

community

number of small-town and rural folks," says Westerling. "I can't prove it, but I'd suspect that if you look at all of the states that make up this country, there are more small-town occupations going on in Oregon than anywhere else in the United States. I think that particularly is testimony to how here in Oregon we do have an organization that is entirely about amplifying those voices and making sure that these concerns are felt everywhere."

While the focus on individual Occupy movements nationwide begins to trend toward sustainment of the various camps, general health and well-being of protesters, and walking the tightrope of civil disobedience, Westerling hopes that those involved continue to analyze their motivations. She encourages every citizen to look at where they're most impacted "by the downward mobility of our society, and to make that a household discussion, and to come into this moment."



"I would be part of this, healthy or not," says Westerling of the Occupy movement. "Right now, we are living in an incredibly jumbled society. We can pull at any strand and see at the other end how a problem has actually been made so much worse over recent decades. I see it as a very grown-up- movement message to say that all of us matter. If people can't hear that, I think that's because they're not looking, really, at what's going on."



You Weigh In

Just Out asked readers via Facebook their thoughts on the Occupy movement and the demonstrations in downtown Portland. Below, a recent thread...

I believe in the right to free speech and to protest. I believe in what their general message is (though it seems to be getting lost). However, I also believe in abiding by laws and ordinances and not being destructive. It's tough. The damage caused to the parks is adding up and we, as taxpayers, will foot the bill. Granted, it's far less than we already spend in taxes, but it's money that could go to better use. I say move them to Pioneer Courthouse Square. Even more obvious and no chance of ruining anything. Also, they should apply for a permit to stay overnight in an effort to make it legal. [Mayor Adams], surprisingly, has worked well with them so far. I'm sure he'd entertain the idea of legally allowing them to stay overnight. -Michael Olson

I understand the basic thought behind the Occupy movement, but I do not think they have the right to claim they are the "99 percent." If they base their actions on a vote, I do not remember ever being asked if I agree with their actions. They are no more the "99 percent" than the "1 percent," if you ask me. As things move on and on, the communities they are protesting in are burdened with having to pay for more police, cleanup, etc. I don't think with all the budgets already stretched pretty far this is a good use of the funds. Nor do I think blocking streets, derailing other groups who took the time to get needed permits, etc. really speak for the 99 percent. Sorry but this for me is turning into yet another 1 percent speaking for us. -April Landers

They have been working on education/information campaigns—I think the organiz-

ers recognize that simply sitting in the park is not enough and is really just [an] initial action—eventually there has to be a phase two, the what's next.

"This for me is turning into yet another 1 percent speaking for us."

-APRIL LANDERS

They have (for some time) been/are planning to collect funds to pay for the park damage—including volunteering to do the work (keeping in mind the broad range of skills there). -Debra Porta

By 99 percent they are talking income levels. So technically whether you agree with them or not, you are part of the 99 percent. Unless you're a billionaire. I am tired of people complaining about how much this is costing the city. The damn fact is people have the right to protest without friggng permits, and if our government and financial sector hadn't screwed us we wouldn't be having a problem with our budgets being stretched. Your apologetics for the 1 percent is sad. So let me get this straight. You would halt all demonstrations and all the progress this movement is making because it costs money? -Djambel Unkov

Throughout history REAL change has only occurred by the people. Instead of focusing on the minimal cost of a park cleanup, perhaps attentions would be better focused on the trillions of dollars the banks have taken from us and the criminal activities they have yet been held accountable for. Or perhaps the fact that the banks/corporations/rich own politicians and the people's will is being ignored. In my America, free-

dom of speech is more important than trespassing on private property, which is a misdemeanor. Conservatives who support the Tea Party movement, which is named after a felonious act against oppression, seem not to agree. Don't you find that oddly hypocritical? -Shelly Casteel

I support the cause and the message. I don't believe that a (largely) homeless camp in front of Portland City Hall is going to have any impact. As we know there are scant few Fortune 500 companies based in Portland. Protests like this in our liberal mecca is certainly singing to the choir. If the movement is going to have any impact, besides whining about the obvious and abhorrent inequities in our society, they need to have a platform of issues, an agenda to accomplish them, and leaders to promote and elect. They will NOT overthrow the government or subvert the current paradigm by camping in a park. I think it's time to go home. -Scott Osburne

"In my America, freedom of speech is more important than trespassing on private property, which is a misdemeanor."

-SHELLY CASTEEL

My partner and I have participated in the marches... very inspiring... so many different kinds of people participated... union folks, grandmas, every ethnicity, not just the usual suspects. The message is important... the income disparity is about the disappearing middle class... the richest folks and corporations OWN our government. This model is UNSUSTAINABLE. The park that is being occupied (in a very organized way) is paid for by the taxpayers. It is being used for an important purpose. Those who are occupying are representing those of us who stand in solidarity but can't be down there. -Wendy Wick



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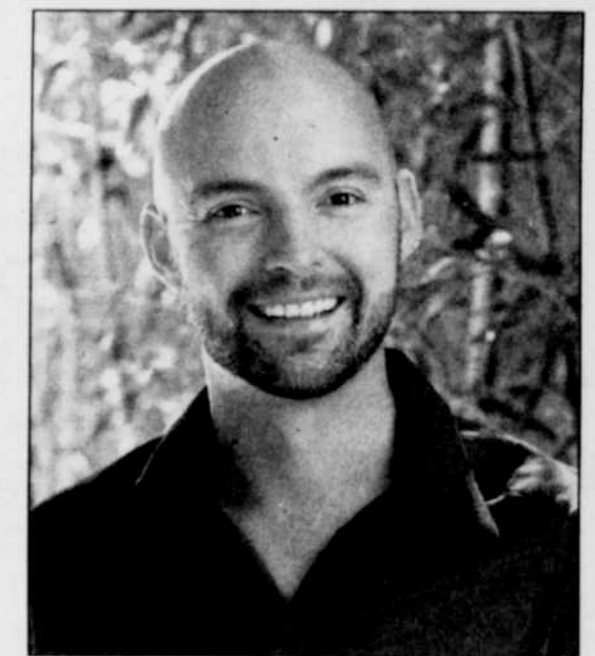


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