be back. The more no votes we have, the more power the city has to resist their future onslaught. Every vote really counts. We need numbers.

Next Tuesday is the deadline. If you enjoy living in Gearhart as it is today, you need to vote “no” today.

CAROL LUCAS  
Gearhart

## Costly changes

Just a reminder in case you have not yet voted: The current short-term rental regulations are not cast in stone. Under the current regulations, any of the rules can be modified by citizens requesting changes, working through the city planning commission and the city council.

However, if you vote yes on Measure 4-188, and the repeal and replace initiative wins, changes could only be approved by a general election, which would cost the city’s taxpayers \$10,000.

A “no” vote = changes possible.  
A “yes” vote = difficult and costly to change.

KATHY SHANELEC  
Gearhart

## Choose to vote ‘no’

Gearhart is coming to another crossroad which will affect its direction for years. The big question? Should one vote “yes” or “no” on Measure 4-188?

The answer lies in what you want for the future of your spe-

cial town. If you are a full-time resident, live in Gearhart for 183 days annually, and are not illegally filing taxes from your vacation home, if you grew up in this town, you understand how Gearhart has dramatically changed in recent years.

We now have a brewpub, a strip mall much like 82nd Street in east Portland, and a highway speeding problem that is rarely enforced. The charm of yesteryear is rapidly becoming a thing of the past. It does not have to. Choose to vote “no” on Measure 4-188.

Those supporting a “yes” vote profess rental restrictions will hurt property values. Have they not heard? Houses have been selling like hotcakes, and there is a housing shortage. Short-term rental owners are making tons of money, and are quite happy to line their pocketbooks with the cash coming in from their “homes.”

They complain regulations do not make economic sense. Who are they kidding? These homes are individual motels. They should be taxed with regulations. Why? They are using our town. Regulations create safety restrictions for those who rent the homes, e.g. the number of people permitted to stay in a home. They create guidelines for septic tank use, so our healthy aquifer (our underground water table) will not become contaminated. Regulations protect residents who deserve reasonably quiet neighborhoods, streets that are not jammed with cars.

Don’t let Gearhart become a town for visitors only. Don’t let the wool be pulled over your eyes. The minority who support a “yes” vote are ruled by the almighty dollar. Many “yes” supporters don’t live here, and are either vacation rental businesses, or those owning vacation rental properties.

Don’t let Gearhart’s uniqueness become a thing of the past. Please do your part to help Gearhart retain the true, safe, small town atmosphere we all cherish. Vote “no” on Measure 4-188.

SUSAN EDY  
Gearhart

## Food bank changes

Over my nearly 50-year career of leading not-for-profit organizations as CEO, and at times as a member of the board of directors, I am very familiar with the kind of challenge that faced the board of the South County Seaside Food Bank.

Board members are charged with both the personnel and fiduciary oversight of the organization. It is the responsibility of the board members to be sure the mission of the organization is carried out and that members of the community for whom the organization is established are being properly served.

In every organization I have served, there have been times when difficult and challenging decisions have to be made to ensure that these responsibilities are being met. One of the significant challenges is working with volunteers who are not employees, and can at times begin to take the organization away from that original mission.

When and if decisions are made to dismiss volunteers, and move to reinstate the organization back to its original mission, it is almost impossible to provide details and information that the public and the press demand. This can become the battle of “he said and she said,” and can become an unending and very damaging dialogue between persons on the board and those aggrieved by the process.

Ultimately, this is where I come down on the controversy: I know the people who are in leadership of the board of directors. These are leaders in our community who have given generously of their time and resources to bring the food bank to the place it is today.

I have confidence in them, and firmly believe that their decisions over the past week were made with careful thought and deliberation, and I understand why they will not, and are not going to participate in a process of responding to allegations and statements in the press that malign their character and leadership.

Some of these board members have reported to the police physical threats and malicious statements regarding their character and honesty. They are all “big people” and will continue to serve in spite of all of this.

Please, Seaside community, a community that prides itself for civility and measured response, let’s step back, take a deep breath and support our food bank as it continues to serve our region, as it has for many years, and will for many years to come.

JAY A. BARBER  
Mayor of Seaside