

We the 99%

THE OCCUPIED

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Occupiers camp out in McPherson Square in Washington, D.C. In the month since the occupation began, tents have filled the square, including those offering food, power, information and medical service. (Craig Hudson)

Waking up from the American dream

BY SAM JEWLER

Over the past thirty years, the United States as a whole has prospered greatly. A closer examination, however, reveals that only a small sliver of Americans is profiting from this boost in productivity. The vast majority of Americans have seen their incomes stagnate while their opportunities dwindle and their costs rise.

US productivity has increased by 72 percent over the last thirty years, but the wealthiest one percent of Americans have increased their real after-tax income by 275 percent, according to a recent study by the

Congressional Budget Office (CBO). According to a new study by the Economic Policy Institute, the top 1 percent of Americans claimed 60 percent of all income growth in the last 30 years, with the top .1 percent taking 36 percent of all income growth. The bottom 90 percent claimed just 8.6 percent of all new income in the last thirty years.

"The people who have power have adopted policies that skew the rewards of the economy to people with power, and have blocked policies that would lead to shared prosperity," said Larry Mishel, president of the Economic

Policy Institute. "That people aren't doing well has not been determined by the economy; it's been determined by politics and policies."

The tax cuts started by Bush and extended by Obama return over \$100,000 per year to those making a million dollars per year — a tax break greater than three times the average annual American income, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The CBO shows that even as their share of American incomes more than doubled over the last thirty years, the richest 1 percent of families' effective federal tax rate dropped from

37 percent to 29.5 percent.

"People making ten, twenty million dollars per year are all government welfare recipients," said Dean Baker, co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research. "Without the government running to their assistance, Citibank would be bankrupt today, Goldman Sachs would be bankrupt today — most of Wall Street would not exist today. And that's true of many, many sectors of the economy," Baker cited pharmaceuticals as an example, saying drugs would be one-tenth of their current

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Jack Evans of Ward 2 brings corporate influence to City Council

BY PETE TUCKER

After the mayor and D.C. council chair, Ward 2 Councilmember Jack Evans may be the city's third most powerful elected official. As the longest-serving member of the D.C. Council and chair of the all-important Finance and Revenue Committee, he has significant sway over how the city spends its money.

Not only is Evans influential, he's also wealthy. In addition to his \$125,000 council salary, Evans earns \$190,000 a year from Patton Boggs, the powerhouse K Street lobby firm. But it's unclear what the councilmember does to earn his second six-figure salary. His Patton Boggs bio used to say, "Mr. Evans advises clients on real estate matters." However, that sentence was removed shortly after this reporter's January 2010 column in the Washington Post.

In his decade as Finance Committee chair, Evans has played a leading role in "real es-

tate matters" that involve large amounts of public land and taxpayer subsidies, and have often resulted in major revenue losses. Examples include the baseball stadium (cost to taxpayers: \$600-plus million), the convention center (\$850 million — D.C.'s largest publicly financed project ever), and the convention center hotel (\$272 million), among others.

Evans' Ward 2 includes Dupont Circle, Georgetown and the downtown area, where D.C. has ongoing occupations at Freedom Plaza and McPherson Square on K Street.

Over the years, Evans' dual employment has led to questions regarding potential conflicts of interest. Former Washington Post reporter John Hanrahan recently raised concerns over Evans' role in the convention center hotel deal. After spending years pushing for massive public subsidies to assist Marriott in building a 1,175-room luxury hotel, Evans

CONTINUES ON 2



Members and supporters of the OccupyDC movement participate in a flash-mob style protest in Union Station on Oct. 20. The action was in response to the Conservation International's corporate greenwashing of Northrop Grumman and other corporations. (Craig Hudson)

Conservation International linked to corporate greenwashing

BY JARRAD DAVIS

Out of nowhere, approximately 100 Occupy DC demonstrators appeared at Union Station, protesting a \$1,000-per-plate fundraiser hosted by the nonprofit Con-

servation International (CI) with chants and music and dancing. On its website the environmental organization claims to work toward "a healthy and productive planet for us all." But protestors say that given CI's close corporate partnerships with companies like BP, Monsanto, Walmart, Toyota, McDonald's and Coca-Cola, all that it cleans up is soiled reputations.

