

WHO OCCUPIES THE LOCAL TOP 1 PERCENT?

The Occupy Eugene protesters are waving signs saying they are the 99 percent, but who are the top 1 percent here?

In Lane County, the top 1 percent get almost double the income of all of the bottom 40 percent combined, according to state income tax return data on adjusted gross income. That's about 4,000 people getting almost twice as much money as about 83,000 people.

The income for the top 1 percent in the county averages \$561,000 per year while the income for the bottom 60 percent averages a poverty level \$15,000 a year, according to the 2009 tax return data.

The income disparity in Lane County is somewhat better than in Portland's Multnomah County. Here the top 1 percent gets 12 percent of all the income; in Portland the percentage is 14 percent. But in Benton County, home of Corvallis, the top 1 percent gets only 11 percent of all the income.

The income gap in Lane County has also improved a little over the last decade with the big drop in the stock market. In 1999 the top 1 percent had 15 percent of all the income.

Besides social unrest, the Oregon Center for Public Policy (OCPP), links income disparity to economic despair. The public interest think tank notes that the last time that income inequality reached such high levels was just prior to the Great Depression.

OCPP quotes Marriner Eccles, a businessman who became Federal Reserve chairman during the Depression: "(B)y taking purchasing power out of the hands of mass consumers, the (wealthy) denied to themselves the kind of effective demand for their products that would justify a reinvestment of their capital accumulations in new plants. In consequence, as in a poker game where the chips were concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, the other fellows could only stay in the game by borrowing. When the credit ran out, the game stopped."

— Alan Pittman

LANE COUNTY REDISTRICTING DONE FOR NOW

The long battle over Lane County's voter districts has ended ... for now, but some involved in the contentious process say the final results could wind up in court. "What you're seeing is wholesale gerrymander," says Scott Bartlett, a member of the Lane County Redistricting Task force.

On Oct. 26, Commissioners Sid Leiken, Jay Bozievich and Faye Stewart voted to choose scenario eight, the boundaries suggested by Bozievich after the Oct. 5 public hearing. Commissioners Pete Sorenson and Rob Handy opposed scenario eight, which Sorenson has also called a gerrymander, meaning the district's boundaries were altered to benefit a group or person.

While the commissioners have been split down conservative/liberal lines, more conservative areas have themselves been split on scenario eight. This redistricting puts Glenwood and the Harlow area into Springfield, and Whiteaker and west downtown Eugene into South Eugene, and Churchill residents into rural East Lane.

Bartlett says that by packing East Lane, Faye Stewart's district, with urban residents, it "significantly urbanizes the East Lane district by displacing Cottage Grove as the

OCCUPY HELPS LOCAL HOMELESS

While media attention has centered on where Occupy Eugene will move to next, the occupiers themselves, in addition to discussing where to place their camp, have put effort towards working with those for whom where to sleep at night is daily concern, Eugene's homeless population.

"In Eugene our discussions have revolved around supporting and even transforming the homeless community," says Jamil Jonna, a UO grad student and an Occupy Eugene organizer. "There's a greater hankering for social change in that community," he adds.

While the Occupy Wall Street movement has focused on issues of economic inequality, corporate greed, corporate personhood and Wall Street bailouts, Jonna says Occupy Eugene has concerns specific to the local community, and one of those is working on homeless issues. Contrary to reports on other Occupy efforts, Jonna says the homeless are "not a drag on the movement but actually part of it when given the opportunity."

Occupy Eugene started off camping in the Park Blocks Oct. 15 but moved to Alton Baker Park a week later in order to not interfere with the Saturday Market. Jonna says Alton Baker had exposure, safety and other issues and the group moved temporarily to the UO.

Over a period of several weeks Jonna says Occupy Eugene decided to move to Washington-Jefferson Park, which has the advantage, he says, of protection from rain and weather thanks to the highway overpass. He says that location was selected early on and was

one of the top choices suggested to OE by the city of Eugene. He calls the city's willingness to work with the movement unique and says "The city is working with us and we'd like to leverage that, especially about issues such as the Downtown Exclusion Zone."

On Halloween, OE had a zombie walk to the Eugene branches of several national banks to take a stand against corporate greed.

Efforts in other cities to dislodge occupations have created controversy. In Oakland, Calif., police attacked the Occupy Oakland camp Oct. 25 with rubber bullets, tear gas and other "less lethal" weapons. Scott Olsen, a 24-year-old former Marine who survived two tours of duty in Iraq uninjured, was struck in the head by a police projectile and his skull was fractured.

Eugene's Occupy movement has been marked by dialogue with city officials and a lack of confrontation with police thus far.

Jonna encourages people to participate in the dialogue, and he says the next big march will be Nov. 5. According to the OE website, "Remember, Remember the 5th of November is National Bank Transfer Day ... If you're looking for ways to make a difference, here is one way: If you have a bank account at a corporate-owned bank, move it to a local credit union on Nov. 4th or 5th." For more info go to occupyeugene.org

On Nov. 9, We the People Eugene will do a teach in called "Occupy Eugene in Context" at Harris Hall with UO History professor Daniel Pope, author of *American Radicals*; Lauren Regan of the Civil Liberties Defense Center; Stan Taylor of the LCC Peace Center; Carol Stabile, director of the UO Center for the Study of Women in Society; UO political science professor Joe Lowndes; and Occupiers. — Camilla Mortensen



IT'S ABOUT TIME

BY DAVID WAGNER

Watching leaf drop through the fall, we notice that not all trees drop their leaves at the same time. Of course, different species shed leaves at different times, maples before the alders, but here I refer especially to the black cottonwoods along the Willamette River. Their leaf drop is spread out over several weeks. Some trees will have dropped their leaves completely while other trees are still laden with green leaves. Their variance seems greater than any other tree species.

A good project for a family with kids keen on nature would be to pick a line of cottonwoods and take pictures once a week through the season, noting dates when each tree turns color and when it becomes bare. Then, next spring follow the same trees to see if the early leaf droppers are the earliest ones to leaf out.

Aspen, in the same genus as cottonwood, grows in clones. A hillside of aspen will have some clusters with yellow leaves, some with green leaves. Watch out for this on a trip to Klamath Falls next year.

Beware of the white mushrooms proliferating in lawns this time of year. We have had a recent invasion of these "lose your lunch bunch" fungi, probably a result of global warming.

Our herbaceous perennials have long since had all above-ground parts shrivel and wither away, leaving only forlorn, dry stalks with seed capsules. Their seeds will begin to sprout and grow now that the ground has been moistened by autumn rain.

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SCROPHULARIA
CALIFORNICA

