

Former Portland teacher banned from teaching for public indecency in Astoria

Miller also served as union president

By **BETSY HAMMOND** and **BETHANY BARNES**
The Oregonian



Jeff Miller

A controversial former Lincoln High School teacher and Portland teachers union president has had his right to teach permanently revoked after he was convicted of indecent exposure for masturbating naked on a public street in Astoria, records show.

Jeff Miller taught social studies at Lincoln High for several years before he retired after getting in trouble for worrisome conduct around students. Before joining the faculty at Lincoln, he taught at Cleveland High for 20 years and also taught at Wilson and Benson high schools. He was an elected leader of the Portland Association of Teachers for 11 years, culminating in serving as its president from 2006 to 2008.

The behavior that caused him to lose his license happened in summer 2016. A couple saw him lying naked on a towel in public and masturbat-

Teacher Standards and Practices Commission notified Miller it planned to ban him from ever regaining a teaching license because of his conviction for public masturbation. He did not respond to or contest the commission's action. Miller also did not immediately reply to a message left Monday at the office of the lawyer who represented him in the indecency matter.

Miller retired from Lincoln under a cloud several years ago, having been put on leave by the district and publicly reprimanded by Oregon's teacher licensing agency for a host of unprofessional acts deemed by the licensing board as constituting "gross neglect of duty."

According to that finding, Miller used the N-word in class, threatened two students, failed to present balanced views of politics during class, used swear words while teaching and displayed posters "including skateboards with animated models in sexually suggestive positions and containing captions including 'school sucks' and 'I hate school.'"

Students videotaped some of his conduct and posted it on YouTube. One video showed him as he led a rowdy pro-

test and, for several seconds, pressed his body against that of a female student. She later said she was not upset by his conduct.

Lincoln Principal Peyton Chapman did not immediately respond to requests for comment. In March, Chapman gave an in-depth interview to the school's student newspaper, The Cardinal Times, about how she handles problem teachers.

Miller retired during the 2013-14 school year and is paid \$44,000 a year in public employee retirement benefits.

John Larson, president of the Oregon Education Association, said Monday in a statement that the state teachers union strongly supports getting bad actors banned from teaching.

"There is no place in the education system for anyone who has exhibited the types of behaviors that Jeff Miller has been convicted of. That behavior is unacceptable. Period. I support the actions taken by the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission to keep him out of our schools. Districts and administrators need to act swiftly to address this type of behavior as soon as it is reported."

Coastal towns tackle vacation rentals

Tension brews between tourism and livability

By **TOM BANSE**
Northwest News Network



Tom Banse/Northwest News Network

In Newport, vacation rentals are concentrated along the bluffs above the Pacific Ocean.

Hot housing markets in major cities like Seattle and Portland have pushed the cities to regulate short-term rentals like Airbnb. But small Pacific Northwest towns popular with visitors are also struggling to balance the growth of Airbnb-type rentals with a tight housing supply.

Newport is the latest to put those types of rentals in the crosshairs.

Newport is a beach town on the central coast known for its working waterfront, sea lions, lighthouses and aquarium. Now, the town finds itself at the messy intersection of the sharing economy, the tourism business and a housing crunch.

The second of two open houses for people to ask questions and sound off on short-term rentals happens Wednesday evening at Newport City Hall.

Sandy Benning came to the first open house last week to support capping the number of short-term vacation rentals available in Newport. Benning said she learned firsthand how tight the housing market on the Oregon Coast is when she and her husband moved to Newport two years ago.

"We literally looked for a place to rent for almost 90 days," Benning said. "That entire time we stayed in VRDs (vacation rental dwellings) around the local area. It was a huge expense for us to stay here over the summer for what, three months, before we found a place to live."

Benning shares a widely held concern around the Northwest that landlords are converting long-term units for the local workforce into short-term rentals for visitors because the temporary rentals are more lucrative.

"This was something we found repeatedly," Benning said. "In fact, we ended up having to purchase a home. And the availability of homes for us to purchase was very, very limited."

Newport resident Carla Perry was also on hand at City Hall to share her opinion. She lives in an oceanfront neighborhood where vacation rentals have proliferated and created what Perry calls "a critical situation."

"Lots of traffic. Lots of noise. Garbage. Lots of people," Perry said. "This was a quiet neighborhood. It's changed that. There are no neighbors. It's not like you can know who is staying anywhere."

Perry is part of a citizen advisory committee that came up with options for how Newport could regulate short-term rentals. The alternatives include limits on the number of vacation rentals, their location or density, as well as establishing a complaint hotline.

Newport Community Development Director Der-

rick Tokos said the committee borrowed ideas from other Northwest places that took a run at this issue recently. Hood River doesn't restrict home shares or bed-and-breakfasts where the owner or a manager lives on the premises. Gearhart and Yachats have caps on short-term rentals, and Durango has a density limit that only allows one short-term vacation rental per block.

"It's kind of a potpourri," Tokos said. "They looked at best management practices that a lot of jurisdictions are using. These are all kind of living codes that get updated periodically as jurisdictions try something. Then, 'Hey, maybe that wasn't working like we wanted.' So they make adjustments."

Newport has a permanent population just over 10,000. Tokos said about 200 properties are licensed as vacation rentals.

'Lots of traffic. Lots of noise. Garbage. Lots of people. This was a quiet neighborhood....'

Newport resident Carla Perry
lives in an oceanfront neighborhood where vacation rentals have proliferated

States aim to stop internet release of 3D-printed gun plans

By **MARTHA BELLISLE**
Associated Press

SEATTLE — A federal judge in Seattle hearing arguments over a settlement that allows a Texas company to post online plans for printing 3D guns said Tuesday the overall issue of such untraceable plastic weapons should be decided by the president or Congress.

U.S. District Judge Robert Lasnik said he'll rule by Monday on the legal issues involving the settlement between the company and the Trump administration. He added, however, that "a solution to the greater problem is so much better suited to the other two branches of government."

Nineteen states and the District of Columbia sued the federal government, alleging it reached a "covert" settlement with the company, Defense Distributed, without notifying Congress or the Department of Defense about changes it made to an export act that prohibited 3D gun plans from being posted online.

The Austin-based company is owned by Cody Wilson, a self-described "crypto-anarchist" who opposes restrictions on gun ownership.

Lasnik granted a restraining order in July that blocked the immediate release of the plans online. The states want him to make

it permanent.

Washington state Assistant Attorney General Jeff Rupert argued that the government's decision to allow the posting threatens public safety and should be reversed.

Any felon or terrorist with a laptop and a 3D printer could start making firearms that can't be seen by a metal detector, leaving airports, courthouses, jails and many government buildings and schools — vulnerable, he said.

Lasnik made it clear that he was frustrated that he only had a few days to make decisions on "probably the most significant case that I've handled as a United States District Court judge."

He added, "I really hope and wish that the executive branch and Congress would face up to this."

More than a dozen members of the Washington Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America filled half the courtroom during the hearing wearing red T-shirts. They later said they agreed that the answer lies in Washington, D.C.

"We do believe in the right to own a gun, but we also believe in this country our rights rest of a foundation of shared responsibility to keep all members of society safe," group spokeswoman Sue Whitecomb said. "And we believe that is the job of Congress."

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A: The short answer is maybe? Check with your employer; companies with fewer than 20 employees have the right to exclude you. Check well in advance before turning 65, a mistake here could leave you with gaps in your insurance coverage. Call me for assistance.

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