Former Conservation International employee Christine MacDonald, spoke out against

Bank transfer: Customers switch to credit unions

BY ANDREW BREINER & KARINA STENQUIST

People at occupations all over the world are focusing their anger on the consumer banking industry. They are outraged at the massive bonuses handed out after a taxpayer-funded bailout, anxious about the banks' ability to dictate government policy and fearful that not enough is being done to keep something like 2008's collapse from happening again. And after the public outcry that caused banks, most notably Bank of America, to retreat from putting new fees on debit card use, consumers are looking for new ways to store their money.

At a big bank, large shareholders and the board of directors make the decisions. The bank invests depositors' money and charges them fees to make as much profit for its shareholders as it can. When someone puts money in a credit union, however, she is a member and an owner. The board of directors controlling investments is made up of elected, unpaid members.

The structure of credit unions tends to make them treat depositors well, said credit union historian and proponent

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Evans brings K St. to City Council

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ans recused himself from voting on the issue at the very last minute. Months later, when the deal became ensnarled in legal troubles, Evans un-recused himself and reconciled the warring parties.

Two weeks ago, in an interview with TheFightBack, Hanrahan questioned why the Ward 2 councilmember has yet to submit a written explanation for his 2009 recusals, as required by law. “If the laws are on the books, follow them, Mr. Evans,” Hanrahan said. The following day, Evans lashed out at the veteran reporter, calling him “a f---ing idiot” in an interview with City Paper’s Loose Lips. When asked by email if he apologized for this statement, Evans replied, “No.”

Evans, whose Patton Boggs salary exceeds his council income, has been excused from following the conflict-of-interest-disclosure law by an April legal opinion from

the council’s general counsel. V. David Zvenyach wrote that Evans doesn’t have to file a

“If the laws are on the books, follow them, Mr. Evans.”

written explanation because the “appearance of a potential conflict” is not enough to require disclosure. Evans told The Occupied Washington Times he does not plan to file an explanation for his recusals. “There’s nothing here,” he told the Post’s Mike DeBonis.

Excusing Evans from explaining his recusals is significant because unlike lying to reporters, which may result in bad press, lying on a legal document can be a criminal offense. •

Pete Tucker is a local D.C. reporter at The-FightBack.org.

American dream falling out of reach for most

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prices in a truly free market in which executives earned less money.

Costs of critical services are now higher in real terms than ever before. Health care coverage costs have doubled since 2001, to an average \$15,000 per family, according to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation.² In turn, the proportion of personal bank-

ruptcies coming from health care costs has gone up, from 46 percent in 2001 to 62 percent in 2007. According to the American Journal of Medicine, some 80 percent of the bankrupt had health insurance, but it was insufficient to save them from financial ruin.

Education costs in this country are higher than ever before. Nationwide, student debt is approaching \$1 trillion — more than national credit

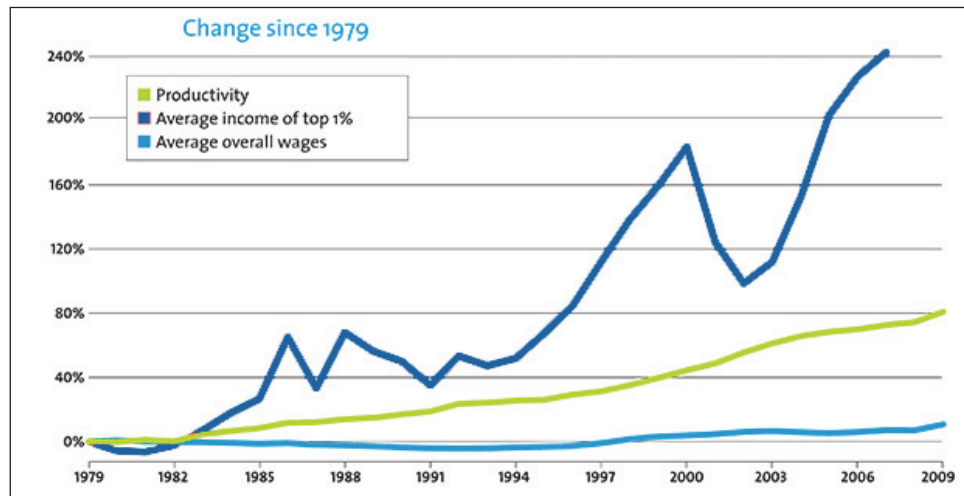
card debt. The average class of 2009 college graduate is facing \$24,000 of debt, according to the Project on Student Debt. Only about a third can pay their loans back on time, in large part because of the dismal job market. 4 Some 22 percent of 2009 college graduates have no work; according to a study at Northeastern University, an additional 22 percent are working jobs that don’t require a college degree.

