

Occupy Wall Street organizing underway in La Crosse, Wisconsin

Our reporter

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Supporters of the Occupy Wall Street movement are working to build up Occupy LaCrosse. They've been barred from camping out in Cameron Park in the downtown area, and a group has initiated a petition campaign to secure their right to establish an encampment. Meanwhile, they are holding rallies, bannerng and staging soapbox sessions.

At Saturday's rally, Nick Renstrom, who is working to build support for Occupy LaCrosse, spoke to the WSW.

"We're trying to get as many people as we can to come down here to take part in the Occupy movement," said Nick. "I've actually been interested in politics for a long time. The main thing that brings me out here is the money in politics. It's been a joke my whole life. I'm sick of pretending that that is the way things have to be, that we should leave things as they are.

"People are not complacent anymore. They are sick of sucking up and choosing between the two political parties. Everybody wants this to change. The problem is, nobody knows how to do it.

"The two-party system is flawed and broken. Most people want someone in office who represents their interests, but not the Democrats or Republicans. It's the money in politics that is so corrupting. Everybody seems to see that. And if you don't see that you're not paying attention."

Bobby, 25 years old and a native of Milwaukee who has lived in La Crosse the last six years, also spoke to the WSW. "I guess what got me interested in politics really started with our monetary system. I came to realize that the Federal Reserve was benefiting very, very few people to the detriment of everybody else.

"When the bailout of the banks started, it became clear to me that with all the money that they were printing, it was only the very well connected, the elite,

that were benefiting.

"People don't understand that the TARP bailout was just the tip of the iceberg. Recently, when Congress released a partial audit of the Federal Reserve, it shed light on the fact that \$13 trillion was spent to bail out the banks. This not only went to American banks, but banks all over the world.

"Another thing that got me into politics was back when the news media was ramping up support to go to war with Iraq. This came right after the Patriot Act was passed. When I found out about the rights that the Patriot Act took away, that's when I made my transition from being apathetic to politically active.

"I would say that the biggest thing about that is the loss of privacy. It used to be that when we talked on the phone, sent emails or checked books out of the library, we were not in danger of being put on some terrorist watch list. Now it is different.

"One can only speculate why the government needs to know these things. They tell us that it is to make us safer. But it's clear from what we know about the past that the government needs to keep tabs on political activists. Activists have the potential to upset the status quo. The government likes it when people are obedient workers and don't shake things up. This keeps the tax revenues keep coming in.

"Here in Wisconsin, I think the 1 percent has a lot to do with our governor, Scott Walker. The mega-rich corporations that our monetary system favors are simply using their influence through him to extract even more from the 99 percent.

"And as far as Obama, I've got a lot of beef with him. He talked the big talk and unfortunately I and a lot of other people believed this talk. To sum up in two words: major disappointment.

"Number one, he bailed out the financial institutions,

specifically Goldman Sachs. Goldman Sachs was Barack Obama's number one private contributor in 2008.

“Number two, his failure to close Guantanamo. Number three, he resigned the Patriot Act. Number four, the reauthorization of military tribunals. Number five, he expanded the wars into Libya and launched drone attacks into Pakistan.

“Number six, the reauthorization of a CIA program called “Extraordinary Rendition,” where they can kidnap people and send them to prisons anywhere in the world. And, most recently, the assassination in Yemen of an American citizen. That sets a very dangerous precedent. Obama became the judge, jury, prosecutor and executioner.”



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