

KICKED DOWN THE ROAD

I have camped and built shelters in the wetlands of the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania, my place of birth, since I was a child, and I have camped all across the U.S. in some of the most beautiful national parks. I have camped in the Colorado Rocky Mountains, Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Montana and Yosemite, not to mention (because I have forgotten) many other tourist, hiking trails and scenic places in California, Colorado, Utah and Arizona.

If folks here cannot trust me to camp responsibly, clean and quiet (just ask the ODOT guys) then I do not know what to say except excuse me for living! At least no one has to call in a HazMat or sheriff's jail crew to clean up my mess. I cook with propane and do not smoke. Risk of fire: none.

I am not on a recreation binge here, people! I am doing this by necessity — I am homeless! But none of that matters. When the city finds me I will get kicked down the road again — except this time the city will be forced to face the fact that there are no more places to camp and people are going to rise up and say enough is enough! We live here, have lived here, and you are not going to push us any farther away!

Danielle Smith
Eugene

JUST A FAIRY TALE

Once upon a time there was a beautiful kingdom known as Oregon. In this kingdom,

there was a town called Eugene. There were many who lived there who were wealthy and lived quite well. But there were also many who were poor and lived quite poorly. The poorest of the lot were the fairies. They had no jobs or homes so they were forced to live way out at the edge of town. They camped out and lived there as best they could. Then one day, the owners of the land they camped on grew angry with them. The owners were unhappy with the mess that the fairies had made there.

When the Eugene City Council learned of this, they decided to do something about it right away. They sent out city trucks and workers to pick up the trash. Other trucks brought Porta-Potties and solar heated showers. FOOD for Lane County pitched in and sent them food. The fairies got medical help from CAHOOTS, Occupy Eugene and the White Bird Clinic. St. Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army and Goodwill provided clothing, tents and sleeping bags.

The fairies were very happy and grateful for all of the help they received. They made sure that they kept their campground clean. The fairies lived there happily ever after.

This, of course, is just a fairy tale.

Randy Stenersen
Eugene

PERVASIVE DISORDER

If former commissioner Rob Handy's alleged indiscretions warranted an outside review, so do the actions of Lane County Administrator Liane Richardson and the four county commissioners who support

her. Outside review means "outside" and "impartial," not overseen by a friend and colleague (County Counsel Stephen Dingle). Who was the author of this really bad idea?

This latest fiasco is yet one more example of the Board of Commissioners refusing to pay attention to the obvious. For the past year, numerous people have brought to the commissioners' (and city of Eugene's) attention, with documentation, Greenhill's withholding treatment from some animals and other contract violations. We have Greenhill's own files and internal emails that prove this. Commissioners Bozievich, Farr, Leiken and Stewart have refused to act and move forward on the violations of state statute, and to actually enforce the contract the county has with Greenhill (see NoKillLaneCounty.org). How many other contracts, paid for with taxpayer dollars, are being similarly mismanaged?

Things are so bad that whistleblowers have to remain anonymous and get outside legal help. Requests for public documents are blatantly ignored. All these things and more are symptoms of the same pervasive disorder that permeates county government. Only by removing all the bad apples will we have back a county that we can be proud of and can afford to live in.

Tamara Barnes
Eugene

SMART METERS SPEAK OUT

Places like EWEB usually get what they want — so we can expect to get and

pay for "smart meters." But when we do I hope we can get the latest models being beta tested in California. I was visiting a friend there and the new meters have a speaker and announce things so you do not have to look it up on your computer.

When we were sitting in the living room one very hot July day — about 102 degrees — the meter announced:

Hello Dave, I have an efficiency message for you. Turn the air conditioner off. I suggest a fan. As you know I will be reporting your usage for this hour, and with time of day pricing, you cannot afford this.

We ignored that but after a bit it came on again and said:

Dave, can you hear me? Please respond. If you do not I am reporting your usage at this time, and turning the air conditioner off.

Then the air conditioner was turned off. It was uncomfortable soon, but the efficiency the utility promises is there. Money was saved. It seemed like a bit of loss of privacy, but we are all getting used to that these days.