In Washington, D.C., the average debt for recent college graduates is \$30,000, greater than in any of the 50 states. The Project on Student Debt lists American University as one of the twenty highest debt

universities in the country.

Social mobility, the movement of people between income levels, is now little more than an American dream. The US consistently ranks as one of the least socially just countries in the Western world. Blacks and Hispanics have seen no rise in real income since Martin Luther King had his dream, and a third of the middle class is falling into poverty. Americans live in a world more productive than ever, yet it is one with higher costs, fewer jobs and lower-paying jobs.

The American dream is a reality only for those at the top — the other 99 percent of us have fallen asleep. Now begins the great awakening. •



NO SHARED SACRIFICE

The graph at left depicts the steady gains made in American productivity over the last thirty years compared to the massive gains in income for the top one percent and the essentially stagnant development of average overall wages. The graph was put together by Mother Jones, which reported that if median household income had kept pace with the economy since 1970, it would now be over \$90,000, instead of the current \$50,000.

Source: Mother Jones

Conservation International trades green cover for profit

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the most polluting plant in the whole country.... But nobody in that meeting, or anywhere else in the organization, wanted to talk about it. It was a taboo. You weren’t supposed to ask if BP was really green. They were ‘helping’ us, and that was it.”

Northrop Grumman is another corporate donor backing Conservation International. Their President and CEO, Wes Bush, sits on CI’s Board of Directors and was attending the October 20 fundraiser when Occupy D.C. arrived.

According to a 2008 report by the Political Economy Research Institute at the University of Massachusetts, Northrop Grumman released 460,000 pounds of toxic air in one year. The Environmental Protection Agency has also linked the company to 52 toxic wastes sites within the United States.

Yet despite the seemingly



Sophie Vick lifts a hand-made OccupyDC flag over the crowd at the Oct. 20 Union Station protest against corporate greenwashing, one of many actions carried out by occupiers. (Craig Hudson)

obvious environmental damage being caused by companies like Northrop Grumman, Conservation International maintains that they and the rest of their Business and Sustainability Council are, “a community of companies committed to leveraging their business experience and resources to protect nature for the benefit of humanity.”

New Zealand-based researcher and writer, Aziz

Choudry, denounced Conservation International, stating, “CI’s track record suggests a motivation to conserve biodiversity as a resource for bio-prospecting for its private sector partners rather than any concern for the rights of the peoples who have lived with and protected these ecosystems for so long.” Bio-prospecting is the discovery of new and useful biological samples, typically in less-developed countries,

either with or without the help of indigenous knowledge, and with or without compensation.

The Amerindian Peoples Association expressed “deep concern” when Conservation International did not consult with the indigenous residents of southern Guyana before entering into a memorandum of understanding with the government of Guyana, which allows the nonprofit to turn their traditional lands into “protected” lands.

The Mexican Center for Political Analysis and Social and Economic Research (CAPISE) announced much stronger worries, calling Conservation International “the Trojan horse of major transnational corporations and the U.S. government.” CAPISE continued on to say that, “Conservation International’s strategy is to gather information and buy large tracts of land with high bio-prospecting

potential, which allows it to administer natural and/or strategic resources and place them at the disposal of major transnationals.”

In order to investigate the accusations of greenwashing and bio-prospecting against Conservation International, the British magazine Don’t Panic had two of their reporters go undercover, pretending to be representatives of Lockheed Martin—the world’s largest multinational arms company—to see how CI interacts with its corporate partners.

The undercover reporters met with a senior official at Conservation International who offered “Lockheed Martin” a chance to join CI’s Business Sustainability Council for \$37,500 per year. That offer came after the reporters had stated in an email that their main interests were not to protect the environment, but rather to raise their “green profile.”

The official from CI assured them that companies are not bound by Conservation International to participate in any kind of sustainability practices.

Conservation International’s alliance with corporations appears to be its only concern. CI accepts money from large-scale polluters while praising those same companies’ small-scale green efforts and harmful actions like bio-prospecting.

