The March against Monsanto

By Jerry Brule

On May 25, Eugene joined hundreds of cities worldwide in protesting Monsanto, pesticides, and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). An exuberant rally of between fifteen hundred and two thousand people took place at the Wayne Morse Free Speech Plaza. The Raging Granaries warmed up the crowd with inspirational songs and were followed by several speakers. Melissa Wischerath, a managing attorney and cofounder of the Sustainable Law Center, told the crowd about Oregon Senate Bill 633, which was drawn up by ALEC (the American Legislative Exchange Council) and has been introduced in 19 other states to benefit corporate interests like Monsanto at the expense of local control of what we grow and eat. It is called the Oregon Monsanto Protection bill because it prevents county and local governments from passing any laws that affect seeds or the products of seeds, and it prevents localities and counties from regulating GMO seeds and products. If passed, this bill would take away the power of the people to determine what is best for local farmers, the water, the soil, their own health, and that of other creatures.

As a theme, many of the participants in the crowd dressed in black with yellow stripes to represent bees. Others wore beekeeping outfits. Phillip Jones from Oregon Sustainable Beekeepers spoke to the crowd about the decline in the number of bees due to pesticides. He said that many European nations have banned a class of pesticide called neonicotinoids, which are suspected of causing colony collapse. Jones said that, here in the United States, lawmakers were not only unwilling to ban the use of these pesticides, they also approved the use of an additional insecticide. Due to lack of bees, the almond crop may not be pollinated this year.

After the rally, the long line of marchers, accompanied by the music of Samba Ja, traveled on sidewalks and through traffic lights with the aid of the Eugene Police. They crossed the Ferry Street Bridge both ways and ended up at the Campbell Center where there was additional entertainment and several other speakers. As Fergus McLean said, “The gathering at the Campbell Center was nearly idyllic. So many bright, happy young people listening to the truth, being strong together!” It was a great march on a perfect day.

Follow Up: A week after the march, news of GMO wheat in the state hit the papers. The discovery of GMO wheat in Eastern Oregon resulted in Japan temporarily suspending purchases of any Western wheat. Genetically altered wheat is illegal in the U.S., and the rest of the world, so how did it get into Eastern Oregon? Monsanto was allowed to test GMOs in Oregon and 15 other states from 1998 to 2001. Although we were told the test plots were isolated and destroyed, some wheat must have escaped and contaminated other areas. This contamination illustrates the danger of GMOs to all farmers who want to provide organic produce and also to the health of us all.

The Danger to Bees

By Scotty Perry and Jennifer Frenzler

The May 25 March Against Monsanto, locally and across the globe, was a fantastic success on behalf of both our food supply and the pollinators that make it possible. We hope we can use this significant momentum to address a specific threat to bees in the community that is being manufactured by Monsanto and Bayer at the expense of our health, our food, and that of other creatures.

"Neonicotinoids" may be harder to say than "GMOs" — just think "ne-o-nicoti-no-ids" — but the danger posed by them has been even more conclusively and empirically determined. These chemicals are increasingly singled out as perhaps the most significant factor in the staggering collapse of bee colonies worldwide.

For example, the success of beekeepers in Northern Italy in prohibiting maize seeds treated with neonicotinoids in 2008 resulted in an almost complete rebound by their hives the following season. The results were practically undeniable, and, accordingly, Europe countries have increasingly banned the use of this pesticide.

Occupy Eugene Launches Sustaining Donor Drive

Occupy Eugene’s overhead is minimal. With no paid staff, its expenses consist of office rent, supplies for actions, and the printing of the Eugene Occupier five times a year. These costs total $5000 a year. While we were at Washington Jefferson, donations came in steadily. However, these days, donations are few and far between, and, all too often, organizations spend much of their volunteer time raising funds, time that would be better spent doing the work of Occupy.

If 40 people were to donate $120 a year, just $10 a month, Occupy Eugene’s costs would be covered, freeing up people to do the work that brought them to Occupy in the first place. Becoming a sustaining donor is easy and there are several ways you can do so. You can make a direct deposit to Occupy Eugene’s account at Oregon Community Credit Union or mail a donation to P.O. Box 744, Eugene, OR 97440. Another option is to visit our website, occupyeugenemedia.org, and click on the link on the left below Occupy Eugene Announcements which notifies subscribing anonymously if you prefer. If you are unable to donate financially, the donation of your time is greatly valued. Join our mailing list, on our website’s left column, to receive Occupy Eugene Announcements which notifies subscribing organizers, once a week, of various actions and events of Occupy Eugene and its allies.

Welcome to the new issue of Occupy Eugene’s newsletter! We hope you enjoy our articles and find a place to join Occupy Eugene in our efforts to bring about our vision. If you are looking for a way to get involved please visit http://occupyeugenemedia.org/volunteer/
Nitrogen build-up and the staled and over-budget effort to build a vitrification plant as the long touted solution to this toxic dump. In addition to knowledge gained through WAND, there are two connections that have tug at my heart in that same intimate and emotional way. I have become friends with Pat Hoover, a Hanford downwinder, and learned of the life threatening impact of the food she ate, the air she breathed and the river she swam in as a child living in the shadow of Hanford. It was just a little over a year ago that I learned my nephew in Seattle was diagnosed with chronic myeloid leukemia, a disease associated with nuclear radiation from the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The total absurdity of those duck and cover drills is clear some 60 years later. Let's commit to more meaningful ways to respond to this nuclear legacy. You can follow me on this journey and help me get the word out to as many others as possible. Bookmark the Oregon WAND blog, check it every day, and leave comments. Share it with your friends.

