

Making a run for it into the new year

The alarm clock goes off. Internally, a debate. Should I go? Should I stay? Somehow, for some reason, I muster the strength.

Many, many times in the 2017 calendar year, this experience was mine and perhaps some of yours. And nearly every time I had that debate, I ended up on the Seaside Promenade, often around 5:30 a.m.

I have been running the Seaside Prom since I was in middle school, when our track coach used to have us run the length of the prom and sprint intervals using the light poles as our start and finish line. After our family got a new puppy last year, I figured the best way to get a little workout and get the puppy some exercise, was a nice run to start the morning off right.

When I first started, running in the dark proved challenging. I began on the streets of Seaside and Gearhart, where sidewalks are a luxury and flat sidewalks are nearly nonexistent. The Prom was a perfect solution; a flat, well-lit path, with a measured distance and a beautiful scene.

There were other challenges that surfaced over the course of



SKY BOX
SKYLER ARCHIBALD

the year and weather was probably the most significant. Rain and cold don't bother me much but wind is the worst experience for a runner (or a non-runner like me) to have to endure.

As Hood to Coast approached late in the summer, I often stretched my runs out, incorporating the Prom as a portion of the necessary miles to prepare. Occasionally, particularly in the summer, there would be good-sized crowds on the Prom and dodging the onlookers sometimes proved difficult for an energetic dog.

As 2017 draws to a close, I have reflected often on the habit that I've formed. I've made the trip around 200 times over the course of the year. My pace is similar to when I started, although the run seems a tiny bit easier each time. I still find the first few hundred yards the worst, partly because that is where my dog often stops frequently to handle his business.



SKYLER ARCHIBALD

View of Tillamook Head, early morning.

Speaking of my dog, he's become accustomed to the tradition as well. He hears my alarm clock and waits impatiently at the foot of the stairs for me. He gets particularly excited when he recognizes my running shoes.

The value of movement is not to be understated. The U.S. Department of Health recommends

that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise each week, or an average of about 21 minutes per day. Coincidentally, the Prom is about the perfect distance (three miles roundtrip) for a great runner to finish in 21 minutes. And if you're not a great runner, you can just turn around at one of the many landmarks on your way, or make

a loop on Holladay or Necanicum drives.

My morning run helps me set the tone and direction of my day. Post-run, I feel better able to be mentally and emotionally sound and to be a source of strength to others around me. Physical activity, to me at least, is one main difference between a good day and a great day.

I can't begin to explain the beautiful scenes that I've witnessed. During certain times of the year, the sun will break beautifully over Tillamook Head. In the clear and crisp days of winter, the stars and moon over the Pacific produces an inspiring scene. I've gotten to recognize the other like-minded early risers of our community and feel a kinship with those folks. Who knew that recreation and physical activity can help a town feel more like a community.

I challenge you to find a way to move more, be more healthy and challenge yourself in 2018. It's never too late to start a tradition of your own, or you are welcome to join me on my morning run!

Skyler Archibald is the executive director of the Sunset Empire Park & Recreation District.

2017

The Year in Review: Gearhart

Short-term rental rules are the top story of 2017

Short-term rental vote puts issue to bed, for now

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

In an off-year in the election cycle, Gearhart voters were roused to the polls by an issue that had polarized the city for years. After debate, discussion and mountains of public comment, voters agreed that short-term rental properties needed regulation. The at-times heated discussion played out on social media, in the press and on the street corners as neighbors voiced sharply differing opinions. The Nov. 7 vote put an end to the talk — at least for now.

Meanwhile, Gearhart firefighters heeded the call and joined strike teams from throughout the state and around the country to battle blazes throughout the West. And a the fire department looks ahead to the future, a new fire station promises to be the big issue of 2018 — the 100th year of the city's incorporation and 60 years since the current fire station on Pacific Way was built by volunteers.

Short-term rentals

After months of debate and nearly five years of discussion, voters rejected a ballot measure that would have repealed Gearhart's vacation rental rules. The measure failed 77 percent to 23 percent.

More than 100 residents who campaigned against the repeal filled a room at McMenamins Gearhart Hotel and shared their moment of victory as votes came in election night, Nov. 8.

The trail to Measure 4-188 began in 2013, when city leaders and residents sought to improve the stock of long-term rental housing amid concerns about how vacation rentals in residential zones can negatively affect the city's atmosphere and livability.