Heydon Prowse, one of the reporters who went undercover, said, “Conservation International’s dependence on corporate funding makes them unwilling to exert any pressure on polluters to change their ways.”

The Occupied Washington Times contacted Conservation International for comment, but they did not return a reply. •

OPINION

Occupy DC and Stop the Machine share common ground

THE OWT AND OWP EDITORIAL BOARDS

There are two occupations in Washington, D.C. We fight for the same vision of a nation that promotes the general welfare of its people without regard for - or undue influence from - their access to wealth. The Occupied Washington Times, created by the occupiers of McPherson Square, and The Occupied Washington Post, created by the Stop the Machine occupiers of Freedom Plaza, build our solidarity on the knowledge that we share the support

of the majority of American people.

An ABC News/Washington Post poll found that 80 percent of Americans oppose the Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission Supreme Court Decision, including 65 percent who strongly oppose. Citizens United allowed corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money to advertise in elections, greatly expanding their power to choose politicians and create the policies they want.

A 60 Minutes/Vanity Fair poll showed that a large major-

ity of Americans choose taxing the rich as their preferred way to address the deficit. Yet most politicians have neglected to seriously consider this approach.

Eighty percent of Americans don’t want the government to cut Social Security. Yet Congress is considering cutting Social Security to lower the deficit, which many economists consider far less urgent than the unemployment crisis.

Eighty-eight percent of Americans supported banning bank bonuses or taxing them at 50 percent, according to a Bloomberg poll taken after

the taxpayer-funded bailout. Yet these proposals were never discussed by our elected representatives. And once again this election season, the two major party presidential candidates, as well as the most influential legislators, will be courting the financial sector for tens of millions of dollars in donations.

We the 99 percent declare a democracy that listens more to wealth than to public opinion unethical, illegitimate and self-destructive. We demand that we the American people be heard - for the benefit of the 100 percent. •



Occupiers collaborate to spread the word about the growing movement. (Craig Hudson)

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

MCPHERSON SQ. OCCUPIERS AT A GLANCE



MICHAEL PATTERSON

I'm an Iraqi war veteran. I was an interrogator and I saw this government's policy when it came to occupying other countries.... I would interrogate individuals and the same story kept on coming up over and over again: "I have to feed my kids"... "It is wrong you guys are here." This government conditions its soldiers to dehumanize people. You're not fighting people or Iraqis or Afghans, you're fighting terrorists or insurgents.



KELSEY TRIBBLE

I believe that things drastically need to change. I'm pretty freaked out by what looks likely to happen within my lifetime when it comes to global warming and climate change. As well as just the destruction of earth, especially the lengths we're going to to get more fossil fuels: fracking, mountain top removal and deep-water drilling. It is just getting more and more destructive.



MIKE GOLASH

I was at Columbia University in 1968, where we had a major student strike sit-in, which involved a thousand students

getting arrested as part of a fight against racism and as part of a fight against the Vietnam War. After that, I continued being active against the Vietnam War movement until 1975 when the war ended. At that point I got a job as a transit worker in Washington and I started fighting for improved wages, benefits and job security for the workers there. All those experiences showed me that people will fight when conditions are right and that you can actually make some progress.



ROOJ ALWAZIR

I'm occupying because I'm sick of the hypocrisy and I'm sick of all the lies. I'm sick of

what it's done to humanity... My aunt was diagnosed with leukemia, and because of our messed up health care system she was unable to get medical assistance. No insurance would take her, and that to me is the most inhumane thing ever... I've been out here since day 2 of Occupy DC. I didn't know what to expect at first; I had no expectations. I was just like, "Oh my god, the time has finally come. People have really awoken, and we're not just talking now - it's action.

How we occupy

BY BRIAN KNUDSEN

Americans are increasingly dissatisfied with the institutions of our national life. A recent Gallup poll revealed diminished public confidence in areas as diverse as business, labor, banks, medicine, media and the criminal justice system. Congress' approval rating hovers around 9 percent.

Yet nothing elicits as much disappointment and anger as the state of our representative democracy. Citizens decry the gridlock of the political system and loathe the polarized nature of our discourse. There is collective frustration with our 220-year-old government's inability to bring us together to solve the important issues of the day.