I have also been the local Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration held at Alton Baker Park each year on August 6. This is a lovely cultural event planned with Japanese American Association, CALC, Justice Not War, and WAND. It ends with the floating of lanterns on the pond.

Why Is EWEB Pushing “Smart Meters” on Us?

Appealing to a technology-infatuated public despite evidence of multiple risks, EWEB is joining a nationwide stampede to replace analog electricity, water and gas meters with “smart meters” that transmit utility data by radiofrequency electromagnetic radiation linked into “smart grids.” An article in the October 5, 2010 American described the Smart Grid as “a dangerously enticing idea” EWEB must heed this as have other jurisdictions.

Health risks of electromagnetic radiation: Animal nervous systems operate through electrical signals controlling everything from heartbeat and breathing to vision and movement. Some 600 studies have shown negative effects of RF cell phone tower emissions on birds, bees, other wildlife, plants and humans. In 2011, scientists from 14 countries representing the World Health Organization International Agency for Research on Cancer classified RF radiation as a possible carcinogen. The WHO recommends “the precautionary principle” in absence of certain.

Potential liability: Like cell phone towers, smart meters expose citizens involuntarily to RF radiation. Wikipedia’s entry on “Mobile phone radiation and health” includes 103 citations, representing abundant expert testimony for future lawsuits. Will smart meters be the next personal injury gold mine with cell phones establishing legal precedent for RF radiation damage?

A coalition of citizens and organizations, the Community Rights Group Plans to Submit Local Food Initiative

This ordinance, drafted with the assistance of the Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, would prohibit GMO crops in Lane County and make saving seed legal for everyone. It aims to protect the right to grow local food, the rights of natural ecosystems to exist, persist, maintain themselves, and evolve, as well as the right of local communities to self-government, including regulation of corporations. This is an ambitious project, and CELDF has pledged to provide legal support to the campaign and to the county as necessary to carry it forward.

In a couple months we will need everyone's help to collect 12,000 signatures. We will have six months or less to accomplish that task. Visit http://communityrightslancounty.org/ for more info.

Contact Occupy Eugene

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P.O. Box 744, Eugene, OR 97402
www.occupyeugenemedia.org

Occupy Eugene Newsletter

We welcome your comments, suggestions, and feedback. We will continue to provide accurate and financial contributions for our newsletter. E-mail us at newsletter@occupyeugenemedia.org.

Occupy Eugene holds a General Assembly (GA) every Friday at 6 p.m. upstairs in the Growers Market, 454 Willamette. The 3rd GA of each month attracts the most members. The GAs are open to all. Please come to a GA and find out what we are up to.

Occupy Eugene

O ur Duck and Cover By Susan Cundiff I grew up at a time when “duck and cover” was a drill routine that we did in school to prepare for nuclear war. Bomb shelters were advertised in local newspapers. All this was part of an absurd belief that the world might be habitable after Russia and the U.S. hurled nuclear bombs at each other.

I assumed that we would all be destroyed before I reached adulthood. For me, the threat of nuclear annihilation has always been an extremely personal and emotional issue. Perhaps that is one of the reasons I have decided to participate in the Interfaith Peace Walk for a Nuclear Free Future from July 26 to August 11. I’ll be drumming and chanting with a pair of Buddhist monks as we walk about 210 miles through various Northwest cities. It’s a labor of love for something I truly believe in: a future free from the severe damage to our land, water and environment caused by exposure to nuclear radiation and the threat of annihilation overall.

I have been involved with Women’s Action for New Directions (WAND) since 2001. Why? This is its mission in a nutshell. In fact, that used to be our name. Women’s Action for Nuclear Disarmament

Even though I’ve lived in Oregon since 1973, until my involvement with WAND, I knew little about Hanford Nuclear Site, located on the banks of the Columbia. There are many Oregonians who are totally unaware of Hanford or its status as the most contaminated site in this half of the globe. As a member of WAND, I have learned far more about our national arsenal and industry, its enormous cost and the lethal legacy of production. Hanford brings geographic immediacy into the nuclear debate. Recent news articles indicate the increasing dangers of leaking tanks.

By Fergus McLean phone tower emissions on birds, bees, other wildlife, plants Some 600 studies have shown negative effects of RF cell "compelling evidence" of DNA damage from RF exposure. studies from 12 collaborating European laboratories found genetic risk. The Versailles Court of Appeals ruled RF exposure risk estimated to be between 300 and 700 times higher in Israel than in France. One Houston firm already specializes in smart meter related fires. And two large class action lawsuits have recently been filed in Northern and Southern California against Southern California Edison, Pacific Gas & Electric and several manufacturers alleging negligence, fraud and deception, and products liability for harms caused by smart meters. Compounding all other problems, the liability risk to EWEB ratepayers is unacceptable.

Privacy and Cybersecurity: Connecting meters and grids to the Internet will make hacking possible from many thousands of access points, facilitating theft of private information and possible takedown of entire grids. In a survey of 544 IT security professionals, 77 percent distrusted “smart grid cyber security.” Pike Research reported, “The attackers clearly have the upper hand. Many attacks simply cost EWEB ratepayers millions of dollars annually. EWEB will decide this fall whether to sign a $26 million contract with a company that installed smart meters that have caused fires. Give the commissioners your thoughts at http://www.eweb.org/commissioners.

