

so little sense

MONEY, from page 8

money to go to housing people like that. There's a process for this stuff. We've already been burned once."

Multnomah County Chairman Ted Wheeler was the only politician willing to talk one-on-one with Street Roots after the roundtable. Wheeler said he'll do whatever it takes to expedite the process of getting dollars on the ground for projects in the pipeline.

"Look, things are bad. Real bad. I mean I don't know why on earth I ever ran for this position," says Wheeler. "And one day, when the smoke clears and I am eventually governor, I'll remember some of these folks. And I tell you what - they're going to remember me too. They're going to remember when Uncle Ted force-fed them - Wheeler Road Kill Café burgers. Why is that? Well, that's how we're going to be covering costs for the next two years for our animal road maintenance crew. I'll wait for my shot and then, *bam*. It'll be possum stew for some of these characters. They'll regret crossing me if I don't end up in the Oregon State Hospital before the economy turns around."

Meanwhile a spokesperson for City Hall pointed towards a new soccer stadium and a proposed Convention Center Hotel for signs that the economy is not that bad for everyone.

"We may be cutting crucial services and moving things around a bit," said one chief of staff. "But the reality is Portland is resilient and we'll persevere."

Asked about the decline in home values, the record number of foreclosures in the city, the dozens of vacant storefronts downtown and throughout neighborhoods, the conversion of condos to rentals, the rising unemployment and homeless figures, and the cutting of important social services, the City Hall staffer said, "We're the city that works. And we'll let you know what's going on as soon as someone in Salem tells us what's going on with the money. Until then, we're going to have to live with it."

In a written response from Sen. Jeff Merkley's office in Washington, D.C., on the matter of the failing economy, Merkley told Street Roots, "Tell me about it. I need some help paying down my debt for those commercials. Times are tough."

Asked if anyone in Washington, D.C., was helping Merkley's colleagues in Salem figure out what was going on so they could help their colleagues in Eugene, Medford, Bend and Portland figure out what was going on, he said, "To be honest, we've been asking our colleagues in New York what's going on and they've been asking their colleagues in Paris, Berlin, London,

Riyadh, and Beijing what's going on and no one really knows. Money is on the way. That's all we're told."

Meanwhile the world's leading economists and insiders at the Federal Reserve and Treasury Department told more than 400 television reporters that they aren't even clear about what's happening.

"We live on an axis. The tide must turn," said one state economist.

"When will things turn around? How do we lead ourselves out of this dark recession depression?

What is the meaning of life?

And how do local economics

play a role? These are all

questions we ask ourselves.

Time is all we have. The

answers will reveal

themselves."

Asked if the economist,

who has written two New

York Times' bestsellers,

was sleep-deprived and

possibly needed medical

attention, he just said,

"No, this is life's journey.

It's possible I had a

nervous breakdown back

in November, and again in

February, but now, I've just

accepted things to be ...

When people ask me for

advice, I just tell them things

are going to be OK. Keep

investing. Go green."

As Street Roots was going to

press, President Obama announced

that a second round of stimulus

package money totalling nearly a

trillion dollars was being proposed to

hire staffers around the country to report

on how the first stimulus package was being

handled. Dozens of high-level administrators

with Fortune 500 companies on Wall Street have

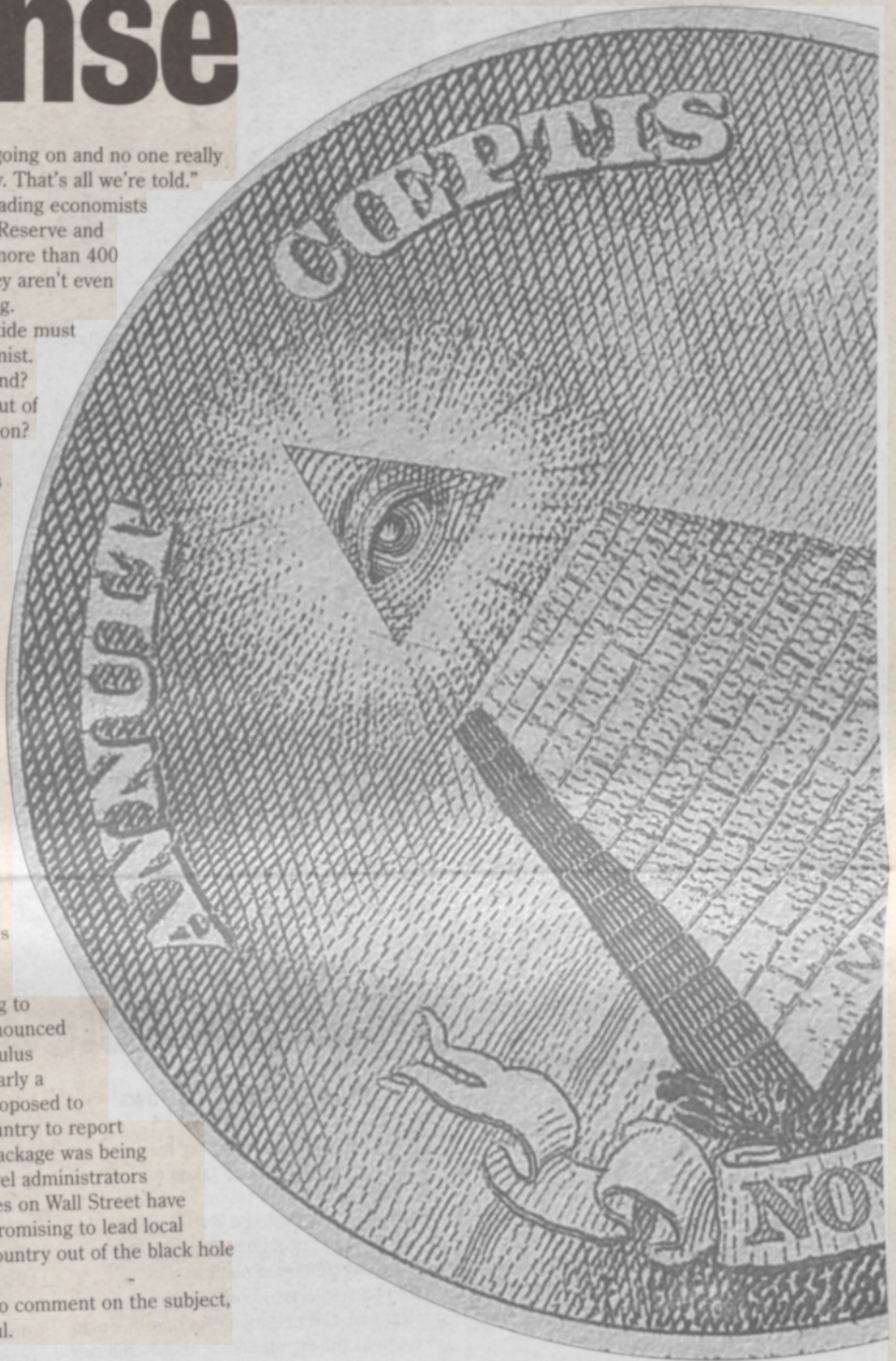
applied for the positions, promising to lead local

governments around the country out of the black hole

they created.

Local officials declined to comment on the subject,

but did say they are hopeful.



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