

Occupy Wall Street

by April Love
Voice Staff Writer

Starting in New York City, as just a couple dozen people protesting Wall Street and their wealth, the "Occupy Wall Street" protests have become a national movement among those who feel that the government has failed them in the way of providing jobs and giving those on Wall Street and other corporations too many tax breaks and loopholes at their expense.

There are people marching in the streets, protesting with signs and slogans, combating police officers, and fighting for causes that are not at all singular in their effect. They refer to themselves as the 99 percent who want a share of what the top 1 percent have gained at their expense.

President Barack Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which financially bailed out the numerous automotive industries, as well as many banks and lenders, and other institutions in order to prevent the country from entering an economic depression has come back to haunt the congress that passed it, as well as the companies that benefited from the bailout. This event is being used to fuel the Occupy Wall Street protests, although demographically they agree more along the lines of the President's policies. Although, according to CNNMoney.com's bailout tracker, most of the money loaned to the corporations who received bailout money such as Chrysler, has been paid back to the government, protestors still feel that big money corporations like Wall Street have too much control over the majority of the wealth in the nation.

Those occupying Wall St. and other places around the country such as Boston, Houston and D.C., are upset that their tax dollars went to bailout these companies, businesses and corporations and ironically, they can't get jobs or loans. They want a bailout for the American people.

Representative Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), the minority House leader, said in support of the movement, "The message to the establishment, whether it's Wall Street or the political establishment and the rest, that change has to happen."

Reverend Al Sharpton, along with celebrities like Mark Ruffalo, Susan Surandon and Kanye West, joined the protestors on the ground level to try to better understand the movement and what exactly it is that people are demanding of their government, an issue that many who oppose the movement say the protestors have failed to outline.

After speaking to some of those out on the

streets, Rev. Sharpton summed it up, "We are here today because we agree 1 percent should not be controlling the nation's wealth. These demonstrators are regular people trying to feed their families, trying to pay their rent and mortgages, trying to survive."

In the same vein of previous movements like the civil rights movement, war protests, and the many revolutions that occurred this past Spring in the Middle East, people are taking to the streets to let their voices and discontent be heard and seen. The mere fact that so many of these people don't have jobs to call out of to participate speaks to the desperation that so many feel.

The Occupy movement has melded into the now Millionaire March, in which many of the protestors in New York are marching on the homes of the wealthiest in America who reside on the Upper East side, and comes on the heels of Obama's failed Jobs/Fair Tax Act. Many of these millionaires and CEO's are benefiting from tax codes and laws that exist that disproportionately benefit them, while the American people are struggling to find jobs and financial breaks.

While the movement has received support from the public, it is disliked by many in Washington, especially by those representing the right wing. House Majority leader, Eric Cantor (R-VA), feels that the movement is a waste of time and political figures who agree with the movement are focusing more on who they can blame for the nation's economic crisis and not enough on those who created the policies that created the situation.

"Where I am most concerned is we have elected leaders in this town who are frankly joining in the effort to blame others rather than focus on the policies that have brought about the current situation. These are policies they put in place, and a lot can be done here in this town to turn the economy around and promote income mobility, and not go in and excoriate some who have been successful. We want success for everybody," said Mr. Cantor as reported in article for The Huffington Post.

Despite many media outlets and pundits reporting that the movement is disorganized and that the protestors are not on the same page, the Occupy Wall Street website describes the movement as a "leaderless resistance movement with people of many colors, genders and political persuasions. The one thing we all have in common is that We Are The 99 percent that will no longer tolerate the greed and corruption of the 1 percent."

The revolution is being televised, are you watching?

President Obama revamps black male image by example



photo courtesy of www.whitehouse.gov

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There's a climate change that is occurring today that has nothing to do with global warming.

The change is in reference to African-American men and their image after the election of the nation's first African-American President, Barack Obama.

Sitting in the White House is a black man calling the shots. In just three years, Mr. Obama and his family have become a sort of standard for African-American men and the black family, with his equally successful and intelligent wife Michelle, and their two daughters, Malia and Sasha. Now, possibly more than ever, black men have an ultimate model for how to conduct themselves and can now see a man who looks like them who has the highest position in the free world. Mr. Obama has challenged the typical idea of black masculinity and made it cool to be a good father, husband and successful man in his career.

In an article for the Huffington Post, writer Zondra Hughes, wrote there are basically two roles people see men of color in, and that's of the "stud and the absentee father." Of our first lady and the President she asserts, "It's not that they're black, it's that they're black and they have a cool factor. You can be cool and smart and, as a matter of fact, smart is cool."

Fayetteville State University junior, Michael Staton, feels that society's view of black men is critical. He expressed that support from other black men and women would be extremely helpful and could help rectify this negative image. It helps when you see people who look like you doing well and are in positions of power and are well respected.

Since Mr. Obama's election in 2008, a growing number of black men across the country have become mentors and big brothers to young black men in an effort to be a positive role model and act as a sort of replacement father figure for those without.

David Miller, co-founder of the Urban Leadership Institute in Baltimore, works with groups to mentor black and Latino boys, said of his passion and purpose.

"I use Obama as a sort of an unofficial national spokesman when I talk to men about responsible fatherhood. I show black men multiple images of Obama with his children and his wife. Even with the criminals and thugs, they get excited," said Mr. Miller.

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