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http://www.citizensforaradiationfreecommunity.org
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GYVIIu0OiDg
http://www.wnd.com/2012/12/smart-meters-turn-incen-diary

Occupy Eugene Fundraiser at Tsunami

On May 19 the Occupy Eugene Newsletter Working Group and the Library Committee held a successful fundraiser at Tsunami Books. We raised over $1200 dollars, which was evenly divided between the newsletter and the OE general fund.

We would like to thank everyone who made this event possible: Scott Landfield for hosting; Robert Long Hill, Kirk Tonczary, Plaedo, Scotty Perry, Eden, Zara and Art Bollman for performing; and Jen Frenzer for emceeing. And we are most grateful to the many donors who made this event a success.

Contact Occupy Eugene

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Occupy Eugene has come together to create a community that expresses our common needs, to organize, network, and participate in solutions and to commit to more meaningful ways to respond to this nuclear legacy.

As I walk this summer, I will blog about my experience. Each day I plan to highlight a particular organization or individual and the work they do striving for peace and a nuclear free world

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Occupy Eugene Newsletter

This issue of the Eugene Occupier is brought to you by the tireless collaboration of Catherine Siskin, Chriton Blackwell, Vickie Bitter, Wanda Brooks, Lark Ritter, Fondle Nelson, and the many participa-
tants and committees of Occupy Eugene.

Reader Feedback and Comments: We welcome your comments, suggestions, and feedback, as we continue to provide accurate and financial contributions for our newsletter. E-mail us at newsletter@occupyeugenemedia.org.

Occupy Eugene

We are a non-violent, non-partisan, social-political movement for accountability and responsibility in government. We stand in solidarity with Occupy Movements around the globe and all people who will no longer sit back and watch corporate and special interests run their Government, and spoil the living Earth. For we, the people, are the government.

It is time to turn away from a culture of war and domination, and create a living economy that operates in harmony with our living planet. We must begin by opening our hearts to those the present system would discard and push into the shadows, because we believe that, in our United States, it’s the people who are sovereign- not global corporations.

We have come together to create a community that expresses our common needs, to organize, network, and participate in solutions and to commit to more meaningful ways to respond to this nuclear legacy.

Note: This essay has been approved by the OE General Assembly. You can find Occupy Eugene’s complete vision statement at http://occupyeugenemedia.net/vision.
**Trans-Pacific Partnership Solidifies Global Corporate Control**

Have you heard about the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations that may be finalized this summer? Are you aware that President Obama is currently pushing hard for a secret agreement with Pacific Rim countries that would deliver control and oversight of every aspect of United States government — national, state, and local — to secret panels of corporate lawyers accountable to nobody? Does that alarm you and make you want to know more? Did you know that Monsanto’s chief lobbyist is the U.S. chief negotiator for agricultural policy? That the negotiations, which have been going on for three years now, are so secret that no member of Congress knows what the administration is up to? It’s all true. Our “Audacity of Hope” president is pushing hard to be given fast track, or Trade Promotion Authority, which would mean Congress has absolutely nothing to say about the agreements being negotiated on our behalf by 600 corporate executives. Furthermore, Congress could be asked to approve this Trade Promotion Authority this summer. Does this sound like a plot for the next end-of-the-world blockbuster? Well, multinational corporate arch-villains are plotting, but it is not more, Congress could be asked to approve this Trade Promotion Authority this summer.

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No doubt, much worse is lurking in this awful nightmare that Obama and his corporate cohorts are plotting. Trouble is that nobody on the outside, including our representatives in Congress, knows what it might be. The only information available on the TPP is that which insiders have chosen to leak. This is total domination over everybody else by the super elite richest global masters of the universe. Make no mistake: let go of any fantasy that Obama intends to deliver us from corporate subjugation. This is happening right now. We need to stop it now. We can start by stopping the Trade Promotion Authority from passing both houses of Congress. Let’s all ask Sen Wyden why he hasn’t spoken out against Trade Promotion Authority.

We came together and stopped the 1999 Seattle round of the WTO. We stopped the 2003 Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations, which would have extended NAFTA to South America. If we act immediately, we can stop the TPP. Once we’ve derailed the corporate engine for the third time, we might see real light at the end of the tunnel. If you want information on where Trade Promotion Authority legislation is in Congress, check out www.itsourceme.com. This site is managed by the trade and finance people in Jill Stein’s “Green Shadow Cabinet.” We put around 2000 people in the streets to march against Monsanto on May 25. Can we afford to do any less to stop Obama and Congress from giving Monsanto a free hand to force GMOs — and worse — on an unsuspecting, unwilling world? Absolutely not. Activate! Rep. DeFazio and Sen. Merkley oppose TPP. Let’s call, thank and encourage them. Sen. Wyden remains undecided, we are told. He needs to hear from us. You can sign an online petition against TPP at http://act.rootsaction.org/p/dia/action3/common/public/?action_KEY=8006.