The Occupy movement spreading across the United States expresses this frustration with mainstream politics

by conceiving and practicing democracy in a wholly different way. Namely, the occupations are exercises in direct, or consensus-based, democracy. Truly democratic decision-making, occupiers assert, is a

Truly democratic decision-making is a collaborative effort that hears and recognizes all voices.

leaderless, active and collaborative effort that hears and recognizes all voices. It is not a passive, competitive affair that reduces social problem-solving to replacing one set of politicians with another.

By choosing to relate to each other in a radically egalitarian, horizontal, and non-coercive fashion, and by making decisions by consensus as opposed to voting, occupi-

Finding my second occupation

BY KATHRYN SEIDEWITZ

"Get a job!" someone shouted from their car at a group of occupiers sitting in McPherson Square. Before anyone could respond, the car was gone. The refrain is a common one.

It comes not just from hecklers on the streets but also blasted from media outlets and proliferated in waves on the Internet. The most immediate thought — other than "I have one!" — is "Where?"

Unemployment currently lingers around nine percent, meaning close to 14 million Americans are without a job. Nearly 40 percent of the unemployed have been out of work for over

six months. Chronic unemployment often degrades a person's attractiveness to potential employers. The average length of unemployment has shot from 13.5 weeks between 1948 and 2007 to 40.5 weeks today.

These figures do not include the people that have simply stopped looking because jobs are nowhere to be found.

Job participation, the amount of people of working age who are employed or actively seeking work, has fallen to 64 percent. Five and half million Americans are unemployed and not receiving benefits, up from 1.4 million last year. With the lowered job participation rate and underemployment

factored in, unemployment rises to 17.5 percent. Of the Americans that have managed to find and hold onto jobs, 40 percent have minimum or low-wage service jobs.

These statistics, while shocking, are not news. Things have been bad for a long time now, something the people yelling "get a job" are most likely aware of. The prevailing individualist spirit of our times lays the blame for the depressed job market squarely on the unemployed. The facts, though, place the blame elsewhere.

The 2008 bailouts were supposed to allow for greater financial liquidity. But lending by commercial banks dropped nearly one trillion

dollars as of mid-2010 and still has not recovered. Instead of lending to businesses and promoting growth, and, in turn, jobs, the banks have been buying up treasury bonds. Bank investment in treasury bonds leapt nearly \$500 billion in 2011. In effect, the banks took the money that the federal government's interest-free loan, and loaned it back to the government with interest. This essentially free money contributed to bank profits of \$58 billion in the first six months of the year.

Rather than stimulate the economy, the bailouts helped pad Wall Street pockets, and now, nearly three years after the financial collapse, millions of Americans still can't find work. Many occupiers are in the same situation as most Americans — a Wall Street Journal poll recently found that 85 percent of Wall Street occupiers had jobs.

Counter-protesters that had planned to appear at Occupy DC handing out job applications on October 20 never materialized. Occupiers had taken their lunch breaks to greet the counter-protestors; others had printed copies of their resumes, ready to apply. Many were too busy at work to come down and greet them. •



ROSE JAFFE

On the same page, for once

BY ERIC BLAIR

Dear conservative friend and co-worker,

We don't agree on much, do we? It seems like the act of opening our mouths instantly leads to stubborn disagreement. Despite being a government employee, you believe government should be smaller; I think it should be bigger. You still have some faith in the trickle down effect, and I think

it's a form of liquid torture. To me, conservatives are heartless; to you, liberals are spineless. Although you spare me the Bill O'Reilly banter, I could do without the David Brooks tripe, as I'm sure you could my Noam Chomsky quotes. Nevermind gay marriage, gun rights, search and seizure laws, and abortion.

But there's hope for us yet, my friend, because the political climate is a little more ac-

commodating for dissent these days. We are both shocked by events like Citizens United, when the Supreme Court allowed corporations to write blank checks in support of political candidates. And it's because we figured out just how much money Wall Street funnels into all of these candidates. Biased mainstream media outlets across the political spectrum have kept us at odds. And it's ironically because of these childish standstills in Congress, the forever-looming shutdowns, and the broken promises of elected officials in both parties that there's hope.

What seems to tie us together is the sense of powerlessness we feel watching our government quibble over petty issues as the country slinks further down the road of inequality and stagnation. It wouldn't be so bad if we could vote in new members of Congress to do our bidding, but we both figured out that we can only elect new actors playing the same characters every two years. My friend, we've even agreed on a common reason for this: it's the money of corporations, unions and the elite, not ours, that fuels their campaigns, making our representatives beholden to them. On our lowly government salaries, we're far from being able to buy airtime to run vicious

ers assert that individuals can manage their affairs without representatives. All are capable of direct participation in the process.