At the time, the taxing ordinance for short-term rental properties provided exemptions for the approximately 50



COLIN MURPHEY/EO MEDIA GROUP

Gearhart Mayor Matt Brown reads election results to a room full of people at a watch party at McMenamins Gearhart Hotel the night of the short-term rental vote.

single-family homes rented out under the city's guidelines.

Repeal of that tax came nearly three years later, when short-term renters were required to pay the city's 7 percent lodging tax.

By 2016, the nature of the internet and booking trends through companies like Vacasa and Airbnb added to concerns that short-term rentals would limit long-term housing stock and could be detrimental to the city's quality of life.

Residents in favor of regulating vacation rentals cited Gearhart's comprehensive plan, written in 1994 and expressing the intent to recognize the importance of the city's residential neighborhoods and the need to protect them from the negative impacts of rental property. Complaints that out-of-town management was unable to promptly reply to public safety concerns led to an increased call for regulation, including a provision requiring 24-hour owner contact information.

In presenting Measure 4-188 to voters, opponents of regulation stressed property

rights and said the rule changes go "far beyond" common-sense measures.

The ballot measure would have changed limits on permit transfers and maximum occupancy and repealed special regulations imposed on vacation rentals. The rules cover off-street parking, residential appearance, garbage service, septic sewer capacity inspections and cesspool prohibitions.

The measure would have also eliminated a requirement that a 24-hour representative be able to physically respond to the site within 30 minutes and removed a limitation on the number of vacation rentals.

So far, 73 vacation rental permits have been approved under the ordinance, with another 14 pending. A registry is available online.

Fighting fires

Seaside and Gearhart's "bravest" stepped forward to battle wildfires from Oregon to Southern California.

This summer, California sent resources to Oregon to fight blazes in the Chetco Bar

Fire in Brookings and the Eagle Creek Fire in the Columbia Gorge.

In October, crews were mobilized and on their way down Interstate 5 to fight in the Santa Rosa region, sleeping in tents outside the Sonoma County Fairgrounds.

Oregon firefighters offered relief to local crews whose resources had been spread thin.

Crews cleared brush fires and put out hot spots in an effort to contain blazes driven by the wind, reaching speeds of 60 mph at times.

Local firefighters from the Oregon Strike Team are heading home as California wildfire conditions continue to stabilize.

Five members of the Seaside Fire Department and three members of the Gearhart Fire Department joined the Clatsop County Task Force and crews from throughout the West to battle wildfires in California's Napa Valley.

Gearhart Chief Bill Eddy was among Gearhart firefighters in California. The department had the role of looking for and extinguishing spot fires.



FILE PHOTO

Gearhart Firehouse is considered unsafe in a potential Cascadia Subduction Zone event.

Gearhart firefighters also joined teams fighting the Thomas Fire near Ventura, California. Demobilization began Dec. 19.

New firehouse

The city is looking for alternatives to a new firehouse on public parkland, a proposal that met with strong pushback at a public forum in May.

With some willing property owners, conversations about potential sites are underway.

The current firehouse consists of a cinder-block building at 670 Pacific Way, built in 1958, and is considered outdated and vulnerable to earthquake and tsunami. While built "fairly stoutly," according to geologist Tom Horning, who has served as a consultant for the city and is a Seaside city councilor, the property is likely to flood even in a moderate tsunami, prompting discussion of a new location.

Brown said he hopes to present the new locations, along with cost breakdowns, to the public this fall.

After a two-year study of nine locations, the firehouse committee narrowed the choices down to three: Gearhart Park at the corner of South Marion and Pacific Way; the current firehouse on Pacific Way; and Trail's End, directly across from the fire station on the south side of Pacific Way.

The Trail's End site was eliminated because of low elevation, poor soil quality and public opposition. Locations to the east are vulnerable to flooding from the Neacoxie.

But at a May public forum, many residents expressed their discontent with the park even being considered as an option. Despite the park's 48-foot elevation — the fire station property stands at an elevation of 27 feet — the proposal met stiff resistance. Many of those who spoke said they considered the park a part of the "character of the town."

Gearhart's firehouse committee is now putting finishing touches on a new proposal listing sites under consideration.

At the city's December City Council meeting, Mayor Matt Brown said a proposal listing three sites could be presented at a February public forum.

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