**Working Together to Provide Shelter**

You’ve likely heard of the Conestoga Huts and Opportunity Village. Sometime this summer, OVE will open at a city-owned site on N. Garfield St. On Opening Day, eight new huts will be built. For this feat OVE needs volunteers, both “build leaders” and “hut builders.” Interested people can email Community Supported Shelter at c.s.s.eugene@gmail.com to get on the volunteer email list to receive emails with information about OVE Opening Day, as well as other opportunities to build huts throughout the community.

How have people gotten involved in this wonderful project building shelter for the unhoused? Here’s one volunteer’s story. Henry Schmald, 72, makes the windows for Community Supported Shelters’ Conestoga Huts in a small woodshop behind his house in West Eugene. The window frames are made from rough fence boards, but Schmald uses his lifetime of woodworking experience to make beautifully finished pieces. He and his wife Marcia Brent install the windows into the huts’ ends walls at CSS’s Time Hive workshop. This is what Schmald had to say about his work with CSS:

When Occupy Eugene got started, it reminded me of days when I was always involved with good people doing good things. I really admired the work that Sue Sierralta and her team were doing with the medical bus and hair stylist Benjamin Hunt and all the OVE volunteers who volunteered at the Egan Warming centers. All these people made me think, “Man, I’ve got to find something to do.” Then people started talking about Opportunity Village and that’s when I first heard people talk about Conestoga Huts. At one point Erik [de Buhr, CSS program director] brought one of the huts to the Park Blocks and I went to look at it. I got a really good hit off of Erik and I loved his enthusiasm about the huts. I was impressed, too, that they were affiliated with St. Vincent De Paul, which does so many great things in our community. I wanted to do something with the skills I have. I’ve got a small shop, so I can do small things. So when I looked the hut over, I thought, “Oh, that back window could be just my gig” — and it has been.

From when I was a little kid, my dad had a wood shop, so I’ve always been involved with wood shops. When I was in the Peace Corps in Gabon, I helped build schools. In the ’70s, I worked with Hoedads tree planning cooperative and after that helped start a woodworking and building cooperative called Boardfoot that was a great group of people to work with and a big influence on my life. Erik and the people working on these huts are what the Dalai Lama meant when, in his talk in Eugene, he talked about younger people who will make good things happen in the 21st century. We’re the folks — like the Dalai Lama — getting ready to say bye-bye. But it’s great to give these young folks a helping hand while we’re still around. The huts serve an important community purpose because they make it possible for people who might otherwise be homeless to experience how wonderful it is to have your own place. You can go to the Mission or other shelters but that’s very different from going to your own place. I know how important it is if you are trying to go back to school or get a job to have a place to lock up your stuff, and to just be able to shut a door and be in your own home. The quick answer to why I’m involved is that it makes me happy. I don’t feel good unless I’m doing something to help somehow. I love making those windows.

So, how can you get involved? On July 19 and 20 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Community Supported Shelters will hold a sale to raise funds so that they can continue building huts. They are receiving donated goods until the July 19 at the shop space at 1160 Grant St., Eugene, where the sale will take place. Come on by, or contact them at c.s.s.eugene@gmail.com, and add some happiness to your life.

**Opportunity Village Eugene**

Opportunity Village Eugene will be a new transitional micro-housing project for and by the homeless. OVE has submitted a conditional use permit for the city-owned site at 111 N. Garfield Street and expects to open the village in August. The Vetting Committee has extended invitations to 14 people (two couples, 10 singles; nine men, five women) to join a core group of OVE residents. They will be getting to know each other, reviewing and helping revise policies, and attending training sessions. The Vetting Committee will continue to accept applications, but the screening process will be performed by the Village Council (to be established).

The most pressing volunteer need is for sourcing reused or donated materials and developing relationships with local businesses and organizations that have these materials. For more information about volunteering or making a donation, go to www.opportunityvillage Eugenorg.
The decision to build the Keystone XL pipeline might seem simple. It seems better to get our oil from Canada than to buy it from the Middle East, because the oil from the Middle East is tied to war and terrorism; however, the pipeline and the Tar Sands oil will transform some of the most environmentally sensitive areas in Canada, and Canadians alike must ask themselves how long we want to live with a dying planet, or if we want to change our ways.

By Brett Darrow

The XL pipeline will bring oil from the Tar Sands in Alberta down to the Gulf of Mexico so almost all of it can be sold on the world market. The Tar Sands project will strip mining 72,000 square kilometers as big as the state of Florida, eliminating Canada’s pristine boreal forests. Each barrel of oil produced requires two tons of oil shale and about 2,000 gallons of water. The amount of natural gas used to “cook” the oil out of the sand in one day could heat 3 million homes. The toxic tailings ponds left over are the largest structures made by man and can be seen from space.

An alliance of 10 native bands who are affected by the Tar Sands and the pipelines have come together to form a movement called Idle No More, which is working for justice, peace, freedom and recognition of the sacredness of Mother Earth.

Idle No More members protest the Keystone XL pipeline.

http://www.dirtyoilsands.org/files/EN_CITSC_Tar_Sands_Info_Sheet.pdf

Video: http://video.me.com/6459584

Eugene Joins Fossil-Free Divestment Movement

By Brett Darrow

The fossil fuel industry seems intent on extending as much fossil fuel as it can, in spite of widespread environmental legislation, and it is taking advantage of the large amounts of fossil fuel use. The U.S. joined 166 other countries that signed the Copenhagen Accord, agreeing to reduce greenhouse gases by 2020. These nations, including Brazil, China, India and South Africa, are responsible for more than 87 percent of the world's carbon emissions. The Accord did not set a mandatory target, instead allowing countries to set their own goals.