The general assembly is the Occupy movement's

participants come to workable, collective solutions that all can accept. Even if an individual does not entirely agree with the assembly's decision, she comes away with a stake in it since her voice has been heard and her concerns have been addressed.

Importantly, these methods are working effectively. The movement is growing, managing itself and incorporating new participants with various views and interests.

Faced with an unresponsive government, occupiers created their own responsive one. The movement provides a model for the better society it hopes to bring about by showing that it is possible. The occupation points to the possibility of an engaged world, where general assemblies are present in every neighborhood and people confidently and ably manage their own affairs. •

IN A TIME OF
UNIVERSAL
DECEIT, TELLING
THE TRUTH IS A
REVOLUTIONARY
ACT.

Five things you can do

- 1

OCCUPY
- Visit McPherson Square during the day or stay the night. Bring your tent, sleeping bag, instruments, signs and artwork. Food and water are always available.
- 2

PARTICIPATE
- Attend a General Assembly, held everyday at 6pm on the south lawn of McPherson Square. Join a committee working group (media, outreach, action, resource allocation, cooking, and many others). Join marches, teach-ins and rallies.
- 3

SPREAD THE WORD
- Visit our website at www.occupydc.org for general information and updates. Follow us on Twitter: @OccupyKSt, @Occupy_DC, @OccupyDCMedia, @OccupyWallSt. Find us on Facebook at "OccupyDC K St".
- 4

EDUCATE YOURSELF
- Visit the ever-growing People's Library at McPherson Square, featuring a collection of hundreds of donated books, CDs and DVDs. Spend time online or with a book reading about growing inequality, corporate personhood, activism and political transgressions. Talk to friends about the Occupy movement.
- 5

DONATE
- There is always a need for food, water, warm clothes in person or arrange for a pick-up. Support Occupy DC by visiting www.occupydc.org/donate.

Poll: Occupiers want justice, democracy

Like Marvin Gaye in the 1970's, many Americans look at the Occupy movement and wonder, "What's going on?" In an effort to help answer that question, we conducted an informal poll of 100 supporters of Occupy DC over the last two weeks of October in McPherson Square, from actively engaged committee members to curious passersby. Reflecting the movement's broad scope of grievances, each respondent was asked to write in up to three reasons for being there. Two hundred and eighty six responses were broken into 14 different categories. Three main reasons came up: the fight for socio-economic injustice (given by 56 percent of respondents), the demand for accountable government (52 percent) and the call for an end to corporate rule (37 percent).

Under socio-economic injustice were calls for more humane approaches to issues such as health care, personal debt, the justice system and the homeless. The desire for a more responsive government included demands for more and better jobs, an end to corruption and the establishment of DC statehood. Opposition to corporate dominance included the demand that people be considered more valuable than profits and that corporate greed be curtailed by financial and lobbying reform.

Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents were given up to three write-ins each. •

"EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL, SPECIAL PRIVILEGE FOR NONE."
THOMAS JEFFERSON



Credit unions bank on local economy

CONTINUED FROM 1

Matthew Cropp. "It simply doesn't make sense for a credit union to try to screw its customers, since any extra money made is simply returned to the members" in the form of better rates and free services, he said. Those services often include reimbursement of ATM fees, since many credit unions do not have their own ATMs.

John Bratsakis, president of the Maryland and DC Credit Union Association, said there were big spikes in membership as the financial crisis unfolded, and after the announcement of new debit card fees. "It seemed like the straw that broke the camel's back," he said. "People said, 'I'm gonna go out and look for an alternative.'" In fact, the Independent Community Bankers of America polled their member banks and found 60 percent had seen an increase in new accounts.

Supporters like Cropp say the structure encourages safer investing as well. They cite, for instance, that credit unions engaged in little subprime lending — lending to riskier borrowers at higher interest rates — and fared far better in the fallout from the 2008 housing market crisis. Corporate banks, meanwhile, are more willing to make risky decisions because they risk other people's money, he said, and deposits are insured by the Federal government.