So let's be sure we get the new IM-HAD/VOX. model. At least we have choice in the model type, I think.

Michael Lee
Eugene

HISTORY MATTERS

I always look forward to Brett Campbell's music columns in *EW* because his writing is generally well informed and a pleasure to read. Yet his July 18 piece

MIC CHECK! BY FERGUS MCLEAN

Seeds of Destruction

HOW CAPITALISM SOWS THE SEEDS OF ITS DEMISE

The Occupy Wall Street meme went viral in September 2011. People all over America assembled to oppose the astonishing Wall Street bailouts, which continued after emergency assistance to Main Street dried up. Street drama was electrifying. Looking back, history will show that Occupy was the beginning of a paradigm — shifting people's reaction to the third structural crisis of American capitalism (after the depressions of 1893 and the 1930s). Both of these previous crises resulted in fundamental rewrites of the operating code of the American political operating system. The emergence of the Occupy movement marks the beginning of a rewrite of our political operating system.

I was drawn to the transparency and democratic process of Occupy Eugene and to its focus on the issue of corporate money in politics. I started attending general assemblies and soon found my way onto the Occupy Eugene Foreclosure Committee.

Dozens of distressed homeowners with no one else to turn to came to us and reported appalling fraud and predatory lending practices by their banks that had deceived and double-crossed people who'd fallen behind on mortgage payments. We could do little to actually resolve their problems, but we had some small victories, and we learned about what the banks were doing in a way that few others could, witnessing the devastation inflicted on homeowners through greed and often illegal practices.

People's lives were falling apart, and the people destroying them were receiving huge financial payouts and apparent immunity before the law. We shouldn't have been surprised. What we were seeing was just American capitalism with its pants down.

The U.S. has evolved a political operating system that balances civic concerns of the public sphere and the commons against the power of the self-organizing market economy

and private property. The basic operating code of the public sphere is outlined in our founding documents: equality, self-government and human rights, including free speech, the right to assembly and the right to trial by jury. These principles are ethically and morally based restrictions on the powers of government, operating codes written into our national operating system.

The prime code of the market, on the other hand, is profit. There is no morality associated with capitalism except that imposed on it by the state. Return on capital investment and private control of the money supply in service to empire are the corporate-sponsored operating codes behind our faltering, belligerent, unjust and environmentally self-destructive political operating system.

Twice previously, structural collapse forced American capitalism to fundamentally rewrite its operating code. We are in the midst of the third collapse.

Capitalism is about converting the commons into commodities, and it is almost infinitely flexible; it can turn almost anything into a commodity — including air and water. Mighty capitalism rules the world, but only in accordance with its internal operating code. If we want to change our operating system, we have to rewrite its code.

The depression of 1893 was resolved by creating the American empire and by giving control of the money supply to private bankers. Recovery from the Great Depression of the 1930s took direct government intervention in the economy through New Deal programs of economic relief, Social Security, the minimum wage and the rights of workers to form labor unions. Economic desperation has compelled us, after much suffering, conflict and debate, to rewrite our political operating code to include America as empire, a private debt-based money system, Social Security and the rights of labor. A similar code rewrite lies ahead. Will it be written secretly by corporations or will the voice of we the people be heard?

Advances in and misuses of computer technology triggered the present crisis. Emboldened by supercomputer-driven, sophisticated financial derivatives, bankers demanded and got deregulation of the financial industry. But capitalism, though immensely powerful, is a stupid beast, which needs protection from itself. With no internal conceptual limitations besides the drive to create profit, capitalism lacks the capacity to sustain the conditions that allow it to operate. Unregulated, it has once again engineered its own collapse and created the conditions that birthed Occupy Wall Street and Occupy Eugene.

Fergus McLean of Dexter is active in watershed issues, foreclosure reform and sustainable forest practices. Occupy Eugene and Occupy BankBusters will present a benefit showing of the new documentary Jekyll Island: The truth behind the Federal Reserve in the EWEB Community Room, 500 E. 4th, 7 pm Wednesday, Aug. 21. Call 937-3034 or see OccupyEugeneMedia.org.