Bill McKibben, the noted environmentalist and co-founder of 350.org, said that scientists are working hard to understand what is happening to the bees, but so far no single culprit has been identified. While historically there have been several viruses and other beekeepers believe that the temperature and the amount of stress the bees are being subjected to is the reason for the decline. Colonies aren't just dying; they are literally disappearing. A派 linked Colony Collapse Disorder, a tell-tale sign of colony collapse, and is responsible for a large portion of the honey bee deaths. On their own and without the support of their colony, honeybees will usually die within 48 hours. On their own and without the support of their colony, honeybees will usually die within 48 hours.

One of the leading U.S. bee research centers, Beeolgics, has suggested that perhaps one of the main contributors to CCD is the use of a type of systemic pesticide, a neonicotinoid or neonics, which have been linked to colony collapse. Researchers noticed a correlation between the time period that neonics were approved and widely adopted for agricultural use and the time period that CCD began to occur.

Neonicotinoids are nicotine-based insecticides. Most of today's GMO crops such as corn and soybeans utilize systemic neonicotinoids, meaning that the plants seeds are coated with the chemical in the soil or the plant roots. As the plant grows, the chemical is absorbed into the plant system. The presence of neonics is a threat to many species of pollinators. For example, honey bees can be harmed by a chemical called imidacloprid, which is used on crops such as corn and soybeans. Honey bees are attracted to the pollen and nectar of crops such as corn and soybeans. As the bees forage, the chemical can be transferred to the bees, causing them to become disoriented and confused and that the bees are unable to find their way back to the hive. On their own and without the support of their colony, honeybees will usually die within 6-8 hours.

As a result of the serious questions being raised about the safety of neonics and their effect upon pollinators, the European Union recently voted to implement a two year ban on neonics until more research can be conducted. Globally, neonics account for over $2 billion a year in sales, and, barring further regulatory action, those numbers are expected to rise. Companies who sell neonics, like Bayer, Monsanto, and Syngenta, are not going to give up this productive market line without a fight. They lobbied fiercely to stop the ban in the EU and continue to work hard in the U.S. to stop similar efforts. Indeed, not long after research firm Beeolgics issued the report that first linked CCD to neonics, Monsanto decided to buy the company. They claim that they want to further bee research, but one has to question how objective their research is going to be now that Monsanto owns them. Monsanto also recently partnered with Bayer and announced a new effort to study various mites, a small parasite that feeds on bees and has caused widespread problems for beekeepers. While more bee research is welcomed, one could get the idea that the manufacturers of neonicotinoids would much rather lay the blame for the decline of the honeybees somewhere other than the $2 billion dollar a year neonics industry that they profit so handsomely from.

Politics is the art of controlling your environment.

Hunter S. Thompson
Let’s turn the Seneca Biomass Plant into a BioChar Plant

By Jerry Brule

Originally, the Seneca plant may have sounded like a good idea. Take 132,000 tons of wood byproducts a year and turn that into enough electricity to power to 13,000 homes. That alone is amazing. But there are huge problems associated with converting biomass to energy independent within fifteen years, so we don’t need to go to war for oil. I think it is the ideal transition fuel until we can switch to entirely renewable, like solar, wind or biofuels. Natural gas is relatively clean burning and produces half the CO2 of coal without the pollution controls reduce high nitrous oxides that can form smog, it creates larger-sized particulates, called PM10, that can damage the lungs. Downwinders get is if the controls are on, or high nitrous oxides are high. Since photochemical smog only forms in sunlight, most of the time the smog control is off. Beyond toxics reports that the Seneca plant also produces “carcinogenic acrylonitrile, styrene, formaldehyde and heavy metals, none of which are measured for air pollution permits”. As a result, 60 percent of 350 nearby residents in the poll detected pollution, and 30 percent reported cases of asthma.

In the best of all worlds, Seneca, with its bad history of clearcutting and herbicide use, would leave the trees standing. But people also need lumber and jobs. Getting a utility or corporation to shut down and abandon a $50 million power plant investment is difficult, but, if Seneca can make biochar, it may be possible to convince them to clean up the plant.

In Merced, California, Phoenix Energy has created the first grid-tied biomass gasifier in the United States that produces biochar as a by-product. Biochar is charcoal that is used as a soil amendment. It turns poor soils, like the clay that is so common in this area, into dark, nutrient rich soil - which dramatically increases crop yields. Biochar is produced in a process called pyrolysis. Wood wastes those used at Seneca are heated in a low/no oxygen environment to clean up the plant.

There is a waiting list for Phoenix Energy’s biochar, and reports that the company eventually may make more money doing it, it may be possible to convince them to make money doing it, it may be possible to convince them to convert the Seneca Biomass Plant into a gasification plant which companies pump highly poisonous and dangerous chemicals such as hydrofluoric acid into existing gas and oil wells to “melt rocks” and objects that are obstructing oil flow. In many cases, the dangers associated with fracking may be far worse than any environmental or economic advantages.