Cropp is disappointed that the bailouts saved the "reckless and corrupt" corporate banks

at the expense of responsible institutions. The bailouts, he said, "functioned to protect the wealth, power and market share of the very institutions that caused the crisis, while robbing their alternative competitors of the opportunity to reap the rewards of their prudence."

Small community banks have long been a refuge for those concerned about entrusting their savings to gigantic banks. But they are often bought out by the behemoths.

Thousands moved their money from the big banks on November 5, Bank Transfer Day.

In the Washington, D.C. area alone, customers of Adams National, Provident Bank, Chevy Chase Bank, and Wachovia Bank have found their institutions disappear into Premier Bank, M&T Bank, Capital One and Wells Fargo respectively.

Not surprisingly, federal government employees have a variety of credit unions to choose from in the D.C. area. But for those not eligible for a credit union through their employers, there are institutions that base membership on church affiliation or place of residency. •

Occupy stages global show of solidarity

BY SIOHBAN MCGUIRK

Just four weeks after the tents descended on Wall Street, the rallying cry echoed across the globe: "Occupy Everywhere". On October 15th, in as many as 950 cities in 82 countries, millions took a stand against rampant social inequality. In each location, the motivations, instigators and socio-political contexts differed. All over, the anger was the same.

In Europe, protests merged with existing campaigns against governments' austerity measures. Welfare cuts and privatizations are being sanctioned in times of high unemployment, while corporations and the wealthy continue to exploit tax loopholes and enjoy close ties to influential politicians.

In Rome, an estimated 200,000 marched on the 15th, just one day after Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi survived a no-confidence vote in parliament. He is standing trial on charges relating to bribery and abuse of power. Riot police attacked protesters with water cannons and tear gas, injuring at least 135 people.

In Madrid, half a million people filled Puerta del Sol, scene of the "los indignados" occupation, which lasted from May to August this year. During that time, upwards of 20,000 Spaniards slept in the city's central plaza to bring attention to their political disenfranchisement. Among Spanish youth, unemployment stands at 43 percent.

In London, an encampment outside St. Paul's Cathedral attracted thousands, with 400 camping overnight. Within ten days, numbers swelled and a second camp has been erected, closer to the financial heart of the city. A

chief grievance in the UK is tax-avoidance strategies used by multi-national corporations. UK Uncut campaigners claim that Vodafone owes \$9.6 billion in unpaid taxes. Proposed changes to the Na-

On October 15th, in as many as 950 cities in 82 countries, millions took a stand against rampant social inequality.

tional Health Service have also provoked outrage, with many commentators fearing that privatization looms.

In South Africa, 80 protesters braved a heavy police presence outside the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Similar numbers took to the financial centres in Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei and Tel Aviv.

In Sydney, Australia, 60 regular campers were joined the following Saturday by several hundred more. That night hundreds of police swarmed onto the site to forcibly evict the occupiers. Fifty were arrested. Remaining campers have temporarily relocated and General Assemblies continue to be held. Plans are afoot to occupy another space.

In South Korea, campaigners took a different approach: rather than occupy continuously, they have pledged to return to Seoul Plaza in greater numbers every week. On October 15th, 600 marched under the Oc-

cupy banner. One week later, over 3,000 day laborers workers rallied to demand a minimum wage and labour rights. The Fair Trade Agreement with the US is also a major issue of concern, as campaign-

ers argue it will only benefit the top one percent of Koreans. While some actions have met with more success and longevity than others, the movement continues to spread. It seems fitting that Occupy — kick-started by a Canadian magazine and inspired by the Arab spring — is marching on an international scale.

In each country there are specific issues to address; ultimately governments are being lobbied by their own people. In our globalized world, the connectedness of grievances is, however, impossible to deny. The same multi-national corporations find tax breaks and loopholes in every corner of the earth. Protestors, too, are forging international links. Twitter, live streams and dedicated websites are being used to share information and express solidarity between occupations. No matter where you are, an occupation is probably not far away. •

A NOTE ABOUT The Occupied Washington Times

The Occupy DC General Assembly in McPherson Square has entrusted a newspaper working group with the creation of a newspaper to document the social and economic injustices of our time and news of the occupation itself. A rotating editorial board, held accountable to the Occupy DC gener-

al assembly, determines the final content and tone of the newspaper. The opinions expressed represent those of individual authors. In no way do we speak for Occupy DC or the Occupy movement.

— The Occupied Washington Times Editorial Board



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