

Let's look at the Republican front-runner Willard Mittens Romney. He regularly speaks publicly for \$300,000 a speech, more than 10 times my net salary. If he gives 10 speeches a year, that's 100 times my annual salary. This does not include the \$15 million he annually grosses from investments (468 times my annual net salary).

Mitt effectively pays a smaller tax rate than I do, so for every dollar I earn, Mitt is earning at least \$100 not counting his income from tax deferred assets and investments tucked away in the Caribbean. It would take me 36 years to earn what a typical CEO or CFO makes annually.

When you handicap a population's earning ability, you are handicapping their ability to spend money.

*Jonathan Seraphim
Eugene*

ROBERTS' LEGACY LIVES ON

Two years ago the U.S. Congress declared every Jan. 23 to be "Ed Roberts Day." The work Ed did and the life he lived had many parallels with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Both were inspirational speakers and models for Civil Rights. Both helped guide systemic change and lasting direct benefit to many millions.

In 1962, as James Meredith was escorted through hostile mobs to attend the University of Mississippi, my brother Ed was moving his wheelchair and iron lung into UC-Berkeley. He was the first person with severe disabilities to attend UC-Berkeley. His academic, personal and subsequent political success opened the door (and installed curb-cuts and accessible architecture) for millions with disabilities to follow him out of institutional warehousing and hopelessness into a new world, one full of personal choice.

He died 17 years ago. I miss him dearly and am so proud of his legacy. Although the push against prejudice remains ever necessary, the gains made towards equality will never be abandoned.

One barrier to equality today for all of us is our "fee for service" medical industry, particularly onerous for those who are poor, unemployed and disabled. We in Oregon have a calling and opportunity to transform our state health industry (ultimately federal) into a system in which every human has a right to health care.

If you would like to learn more and join in our social and political push for universal health care, join us at the Peer Support Club, 990 Oak St., a program of Lane Independent Living Alliance (www.lilaoregon.org) here in Eugene.

*Mark Roberts
Eugene*

AN ACT OF KINDNESS

To the man who bought my groceries for me when I lost my money this week (1/20), I was so grateful for your kindness in a moment of panic. This kind of selflessness for a stranger shows that you are a considerate, generous human being. In a world that seems to be inundated by corporate greed and narcissism, it's nice to know that there are still kind-hearted, good people out there.

*Lil Frey
Eugene*

INVALUABLE POOL

A great big thank-you to the anonymous donor who sent \$25,000 to the Tamarack Pool. I know I speak for many when I say we depend upon this resource to live our daily lives. The pain relief the Tamarack Pool provides is something I have not been able to find anywhere else. Having a saltwater facility that is open to even the most disabled is invaluable.

It was heartwarming to see all the babies in the pool on Saturday happily swimming in the warm water, and the swim lesson board is filling up. It is because of your support, and the support of many others, that the doors remain open.

If you have never visited Tamarack Pool, you should. You will find a community who cares and supports each other. It is a truly a wonderful place.

*Leni Bader
Eugene*

HELP FOR SCHOOLS

In 2011 Eugene public schools made about \$22 million in cuts. Schools were closed, teachers were fired, programs were slashed and more kids were packed into fewer classrooms. And we ain't done yet!

Over the next four years, 4J predicts budget gaps of more than \$50 million. There's no reason to believe that the state or federal government will do anything to provide significant economic assistance to schools, and the economy shows no signs of recovery. However, there is hope.

The Occupy movement has helped raise awareness of America's vast economic inequality. More people are beginning to understand that the system has been rigged to benefit those at the top at the expense of the 99 percent. We know that the rich have been doing fantastically well for decades while working people have been getting hammered. Even as the Great Recession (which was made possible by financial deregulation) devastates ordinary Americans, those at the top continue to rake it in.

If we're going to avoid making more massive cuts to public education — the bedrock of democracy — we're going to have to act locally. Fortunately, our City Council has the ability to put a funding measure targeting the wealthy and super wealthy to a vote. Poll after poll shows that the people are ready to support it. The question is: Does the City Council have the moral fortitude to make it happen?

*Joshua Welch
Eugene*

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

The 99 percent complain that they have no representation. That's because they keep electing the 1 percent to office!

*Jerry Ritter
Springfield*

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