Still scientists are developing safer technologies like forward osmosis to recycle fracking fluids, and, this year, Halliburton is offering drills a non toxic fracking fluid called CleanStim that is made from food industry ingredients. There should be stronger federal regulation to require the use of the cleanest technology and for better monitoring to make certain that poisons do not end up in our drinking water or our crops. In 2012, the EPA issued the first ever regulations of fracking which should reduce air pollution 95 percent. Hopefully, our water will be protected next. If there are costs associated with proper disposal of radioactive, toxic, and poisonous wastes, then the drillers, not the public, should pay for their safe disposal. Once we work out all of the problems, then we should export these safer solutions, not the dirty technology the industry started with.

Don't get it wrong. I love natural gas, but there are problems and a need for more regulation. We are now told that we have a hundred years’ worth of natural gas, and that use of some byproducts of some kind will be far worse than any environmental or economic advantages. It would keep the air cleaner and biochar plant would be a win-win: a good investment for Seneca as well as for EWEB. Area residents and our environment would win too. It would keep the air cleaner and help slow climate change. Plus it would be a real boon to local farmers and gardeners.


Natural Gas — What the Frack!

By Jerry Brule

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There is a waiting list for Phoenix Energy’s biochar, and the plant has been able to raise the price of the by-product. It started at a few cents per pound and is now sold for as high as 20 cents per pound in small quantities. Phoenix reports that the company eventually may make more money from the biochar than they do from the electricity they sell.

Converting the Seneca biomass plant into a gasification and Biochar plant would be a win-win for Seneca as well as for EWEB. Area residents and our environment would win too. It would keep the air cleaner and help slow climate change. Plus it would be a real boon to local farmers and gardeners.


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Occupi Inter-Faith Eugene-Springfield is Going Strong

By Mary Sharon Modich, Catholic Community-affiliated

Thanks to others’ passion for social justice and their urge to get involved, the inner activist in me has started to wake up. I have been a part of Occupy Inter-Faith Eugene/Springfield for over a year. This group’s generous welcome of new folks and desire to create a more just society has enabled me to become part of a vital movement for social change.

Occupy Inter-Faith has forged links with other groups in our community who are pressing forward for good, including Occupy Eugene, Opportunity Village Eugene, Homeless Solutions, Community Alliance for Lane County, Church Women United, Raging Grannies, Eugene and Springfield City Councils, Health Care for All Oregon, Eugene-Springfield Solidarity Network, We The People Eugene, Huts for the Homeless, and others.

Under the empowering horizontal and organized leadership from several members, we have stayed on task, educated ourselves on pressing social concerns, educated our congregations, held community dialogues, testified at council meetings, met with elected officials in Salem, linked arms, held vigils, rallied, and marched. We’ve sung and made noise in the public square, and joined in celebration.

Occupy Inter-Faith welcomes persons from all spiritual paths who seek to speak out and work on the pressing moral issues of our time. We held our general meetings September through June on the 2nd Sunday of the month from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at various locations. We are committed to pressing on as a “coalition of conscience” to create a just society in which good can flourish. Health care finance reform, affordable housing for everyone, and true democracy remain the focus of our actions.

We are proud to be part of a grassroots movement that spans our state, nation, and world. We are in this together, and we are not going away. Contact Patty Hine at 541-343-5091 for more information or to get involved.

The Imperative for Public Banking, Part 1

By Ferogue Moleay

Economies organized around the needs of investment capital (capitalism) were supposedly proved superior to those based on social needs (socialism) with the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. But less than 20 years later, capitalism’s brightest financial engineers brought the world’s economy crashing down around our ears despite the trillions of millions they were being paid to manage risk and shape the cutting edge of financial innovation.

The 2008 subprime mortgage collapse panicked bank CEOs who, forgetting their loud insistence that government should stay out of the “business of business,” panicked for, and got, trillions in taxpayer handouts to keep their failed system afloat. So much for unregulated market capitalism. Though the huge bonuses for the one-in-thousand I percent who have continued to grow, the rest of us see little or no benefit.

Social programs are crippled, millions of people have lost homes, jobs, and savings, and schools are dying. But our “global leaders” want us to believe that after opening our pockets to the perpetrators of this historic criminal economic disaster, things are just fine. We just need to tighten our belts and stop whining.

The little detail that free markets are supposed to be free and not need to be for massive taxpayer handouts went down the memory hole. That was then. Right now we all need to sacrifice for the good of the world economy and the bankers. “Free markets” now means bankers take freely from public resources without apology. So the old thing about markets self-regulating and needing only to be left alone is no longer operative.

The bankers’ “ripoff” led to the Arab Spring and Occupy. Trillions pumped into the financial system and historically low interest rates created an enormous bubble in commodity prices, food prices soared, and people in Egypt and other poorer countries went hungry. Nothing like your children starving to make you get out and raise a ruckus.

We cannot have a functioning economy where wealth is continually concentrated in a tiny and shrinking elite. Who is going to pay the taxes when there are no jobs and the rich make a science out of tax avoidance? So-called capitalism policed off socialism and then died with the bailout.

In the meantime, we are stuck with “get tough on crime” laws, such as mandatory minimum sentencing and Three Strikes legislation, which are counterproductive, because they do not allow the judge and others involved to fit the punishment to the crime, nor do they allow for restitution to the victim or rehabilitation for the offender so they will not offend again. Preventative and drug programs are the cheapest way to prevent crime, while restorative justice is best when an offender gets into trouble.


PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURIE GRANGER

Retributive or Restorative Justice?

By Jerry Brule

What is the purpose of prisons? When someone makes a mistake, the theory is that, if the offender is punished in prison, they won’t break the law again. Unfortunately, the system does little to rehabilitate and can even cause more crime. Prison forces minor offenders into contact with violent career criminals, where they can learn even worse behavior. After serving a sentence, getting a job is nearly impossible. Some ex-prisoners commit more crimes in order to survive and return to prison at a cost to the taxpayers of between $40,000 and $50,000 per year. The prison system destroys the lives of offenders, punishes families, and does nothing to help victims recover.

In contrast, the restorative justice system brings together the offender, the victim, and everyone else affected by the crime. Together with a mediator, they figure out what really happened and how the offense harmed everyone involved. The offender has a chance to make restitution, and apology, and make some sort of restitution or appropriate punishment. This is a healing process for both the offender and for the victim.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURIE GRANGER

Raging Grannies

Would you like to join the Raging Grannies, or do you have an event you would like them to perform at? They rehearse at the First United Methodist Church parlor, at 1376 Olive St. from 11:30 to 12:30 on Fridays. For more information or to book an appearance contact Laurie at 541-844-1423 or send an email to raginggranniese@uoregon.edu.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURIE GRANGER
Occupy Medical Needs Skilled Volunteers

By Patti Leahy and Sue Sieralupe

After the noticeable increase in the number of patients attending the June 9 clinic, Sue’s response was, “OM treated 63 patients today. This is an all time record. The numbers are going to be increasing over the next few months. We have to be at the top of our game to keep up. According to the latest numbers, we are losing 30 percent of Lane County’s physi-
cians to retirement during the next 18 months. Our entire medical system is going to have to change quickly. Occupy Medical is leading the way with a new vision of patient care — economical, practical, and compassionate. Encourage your health care providers to look
about any items used for of
License, experienced bus drivers so our current bus driver can take a day off
A team to assist with remodeling the bus (cabinets, counters, seats, etc.)
Another team to help Ben Foot care team members
An official meeting secretary note taker
Donation and fundraising organizers
Spanish interpreters every week; ones who can translate medical terms are ideal
A reliable, accessible, and secure location for donation collections, some of which may be perishable and need refrigeration
We need steadfast volunteers. If you can give one Sunday a month or help staff for one
head cleaner
lavender essential oil
multivitamins
poison oak medicine
allergy relief
inhalers
bus passes
hand cleaner
disinfectant wipes
blood glucose strips
cash
healthy, portable food
gift certificates from local stores for food and miscellaneous supplies
To get a donation to clinic, drop off items at 8th and Oak, Eugene, between 11 a.m. and
scattered, scatter and gather,
and scatter,
The clouds gather and scatter,
...the other most used herb forms are those that are already
packaged, labeled and ready for distribution. The manufac-
tured pill forms of herbs and vitamins donated by the local
packaged, labeled, and ready for distribution. The manufact-
ured pill forms of herbs and vitamins donated by the local
people who can organize or oversee the different groups of
Some of the current volunteer needs are:
Nurses
Licensed, experienced bus drivers so our current bus driver can take a day off
Human resource manager and volunteer coordinator
A steady crew and crew leader to set up and tear down tents, each Sunday: 10:30 a.m.
set up, 4 p.m. tear down
Bookkeeper to document expenses and donations, etc.

Donate to Occupy Medical

By Sue Sieralupe and Patti Leahy

People frequently ask what OM needs. The fact is, besides being a clinic, there is a
business side of operations and, like most others, many facets to its operation. So, just
about any items used for office and clinic operations would be considered. Some ideas are
found at http://occupymedics.wordpress.com/wish-list/

Here’s a short list of frequently needed items:
teethbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss
lavender essential oil
clean socks
vitamin C
multivitamins
combs
poison oak medicine
allergy relief
inhalers
bus passes
hand cleaner
disinfectant wipes
blood glucose strips

Healthy, portable food
Cash
Gift certificates from local stores for food and miscellaneous supplies
To get a donation to clinic, drop off items at 8th and Oak, Eugene, between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. If you need donations to be picked up, arrangements can be made by calling 541-915-6704. If you have questions about your donation, contact OM.

Website: www.occupymedics.wordpress.com
Manager: Sue Sieralupe
Email: sierralupe@comcast.net
Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/434111789971743/
Mailing address for check donations and clinic information only:
Occupy Medical Clinic
3575 Donald St. #230
Eugene, OR 97405

Occupy Eugene Committees

Dozens of activists put energy into Occupy Eugene. While the heart of our decision-making process lies in our General Assemblies, held every Friday upstairs at Growers Market, much of our work in specific areas, such as homelessness, foreclosures, and publicity, takes place at committee meetings. We have numerous committees and working groups. These groups meet regularly and carry out Occupy Eugene’s goals through a variety of actions and events. If you are interested in working with us, please come to one of our GAs or to any of our committees or working groups to see if any are a good fit for your interests and skills.

Winter’s End

By Catherine Siskron

in memoriam
The clouds gather and scatter, scatter and gather, driven by mid March wind.
The shadows come and go like vestiges of loss on a beloved face grieving.
The first, tall and stern sway, keening softly.
Under the first, among the crumbling headstones,
two men died.
One chose a bullet, the other a rope.
I wrote this poem in response to two suicides in March of this year at the Masonic cemetery. Suicide was the second leading cause of death among Oregonians ages 15-34, and the 8th leading cause of death among all Oregonians in 2010 (Suicides in Oregon: Trends and Risk Factors 2012 Report).

Thank you for your donations and our community in action.

Coming downtown to the clinic with your items on Sundays is the best way to contact the Clinic Manager and Head Herbal Team member, Sue Sieralupe. Drop items off at 8th and Oak, Eugene, between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. If you need your donations picked up, you can make arrangements by calling 541-915-6704. We appreciate your support and hope it continues for the clinic’s herbal and other depart-
ments, for the long haul of continuous health and wellbeing for our community. You are welcome to come visit and observe our community in action.
Debra and Bruce Harrow: New Volunteers at Occupy Medical

By CATHERINE SISKRON
Debra and Bruce Harrow, a recent addition to the Occupy Medical team, emit warmth and a lightness of being so rarely seen these days. It is apparent that some of the glow comes from being newlyweds. Theirs is a storybook love. They were high school sweethearts, whose lives took different turns in college. Originally from Houston, Debra found herself on the West Coast. Bruce ended up in Florida. A lifetime later, they reconvened on classmates.com, married and started their new life in Florida. A year later, they moved to Eugene.

What brought them to Occupy Medical? Prior to leaving Florida, they researched volunteer opportunities in the area and OM seemed a perfect fit because both Bruce and Debra have medical backgrounds. Bruce is a physician who takes the Hippocratic Oath seriously. His frustration with the medical industry as managed by the insurance companies makes volunteering both a way to give back to the community and a way to relieve his frustration with health care that is driven by the bottom line rather than patient needs.

Occupy Medical has the earmarks of a MASH unit. Although no surgeries are performed at OM, it is medical practice at its most raw and basic. Bruce revels in treating the person, not just the symptom. “For insured patients, a test rather than teaching good health habits and approaches are encouraged, which addresses another of Bruce’s frustrations in current medical practice—the reluctance of insurance companies to pay for naturopathic, chiropractic, herbal, or traditional Oriental therapies.

At OM, the focus is entirely on the patients. Bruce, like other physicians at OM, sees patients on or off the bus since some patients are too anxious to be confined in an enclosed space. Since there are no primary care referrals at OM nor pre-existing records to review, he relies on triage and his own ability to take patient histories and perform exams as diagnostic tools. He also likes the emphasis at the clinic to teach and support patients to live healthier lives.

Debra describes herself as being right brained and left leaning. Perhaps you had to be there to appreciate the joke, but she is funny, vivacious, and kind. She is trained as an occupational therapist and sees her job as going beyond teaching patients how to compensate for their disabilities, whether permanent or temporary. She works with patients in a broader context, helping them find activities that have purpose, to empower them to become a viable part of the community. Her focus is “to help them find a reason to overcome the challenges of getting out of bed, dressing, etc.”

At Occupy Medical, she is part of the counseling team. One of her self-assigned tasks is to seek out those who remain on the fringes, hesitate to get in line, anxious about approaching the take-in desk. So many OM patients are traumatized by life on the street and by criminalization.

Son of the 1
By GRAHAM LEWIS

It may sound like bragging to confess that I was born into the 1% and had an “over-privileged upbringing.” It’s not. What I am proud of is that I didn’t “take.” There didn’t seem to be anything abnormal about having tailored Brooks Brothers suits at age 8 or flying East to visit our richer “Old Money” cousins at Beechwood, the family estate in the Back Country. As in PBS’s Downton Abbey, when visiting our ever-present chauffeur, there were two signs, each cradled on a forearm and a reason to overcome the challenges of getting down in the basement.

This confession runs the risk of my becoming an occidentalist. As in The Downstairs Girls, as on Downton Abbey, were far more interesting and complex characters. Believe me, it was much more fun down in the basement. It wasn’t until I was sent to boarding school in the High Country of Colorado that I became my own person. The school was on an unpretentious working ranch. I learned the joy and satisfaction of hard physical work, digging post holes, bucking hay and herding cattle. There I shed the skin of family expectations, like following Pop’s footsteps and graduating from Princeton, found real happiness in simple things and freedom from all the trappings of wealth.

So please don’t anyone envy my 1% childhood. Yours may have been a lot more fun. The downside of the Good Life, which even a fading celebrity can’t make up, is that it didn’t “take.”

Mainstream media can make wealth look wonderful and carefree. Many viewers of those primetime soaps are convinced, “Someday, I’m going to win the lottery and be filthy rich!” That’s why so many people refuse to identify with us and our problems in the 99%, instead looking down on us “freeloading bums” who always seem to be bitching loud about something. Our success looms in reaching those in the middle who sense the truth in our mission and are curious. We must exercise this opportunity to win them over and keep growing.

The only vestige of my 1% connection is an ironic joke. Serving on the Board of Directors of the family corporation, I should be assisting to find a new lessee for our Benton Mine, one who is equipped to extract maximum yield of gold while the price is still high. The most recent lessee turned out to be a sleaze whose company broke every environmental regulation in the book, so our future looks less bright, capitalistically speaking. Oh well. The Board knows I’m a liberal; it’s impossible to try and pretend otherwise. But let’s be real. There’s no denying an inner conflict around the prospect of sharing royalties from a working gold mine.